

In Memory of Doom II
Sept. 1994-May 1996

A cool autumn breeze from the window caressed the perspiration from my back. The room smelled of desperation and sweat as I stopped to listen; the sound of artillery fire still rang in my ears. Shrill cries of fear, death, and pain played a chorus. Where were they, my mortal enemies? My sweat-drenched weapon felt good in hand; I knew it to be accurate and reliable. This was a game of cat and mouse. Either they would die or I. This was multiplayer Doom for the PC. Equipped with my fully-automatic IBM keyboard, I trudged on.

My heart nearly burst as a deafening rifle explosion shattered the calm. "Rest in pieces," Mark shouted from across the room. Several grenade explosions replied, hardly distinguishable from my heartthrobs. I tasted blood, realized I was biting my lip, and painfully eased the pressure. A last explosion echoed through the room and Mark loudly cursed the gods above. Now only John and I were left. Deathly silence prevailed once more.

Time lost meaning as we engaged in digital hide-and-go-seek. Everyone else was eliminated, now we were playing for keeps. I think the phone may have rung, and the wind must have still blown, but I can't be sure. My abused lip forgotten, all that mattered now was staying alive. Doom's world was my own.

Finger on trigger, I silently explored this hellish reality. I was in a burned-out house, a bastion of life, family, and love turned mortuary. I could hear the sounds of everyday life as I scavenged the premise for munitions. A gay song played on the broken kitchen radio. A man in the living room planned a vacation with his family. In a bloodied bedroom, a woman still sang her child to sleep. Satanic insignia peppered the walls; voiceless bodies adorned the floor. Digitized sunbeams warmly illuminated the carnage through holes in the roof. It was a beautiful day in hell.

Barely able to contain my adrenaline, I slowly moved through the house. Most of the rooms had hardwood floors, and moving any faster would be loud

enough to give my position away. I knew there was ammunition in the house; I had to find it before John found me. From his earlier showdown with Mark, I knew John was armed with explosives. A small voice whispered “goodnight, Mom,” as I envisioned the devastation a grenade would wreak in these closed quarters. Outside the house, I was an easy target. Inside the house, I was doomed. My head began to hurt as I frantically pondered my fate. The radio began another happy song.

Suddenly, there were footsteps downstairs. I stood paralyzed with fear as John explored below, hunting his prey. Thoughtlessly, I wiped my sweaty hands off on my jeans. Then the footsteps seemed to run at me! In a panic, I shattered a window and jumped through it to the ground below. He knew where I was! I ran around the yard in a frenzy, blindly zigzagging and jumping to make myself a harder target. Mind racing, body fatigued, I stumbled into the shelter of a small carport. All at once, I picked up the bullets suddenly resting at my feet, turned, blindly fired, and was torn apart by a ferocious grenade explosion. I found myself dead, at last, finally able to rest.

An indescribably beautiful Scoreboard welcomed me to the digital afterlife. Dumbly, I stared at the All-Knowing List. I was on top. I had won! My rifle blast must have found its mark before I was shredded. I couldn't believe it. I was exuberant! Trembling, I wiped my hands off again and slowly walked to the couch to lie down. Life felt good.