It seemed so peaceful and yet so wrong. No wind and yet the plants still flowed, the complete dullness of the world; grey but not dark as if the strength of his eyes had left him slightly and the silence... It was oh so quiet but peacefully so.

What was happening? He was not sure how he got here or how long he had been here. He woke up in a field; coins on his face. The world as it was before now a blur, far away and distant as if he been away for years.

He was drawn East and not even a few steps from the spot he awoke he was then presented with a lake, a vast lake, with calm waters; though most of it beyond his small edge was hidden in mist with no way to see through and beyond it.

Something seemed to beckon to him from the mist but he was not sure, not gripped by the siren call... Rather he went off to the side plopping himself upon a stone as he watched out and into the mist pondering, delving, recalling; all in an attempt to understand the how of his current predicament.

Time seemed to disappear, was he waiting seconds, minutes, hours, days? The plants still flowed in the breathless lands and the mute sky with no clear sign of a sun (but still light) seemed to neither lose nor gain light as if the hour was perpetual midday. He shook his head before looking down to the watch he realised was still attached to his wrist.

A little Quartz watch, a gift from his wife... What was her name? The question dinked about in his head before fading away as he watched with soft eyes as the hands remained still: 12:25. Though as he blinked his eyes the time seemed to shift behind his closed eyelids:

12:42

01:00

09:55

12:32

The AM or PM did not seem to matter; even as the time jumped the world did not change:

Perpetual daylight, in a windless land, where time did not matter.

He shut his eyes looking away from the watch as he tried to go back to understanding his predicament.

It started to come back after an uncountable amount of time, his name first clicking back from the silence Bennie Dot... Ben... Ben sounded right but it still did not help to bring any further understanding to his predicament though a cold dawning was running across his spine.

Perpetual daylight, in a windless land, where time did not matter; was he dead? He had to be? He was alive once before in world unlike this; where plants could not move without wind, where the light did not stay in one place and time did not bounce from one moment to another. Maybe it was just his watch... No, no that could not account for anything else.

His brain clicked back and in his recollection he reached into his pocket pulling out the coins he had on his face; two 50p, a 20p and a 5p... £1.25.

It meant something, but the meaning felt distant and he had to sit and focus on the thought to bring it to the forefront.

Nana, but now recalling her face was difficult. He was very short back then and her dotted dress was the most prominent feature which stuck in his mind, well that and her voice... A sweet and polite voice but one that carried a weight of authority that may have made men tremble at one point in her youth; thought at that point it only reminded Ben that Nana was speaking something serious and he was best to listen...

*/What do you think awaits us at the end of the road little Dot?/*

How did they get to talk about that? He couldn’t fully remember but somehow they talked about death... He was not sure and he was not sure what he told her.

*/Well Dot we go on a new journey; the world you occupy now is one part of many parts you go through; there was a land you were before, the land now and the land of the future./*

He was far too young to understand such chatter at that time and even as he grew he was not sure how much he believed what was being said to him... Though now it sat with him so eerily; especially the last part which seemed to stick in his head.

*/When you go on this new journey... You will meet guides, being who shall put you on the right path to the next stage. To what they shall look like I cannot say, but you should (as is good form) bring an offering*./ She fiddled in deep pocket of her dotted dress pulling out wonderfully persevered tuppence.

*/Something will follow with you, but you will not keep them, you give this or something of equal value too your guide*./

“But what if I don’t have one Nana?” he squeaked in his young voice.

*/Well your family will make sure, as you and your mother will for me, but do not be disheartened... Even with no offer your journey does not stop but making it will be tougher.../*

“Are you ready yet?” a voice spoke out snapping Ben to attention as he looked from his rock and into the mist of the lake, “are you ready; one should not spent eternity dawdling on what was and what could be”.

The small boat parted through the mist, as figure hidden in dark robes piloted it to the edge, placing the stern upon the land. He couldn’t make out the figure within the robes thought the hands which held upon the paddle were ashen and dry.

“You’ve a journey to make Mr Dot; no point putting it off” the ferryman said; surprisingly bright in his tone.

Ben could only sit silently, his mind still calculating everything that had and was happening; what was this, where was this, where was he to go?

“Was I wrong?” it felt like the first thing to ask, in his teens he had been quite the snub to theology before settling to a quiet scepticism as he matured; he had his understanding, why not let others have there’s...

But here he was in some land beyond, perpetual daylight, a windless land, where time did not matter with a mysterious being offering to take him away. But something seemed odd.

“But then who was right?” Ben called as he stood from his rock and walked to the lake stopping short of the boat and ferryman before him. “What was, what is to happen; have I damned myself?”

The figure stayed still; seemingly unmoved by the words. One old hand stretched out but stop before Ben; open palm, a hand awaiting the offering. “These are questions I can’t answer; I am just a guide; which take one from here to there”. His words were kind and clear.

“But where is there? What is there: Elysium, heaven, Jannah, Shamayim, Valhalla, Aaru, Svarga loka, Tian... or is it Heck, Hell, Hades, Jahannam, Gehinnom*,* Helheim... Or is one to be reborn a new...Or is there nothing beyond?”

“If there is nothing Mr Dot, then why would I take you somewhere that is not there?” the figure asked as Ben let his head drop.

“Nothing is certain Mr Dot, am sure you appreciate that now, but if you come with me things will move forward... There is nothing but empty eternity in this land of transition”

Ben just watched the land around him, this place of perpetual daylight, windless, where time did not matter... Ben reached into his pocket and pulled out the few coins, shaking them in his hand. “What if I don’t like where you take me?” Ben questioned it seemed odd to ask but the question pushed out of his head.

The figure for the first time gave out a soft laugh “did you like your life before?” he asked with a lighter tone. Ben paused; it was acceptable or least acceptable by the fragments which dotted about his mind. “Do others enjoy there’s?” maybe there was smile hidden in the dark hood but Ben avoided starting too deeply into the void.

“Don’t think about where you will go or what it will be; you can only make the best of what is waiting”.

Ben finally sigh looking to the awaiting hand, he finally jiggled the coins once more before handing them over. “Thank you Mr Dot, now come along”

Ben came aboard the small boat, sitting down close to the stern as the ferryman pushed the boat away from the land. Letting it float into the lake as he twisted the stern away from the land; the whole boat was encompassed in the mist...

Oddly he felt at peace, still not sure to what would happen and what was waiting but he made himself ready, accepting that whatever would come, he’d take it in its stride.

“Are you ready Mr Dot, we won’t take long?”

A smile settled on his face as Ben watched into the Mist;

“Ready for what’s to happen; I am not sure, accepting of what’s to happen; I believe so...”

He closed his eyes and... He closed his eyes... He – He – He...

“AH FUCK!” Ben shouted as he shot up from the table tearing the headset off and tossing it across the room. Heart rate: 200bpm.

He twisted to the side of the table sitting up and taking in as many deep breaths as he could.

“How did it go, how did it go?” Dr John shouted as he ran over to the man. He tried to place a supporting hand around Ben’s shoulder but he rejected it, slapping the hand away but falling to ground as he done it.

He quickly picked himself back up, “what the fuck was that, what the fuck” he started to shake his head as the images of what had been all so deeply burned into his mind.

“What? It’s what I told you it was, the 12th Generation of my life simulator... Did something go wrong?” The Doctor had tried some older version on a few other subjects but he never had such a reaction; though he had admittedly never allowed the sim to run so far.

Ben didn’t speak, he could only stare at the Doctor and then at his hands, this was real? Then what of... “How long was I in that thing, how long did you knock me out?!” Ben shouted his tone a mixture of aggression and anxiety.

Dr John’s raised his hand innocently, hoping and not wanting to make the situation aggressive. “I kept you as long as I promised it’s only been ten hours, just like I told you”.

Ben stopped his accusatory hand dropping down as he shook his head before banging his fist against his head; it couldn’t have been ten hours that was more than ten hours... That was a whole life and a little more.

He couldn’t say anymore shaking his head before making his way out of the laboratory but he stopped at the door way twisting around for some final words;

“Don’t you ever ask me to help with that shit ever again!”

Maybe the simulation needed a few tweaks...