

&

APRIL 30
006

**THE COVER WAS DECENTLY MINIMAL,
A NOT SO SUBTLE OFF-WHITE AND
DARK BLUE, FAR TOO TEXTURED**

HE WAS INSTANTLY ENLIGHTENED

LEFT HEMISPHERE
BRAIN WAVES

RIGHT HEMISPHERE
BRAIN WAVES

by Anonymous

Obesity Statistic Collector Frequency Fabricator
Faraday Cage Technician Hydroponic Cashew Farmer
Steven Seagal's Stuntman Big Pharma Head Hunter
Pill Painter Licensed Practitioner of _____
Lemurian Hydrophobe Possessor of "The Look"
Eiffel Tower Maintainer Government Translator
ICC Jail Breaker Chronically False Prophet
McAfee's Poison Procurer Theremin Strummer
Corporate Librarian Seagull Hunter
Car Crash Dummy Korean Shiitake Harvester
Sigma Male Castrater MEP Waiter
Freud's Illegitimate Incel Son Interpol Loose Cannon
Meta-Libel-Suit Manager Amateur Pynchon Cloner
Solid State Survivor Tribunal Streaker
For Hire TTS Conman CIA's Inside Man in the FBI
Quantum Mystic Vice Reverser
Microtubule Traveller IKEA Reseller
Entropy Creator Sumerian Crooner
Serial Sipper UN Match Fixer
MFA Accountant Der Eindzigde
Dylan Impersonator Waitrose Aisle Mixer
Mocktail Chemist

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A stylized illustration of a fish swimming in a grid. The fish is dark with a textured pattern and has a light-colored belly. It is swimming towards the right. The background is a dark red color with a grid pattern. Overlaid on the image is the text 'ARPANET MAP UNRELATED TO & CONTENTS' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The text is partially obscured by the fish and the grid. There are also several '&' symbols scattered around the image, some in white and some in a darker shade.

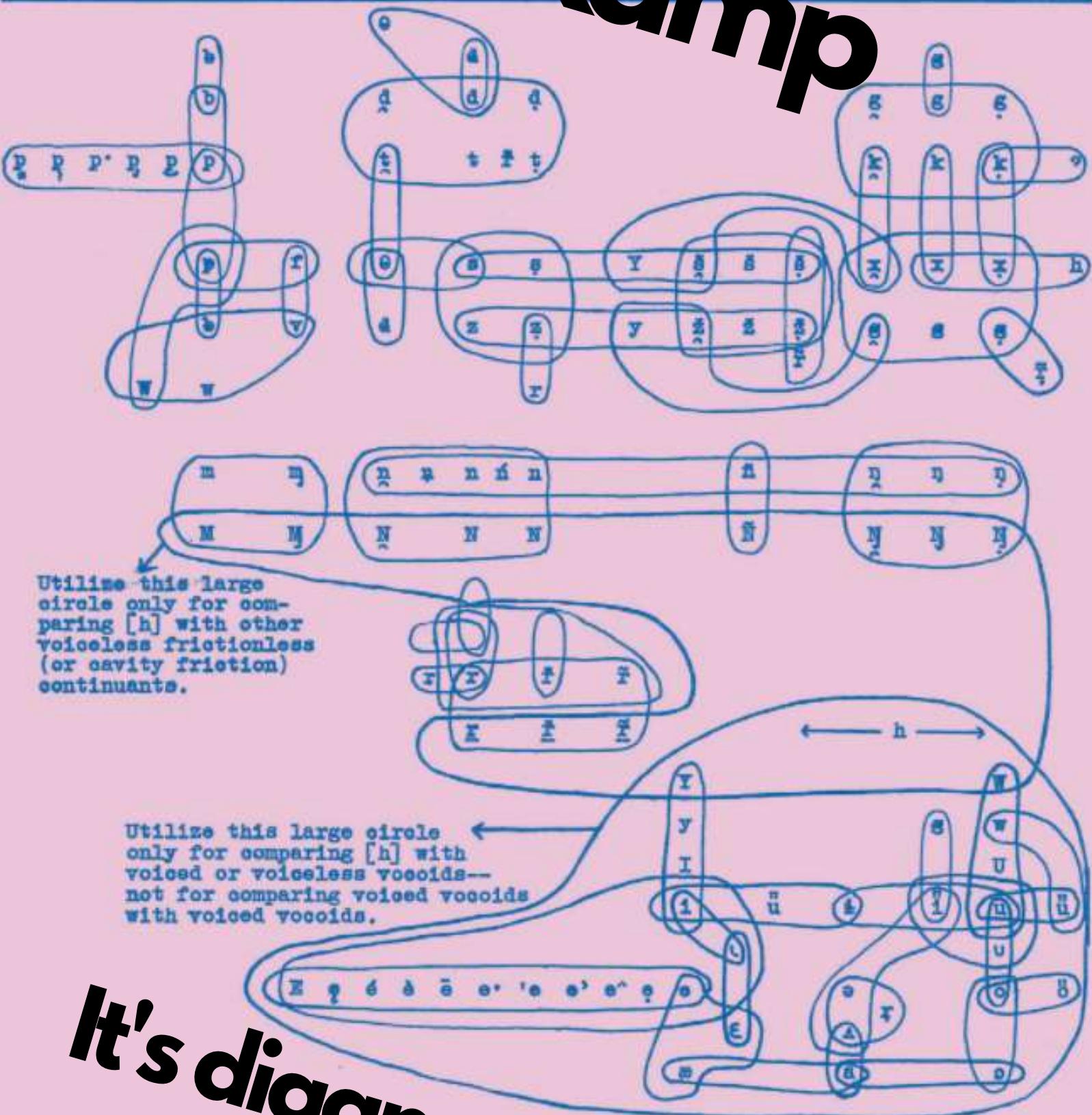
<http://contents>

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&



It's diagrammed

steal these stories!

A little girl grows up on the Mississippi coast as she deals with her alcoholic mother and raises her four younger siblings herself. She climbs out of poverty and explores life on the Gulf Coast pre-Hurricane Katrina. Themes include importance of family, coming of age, and the search for happiness.

Ant-eater-looking-thing builds a spaceship and discovers a race of gerbils on Enceladus, builds an alliance with them and converts them to National Socialism. Ant-eater-looking-thing-space-gerbil alliance then conquers the galaxy in the name of Hitler-Vishnu and brings about a million-year utopia ruled by wise and just psychic Nazi robots.

Guy goes on an image board and projects his insecurity and state on others. Particularly, the conflict between achieving his dream as a writer and his lack of commitment to becoming one.

Woman learns to remember her past lives and continues to reincarnate meanwhile writing a generational novel about fig trees or something.

In the late 2300s, an intelligence officer is tasked with investigating a cult that's beginning to pop up, its members primarily being space mariners and armed forces members. The confederation most of the solar system is under is incredibly byzantine, meaning the officer is forced to be incredibly delicate with his investigation. At some point he realizes the cult's members all had similar pseudo-religious dreams upon re-entry (their leader specifically had this experience during a plunge into Jupiter's atmosphere). While everyone is led to believe the entire thing was a front by insurgents in the asteroid belt to destabilize the confederation the officer begins having pseudo-religious dreams after landing on earth for the first time.

Jewish apocalyptic prophet gets hunted down by roman centurion for escaping a death sentence by Sanhedrin; his prophecy consists of God controlling society through media and the second coming being an AI computer structure

Blood Meridian but with dogs and cats that talk and shoot and stuff.

Ne·ol·o·gist

coined ✓

‽!!?

Multiliminal: | mul·ti·lim·in·al | *məl-tī-lī-mə-nəl*

1 (adjective): The vertigo or disorientation experienced when undergoing extreme transcendental or philosophical epiphany.

Quemb - | kwem | \ 'kwəm \

1 (noun): A permanently flooded basement, cellar, or underground area.

"Ol Ma she was buried but the broke-open quemb took her to the River Tennessee."

Jabber | ja·ber \ 'ja-bər \

1 (noun): Any individual who has taken, or who is enthusiastic or supportive about taking the Covid-19 vaccine.

Phobophile | \ "fō-bē-ˈfī(-ə)l \

1 (noun): a person who actively and aggressively criticizes and disparages something or someone (such as a celebrity or public figure).

*Does god
Know where
God came from?*

*Can god
Please mow
My front lawn?*

Three Poems, Loosely About: Spiritual Doubt

*As the soul seeks rest
I seek the nearest
Restroom*

*I search for one, lest
I arrive upon
My doom*

*Sky god
You sly god
Where'd you find the dough to bake that pie god?*

*I'm glad
You're sad
Hope that's enough to make you feel bad god*

AT THE NOODLE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER



THE NOODLE HOUSE

on the edge of forever is where you eat when you are all alone. The sparks shatter on impact, the ice is warm, and the check never comes. When you are burnt out, hungry, jet-lagged, anxious, and just want some hot food, they have a table waiting for you. A parking space so good you'd think you were crippled. You grab your coat to go in and realize that you had the emergency brake on since you left the airport. You need to eat something before that 1:00PM meeting because God knows the plant manager is going to make you wretch. So, you sit there, at the counter, by yourself, stirring your warm ice water watching the bits of ice disappear, and remembering fragments of movies, comics, books, video games, and other entertaining time burners. You look over your shoulder maybe just in time to catch a glimpse of someone from your imagination walking in.

Gordon arrived silent and breathless in the doorway. He stood there a moment before walking in. He was compelled to stop in and see the others even if he had nothing to say. Phil sat with his back to the wall drinking coffee and shaking with anxiety. His hair was turning white and a pink light was shining in his eyes. He was having trouble trying to decide if things were falling apart or if his career was picking up. He kept looking at his life from different angles and seeing different results. Next to Phil was Steve. He was getting older but still looked young. There weren't many pictures of Steve and if someone did recognize him in public, they were always struck by how he "looks just like that one picture!" Unlike Phil the more angles he looked through life the more he saw everything the same. He wasn't concerned why he was there and mostly focused on his sketch pad. Steve gave a look to Gordon, categorized him, took a sip of coffee, and resumed his drawing. David sat at the edge of the booth. He looked excited to see Gordon joining their party. He took a long drag of his cigarette and slowly let the smoke out. White steamy clouds flowed from his deeply wrinkled mouth as he lifted his mug for another gulp of black coffee. He talked with loud thoughts.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, we are on to something great."

His hand twitched to the accents and his creviced face was all smiles.

"This is what we have been searching for. This is the big fish!"

Phil and Steve's eyes looked at David. Gordon methodically clicked his boots and sat down with the three. His heavy protective suit tested the strength of the booth. The other men were unfazed by how the cushions reacted to the new weight.

"The big fish he says!" An excited Phil joined the talk.

"He says this is what we have been searching for, but how does he know that? This thing that has put us all here, that has fathomed us to existence into this strange place certainly isn't what I have been searching for!" David cut him off.

"Gentlemen, we have gone deep and now the big fish is ours!"

Phil turned to Steve hoping to gain an ally.

"He says it again! How does he know this? How do we know he isn't the fish that has us snared in this experiment? The clerk told me. The young man at the grocery store while bagging my food for the week he told me. He told me how much he liked my work and asked what I would release next. I told him I would have to see if I could afford another novel or would have to find some other work."

Steve listened and carefully held his pencil waiting for a break to resume his drawing. Gordon was perfectly still. His hands out of sight, but his overall presence was powerful. He was a stranger to them, even though the men had an influence on his existence. Phil continued.

"He asked me, this clerk, how much I made off my recent critically acclaimed work and I told him because he seemed to be an earnest fan. Do you know what he told me?"

\$13.50



Phil's wicked eyes moved to each of the party. They were all curious.

"He told me that he made more in 6 months than what I made from the advance and the book sales combined! 2 years I poured my life into that work! New York City editors spent hours on the phone with me revising drafts and critiquing my character development. Awards were bestowed upon me that were highly sought by my peers!"

He looked deeply at the faces around him. He wasn't sure they were familiar with the book he was referring to. If they were, then hopefully they agreed it was deserving of the accolades. If they weren't, then well hoped they thought he was honest and not just paranoid.

Steve looked at him calmly and declared.

"I create because it is what I do. I don't do anything else. I'm not a business man, but I have my beliefs. I will not deviate from the truth; to do so would be evil."

He was clear and absolute. He could have had billions of dollars if he wanted to. He could have been the biggest name out of all of them. He had the talent for sure, but he didn't want what came with it. He wasn't a celebrity and like he said, he wasn't a business man.

Phil's face radiated pink. He was irritated at Steve, but he knew he had no retort. Steve looked back at him with black eyes and white skin. He sipped his coffee and resumed his drawing. There was silence and after two minutes David cried.

"The big fish!"

A column of exhaust rose over his greasy hair.

"Yes gentlemen this is it. I tell you it is"

Phil at his wits end, slapped a hand on the table and silenced David. Then sternly declared.

"Big fish? You fool! I have a big fish for you"

Phil smoothed back his hair and straightened his shirt. He wore a spot stained undershirt with light brown armpit semicircles. He truly was poorer than the local bag boy. He shook off the pink light, focused his anguished eyes onto the tiled floor, and began his story.

"Let me tell you all about a strange world that no human has ever seen and a creature just as strange. The sky was not dominated by a single ball of light millions of miles away, but by an uncountable number of clusters of fissionable material that would spontaneously decay and burst forth their immense energies. These bundles of decaying particles gathered in the upper atmosphere and were the perpetual light source for the planet. It was before the time of my imagination when the original sun finally passed on through super nova and left its remnants in the path of one of its gaseous children. Then after an even greater time period the once massive planet dissipated and attracted new matter to its surface from its siblings. It is from this childhood of abandonment and development in the face of adversity did this world become the home of Mr. Haynes."

As Phil talked, he didn't look at his audience. With great concentration he kept his eyes focused on the tiles with minimum muscular vibration. Steve had started a new page and attempting to sketch the planet being described. David was overjoyed and silent with Phil and his "big fish". Gordon was silent and still.

"Deep on the surface where neutrons could still bombard and where the gravity kept you from completely losing touch, lived Mr. Haynes. He was the only life form on the entire planet and was incapable of being confused or hurt or distraught by this fact or any other. The surface of the planet was covered in small, but extremely heavy stones. Despite their weight they were often subject to the atomic winds caused by the sky and could ripple and roll across the surface of the planet. From this process they would break away in small increments and become almost perfectly spherical. However, the closer to a perfect sphere they became the faster they moved and the harder they would collide with other stones, break apart, and become jagged again. There was no vegetation or lakes or mountains on the planet Mr. Haynes lived on. He never needed to eat and would only grow tired when the atomic bursts would slow down. When they slowed down he would grow tired and look around for a place to rest. When he could not find any, he would pile the stones into a type of bed and lay down. Then when the energy from the sky began to re-energize him he would awake. At the same time the

atomic winds would blow apart his stone bed and he would continue wandering his planet. This was the cycle of Mr. Haynes existence."

Phil licked his lips. He drank a handful of coffee, licked his lips again, and resumed the story before the audience could break from their trance. They were enthralled.

"He possessed no eyes or ears in the familiar sense, but instead his entire 'head' was a receiver of sensory information in the shape of a calloused stump. He could feel the wind and bits of dust circle him. He could hear the cascading waves of stones and the shifting sound they made as he walked. He could feel the heat come down from the sky, but he could not see the flashes of visible light that were also being generated. He could however see the ultraviolet, x-ray, and gamma radiation that bathed his planet. His feet were broad and concave. This gave him a good footing as he trekked across the stone covered planet. He had no hands but rather wide thick arms that were almost like wings which he could protect himself with when the tide of stone became harmful. His brain was of little use beyond the usual cycles and was located throughout his entire body. It didn't make up a disproportionate amount of his body because of this, but was simply spread out but still connected. It told him only basic information with minimal senses of joy. He knew he was Mr. Haynes, but he didn't know what that meant. He knew he had feet and feet were used for walking. His arms he knew were arms. He knew when he was tired. He didn't know what a bed was, but he knew it felt better to lay in one than to not; even if that bed was made of stone. When he would wake from a heavy shower of radiation he always felt refreshed. He was reminded that he was Mr. Haynes and that he should keep walking. And when he felt tired he didn't feel sad only the need to rest."

The "big fish" shook its body.

"Mr. Haynes wandered with little memory and no sense of direction until the fissionable material his planet orbited through dissipated into the universe. When that time arrived he laid down in his stone bed and never rose again."

Phil let out a sigh. He finished his coffee and for the first time that evening he was relaxed. David clapped his hands slowly and thoughtfully. From his cancerous haze he began to speak.

"Let me tell you all about the time Jason Mueller killed his brother-in-law. He shot him one night right in the chest with a .38 Walther his father had brought back from West Germany. His father collected guns and brought back several after being stationed in Berlin for four years. He had the Luger, the P-38, the K98 with the matching serial numbers, and he even picked up a few Soviet beauties when he was over there. At one time he even had an old Pollack come by the base with a rusted up StG 44 wrapped in newspaper and screaming of history. Jason's father knew enough that evil should be left alone in the black corners of history and to cherish peace in the present. However, even in the present we walk with shadows."

David's voice was a getting dry. He clenched his teeth and engulfed more black elixir. Steve had the guns drawn on his paper and patiently awaited the oncoming details. Phil nervously awaited the details behind the murder. Gordon was silent.

"Jason pointed the Walther at close range at his brother-in-law's chest and fired. He could hear the sternum fragments click and grind in the aftermath. His brother-in-law looked back with confused eyes and asked 'Why?' Jason thought the 'Why?' was self-evident. What needed to be expressed was the 'What?' and he did.

"This is how it ends. This is all you get".

He got even closer this time. He was so close his vision was flooded with his target. His nostrils became filled with burnt powder and blood vapor. This time he pushed the barrel right up to his brother-in-law's chest, nearly stabbing him, and fired another round."

Suddenly Gordon interrupted the story by pulling out a nickel-plated full-size Colt Python from his protective suit. Everyone stopped. He released the cylinder, spun it, and pushed it back. The story of pointless violence aroused a deep part of him. It was the part of him that had learned to survive against greed and repugnant human curiosity. He could never speak of the nightmares that had become gods, but he could exhibit the means to destroy them. The other men looked with professional amazement what their silent compatriot wielded. The group watched in silence as Gordon surveyed the room through the sights of his revolver. Phil had beads of sweat forming in his wrinkled forehead. Steve tried to ignore the threat but, his eyes kept darting from Gordon to his sketch pad. A panic that his

ideology could not reconcile was slowly overtaking him. David spoke up.

"That's a nice six-shooter you got there partner. We're pretty far from Indian territory, you might want to put her away."

Gordon listened. He concealed the gun back in his protective suit. The atmosphere began to reclaim its normalcy. Regaining his concentration David continued.

"Katie Mueller was the daughter of Jason and Christina: cute as a button and sweet as candy. She was only 5 years old when her uncle Mark planned to kidnap her. It wasn't because Mark hated his sister or niece. This was just something he was going to do. One night Christina left the house as planned. A mother from Katie's school had attempted suicide and was recovering in the hospital. The mother had taken a few handfuls of aspirin and some leftover Vicodin. It wasn't clear why, but the other mothers were full of wild theories. Christina had discussed her plans to go to the hospital with her brother Mark that day at lunch.

'Jason is working late and won't be home for dinner. I'll be able to get Katie to bed and take off for the hospital. He'll be home shortly after that it is not a big deal, but thank you for offering to watch her.'

He was just trying to make himself useful. He was the uncle after all.

After lunch Christina called Jason to see how his day was going. The hospital visit was just another errand to run. The brief window when their daughter would be all alone seemed inconsequential. Yet, it stuck out to Jason for some reason. There it was. 'I'll probably leave before you get home. Katie will be fine' burrowing into his mind. 'Katie will be fine' Why wouldn't she be? Jason pondered the strange effect this phrase was having on him through the day. 'My daughter will be alone, sleeping in her bed, but only for a small window before I get home. No big deal, we've done this dozens of times. And yet...' He thought deep through the streets and alleys of his mind to find an answer to his worry. He ambled through the typical worries that plague all parents but wasn't satisfied these reasons. Daring to look further, he stretched his imagination into those black corners of thought that if you stayed too long you may never return to normal life. There he saw his fear and with it a remedy."

Steve had the characters drawn out. Jason was a solid bald man with thick shoulders and protective eyes. Christina was delicate and feminine. She had shoulder length wavy brown hair, perfect lips, and the concerned look only a mother could conjure. Mark was a little younger than Christina, and almost a generation younger than Jason. He had dark curly hair, a pointed nose, and a sharp chin. His expression revealed a life of bad luck and worse decisions. David smiled at the drawing and continued his story.

"It is really easy and no one gets hurt."

The two men stood in the backyard and talked in the early night. Burning candles and mosquitos kept them company. Back in the house the women cleaned the dishes and put away the leftovers. It had been a picturesque evening. Mark had brought over his new girlfriend for a barbecue. Jason and Christina had spent the afternoon cleaning the backyard and preparing for the event. The grill had fresh charcoal loaded, the patio was free of debris, hamburgers were pressed into form, and potato salad was prepared. Mark's new girlfriend worked in the shoe department of the same chain store as Mark. Jason could see the same pattern forming he had seen with Mark's two previous girlfriends. Christina was more optimistic.

Now the pleasantries had concluded. The men now stood alone together.

'How often do you do this?' Jason asked.

'Usually every 4 years. I spend a little time looking around, then just grab the kid, and leave a note. The parents get the money fast and as long as you give the kid candy and let him watch cartoons he doesn't mind.'

Jason let these words sink in. Mark put his empty beer bottle down and nervously put his hands in his pocket. He knew he drank the last beer and yet he was trying to think of a way to ask for another.

'I don't know why it's considered such a harsh offense. I don't hurt the kid and the families can spare the money.'

Jason fished for the right words that would keep Mark satisfied with his opinion. This conversation had gone beyond what was considered suitable after dinner talk. Mark was talking about a

world of shadows. A world he had fallen so deep into that he felt it appropriate to discuss with his brother-in-law. The truth of his character was revealed and Jason could not look away."

David paused. He drew in a helping of fresh air and expelled wild carcinogens. His audience was eager. He continued his story.

"Mark retrieved the spare key from underneath a flower pot and entered through the kitchen. Katie would be almost asleep by now. She would be a little confused, but would fall back asleep with the blanket wrapped around her head and a strong hand over her mouth. He carefully made his way across the living room and saw a figure on sitting on the couch. He froze. Unsure of himself and fearful he stood still. His eyes adjusted to the darkness. Jason was on the couch. Marked stared at him and as his eyes continued to adjust, he could tell Jason was staring back."

The tension around the table was unbearable.

"Never doubt the power of the family. It is truly one of the most incredible forces our evolutionary journey has developed for us. Through injustice and tragedy, family moves mankind into new frontiers.

Christina cried until she physically couldn't. She cried with a hysterical joy for how much she loved her husband. She coughed and convulsed. Her love was higher than any previous assessment of what her love for her husband could have been. This overwhelmed her. She did as her husband asked and shredded her brother's clothes with the bright orange utility knife they kept in the clutter drawer in the kitchen. In the garage she could hear Jason talking to their daughter.

'Now sweetheart you can stay up late only if you promise to help daddy, okay? Put your goggles on, that's a good girl. You don't want to get this powder in your eyes. It burns like fire. Good job, that's right just like making a big sugar cookie. Now we aren't going to eat this sugar cookie are we angel? No, it's too big for us but it is just right for the earth. The earth can swallow this cookie whole.'

The men stared through David's cigarette haze. He reveled in their reactions. He turned to Steve.

"Steve, I know you have story. I know you have one just for us."

Nervously, Steve put down his pencil and closed the cover on his sketch pad. He silently cleared his throat.

"I call this one 'Flight of the Weird'."

"Max Warner was a proud young business man. When he pushed his way to the front of the ticket line at New York's Idlewild Airport the other passengers knew he was an important man. And in case someone didn't see his gallant march, he spoke loud enough for them to hear.

'Sir! I have a ticket reservation for a direct flight for the Eastern Iowa Airport outside of Davenport. First class!'

The attendant looked through the reservation list.

'And your name sir?'

'My name? Max Warner! How many times must my company put me on your crummy airline before you know who I am? Why this is my third trip this month to that dingy airstrip.'

Max drew a cigarette from his jacket pocket and began to smoke heavily. The others in line looked on in contempt. At last the attendant produced Max's ticket and placed it on the counter. Before anything could be said Max had slammed his hand on the counter and stormed off towards his gate. Just as he turned, he nearly collided with a small elderly man. Max's sharp young reflexes jolted him from the man and he continued in his quick pace.

At the gate Max made sure he was the first one on board. He quickly took his seat and started a fresh cigarette. He looked through papers from his briefcase. He read them quickly, memorized key information, and re-read them even faster than before. He shuffled his papers, looked up, became enraged at how slowly the plane was filling up.

"Stewardess!"

A young blonde woman in a red uniform turned her attention to Max.

"How much longer will we be boarding? My ticket says we will depart at 8:15 AM and it is nearly 8:00. Can't you speed this up?"

"I'm sorry sir; people are boarding as quickly as they can. Would you like a cup of coffee?"

"No, I would not like a cup of coffee. I would like to be in the air!" Frustrated the stewardess turned her attention to other passengers. Max was red with frustration. He leaned across the aisle to who he presumed was an equally angered passenger eager to fly.

"Can you believe how they treat us? These tickets aren't cheap, but they know men like us have to travel to do our jobs and they can treat us like rubbish."

The other passenger was noticeably older than Max. The sides of his hair were grey and what was on top was thinning. Behind gold framed glasses, he passed an indifferent look towards Max, and then resumed reading his newspaper.

"Hrmph!" exclaimed Max.

He sank back in his seat and lit another cigarette. He watched the other passengers slowly take their seats. His frustration grew with every occupied seat. His eyes flicked towards his wristwatch as time approached the predesignated take-off time. Then as the plane looked nearly full and the stewardess's hands were on the latch to close the door, a faint voice cried out.

"Wait! I'm still coming."

If Max hadn't been sitting in first class he wouldn't have heard it, but there was one last passenger. He clutched his work papers in his hands in fury. His tight fists crumpled his precious documents and he gritted his teeth.

The stewardess reached her hand out the door and carefully escorted a frail old man. It was in fact the same old man that Max had nearly knocked over at the start of his morning in the airport. Max did not recognize him and now saw him only as an obstruction between him and his work that had to be completed.

'Put him in steerage.' Max thought to himself.

'What a wretch of a man. How can they let someone who can barely walk travel on such an expensive airplane?'

The old man and the stewardess stood before Max. He was completely bald and his scalp was peppered in liver spots. His eyebrows and ears were rich in wild white hair. His eyes were tiny black slits. He wore an out of fashion three piece green suit with a large yellow handkerchief sticking out from his front pocket and a wide floppy purple bow tie. He carried only his ticket. The stewardess with a bright smile looked down at the ticket, looked up, smiled at Max, and announced.

'Mr. Katz your seat is right here up front. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make your flight more comfortable.'

The old man's eyes glistened.

'Thank you dear. I'm so excited to be on this airplane. I haven't flown in so many years I have forgotten what it is like.'

He joyfully smiled a nearly toothless smile.

Max was outraged. He couldn't believe that the flight was being held up for such an ancient specimen. This forgotten speck of dust had no place in the modern world. To add insult to injury, he would have to spend the 3 hour flight holed up next to this bizarre character. He looked out the window and contained his indignation.

It wasn't long after take-off that Max fell asleep. The old man stayed awake and sat happily in his seat. Sometime later Max awoke. He rubbed eyes and the pleasantries of sleep disappeared when he saw the old man next to him. The old man had a letter in his hand and he was looking over it with delight. Max was surprised such an urchin could remember how to read. He carefully peered over to see what the letter contained. With one focused glance Max made out the letterhead and it read:

"The Global University of Supernatural Ministry"
The words bubbled in Max's mind.

'Supernatural ministry? Global university? What a bunch of hogwash! Surely this man has spent his last pennies to venture out to this so-called university for some type of miracle cure. It really is sad how so many people are not as smart or quick witted as myself.'

'What is this 'Supernatural Ministry'?"

Max's sharp narrow finger jabbed the old man's letter almost freeing it from his feeble hands. The old man was shocked at such sudden rudeness. Before he could answer Max continued his attack.

'What kind of fool are you? You don't believe these non-scientific charlatans do you?'

Max paused wanting hear the old man's thoughts in order to better ridicule him.

'I'm...'

The old man carefully formed his words.

'I'm the guest of honor. The global university is hosting me for their centennial celebration. I have been studying and practicing.'

Max's face had twisted its self into a mask of disgust. He shot back.

'Practicing? Practicing what? How to trick people out of their hard earned money with a bunch of parlor tricks? You fraud! How dare you make a career out of lying and deceiving people! Untestable and non-repeatable claims are things that need to left in the pages of myth and have no place.'

Before Max could further articulate his criticisms to the old man the plane jolted suddenly. Then it pulled hard to the right and then up again on a strong hard upswing. There was an announcement from the captain.

'Ladies and gentlemen, we are experiencing some turbulence as we make our final approach into the Eastern Iowa Regional Airport. Please remain seated with your seat buckles fastened.' The radio cut out and the plane began to shake violently. Strong gusts of wind were forcing the plane to worm back and forth. Max looked out his window and could see the Mississippi river getting larger and larger beneath the plane. He could see the runway getting closer, but still the plane was erratic. Great fear began to fill inside of Max. His heart thrashed in his chest. Sweat was pouring down his forehead and his nails dug into the armrests. He could feel his whole life coming to an end with one final shake of the plane. He gazed at the river and its black torrents that would soon swallow him and the other passengers. The cold hand of death was growing closer and closer with each sudden and erratic bounce of the plane.

He closed his eyes and tried to think of something peaceful but all he could conjure were memories of his rotten life and how mean he had been to everyone. Max was going to die unmourned and unloved. He looked at the old man next to him, the very man not long ago he was cruel to just because he could. The old man had his index fingers on his temples and his small fingers pointed upward. His eyes were closed and his lips were moving with the most careful steps as he spoke to himself. Max could not believe his eyes. Nearly everyone on the plane was facing certain death. Women were crying out for their husbands, children crying for their mothers, men trying to contain their fear, and this old man was in some kind of ritualistic trance. A rough jostling of the plane began and a metallic tearing sound caused many of the passengers to scream louder. The old man squinted his eyes tight and bit his lips close. His fingers rubbed his temples in an excited motion. Then the tearing sound stopped. The turbulence ceased and the plane was flying smooth again. The passengers looked at each other in disbelief. And suddenly the plane was on the runway with a gentle bump. Max couldn't believe his luck. How close he had felt to it all ending and now he was going to be fine.

'Those crumb bums at the main office better double my salary if they want me to make any more trips out here. No triple it!'

Max thought to himself as he lit a cigarette. When the door of the plane was opened Max pushed pass the old man and knocked him over. When he saw what he had done Max only looked down and said,

'Get out of the way you old fool! There is no room for the slow and old in today's world!'

The old man glared up at Max. His small black eyes sent a bolt of fear into Max who quickly ran away.

Max was quick to forget his cruelties and made his way into the airport. He swiftly claimed his bag and found a taxi to take him to his hotel. As the driver loaded the cab Max caught sight of the old man. He was standing near the airport exit and his eyes were focused on Max. His fingers were on his temples and his lips were moving.

'Driver! I don't have all day!'

Max slammed his door and nervously crouched low in the back seat of the cab. Still from the side view mirrors he could see the old man in his targeted stare at Max's cab.

The cab sped away and made its way along the great Mississippi river. The old man was quickly out of sight, but Max could not shake the fear that had been transmitted into him. The cab moved faster and faster through traffic. It flew past the Davenport exit without even hinting of slowing down.

'Driver! I said 'Davenport'! What are you doing?'

The highway transitioned away from its sleek modern design to the simple country road it was not that long ago. There were farms and wide open pastures all around them now.

'Slow down! Where are you taking me?' Driver?'

Max reached out and clutched the driver's shoulder. The driver's head rolled back and revealed a decaying skull of a face with shreds of putrid brown skin and sunken bloody pits for eyes. Max shrieked with all his soul and body. His mind ripped in two at the impossibility that he was seeing. The car veered off the road by skeleton hands as the rotten skull started back at him. Max screamed louder and louder at the insane horror that was happening before him. The car tore through a cornfield, hard and fast up an embankment, and then became airborne like some kind of carnival act as it made a final launch above and then crashed into the great river."

Steve told the story with an incredible pace. The audience was all leaning forward and excited with each line. With the conclusion, the men looked at each other and nodded in agreement.

Then from the same doorway that Gordon came through, came Scott. He was the reason behind this. He was the stimulus that finally organized these discrete pieces for this important gathering. He was plain looking and carried a fresh pot of coffee. He refilled everyone's mug, poured one for himself, and sat down at the booth next to Gordon. He let everyone relax and enjoy a sip or two before starting.

"There is a mass hallucination being pushed on all of us. The world in our eyes, the movie in our heads is being controlled and manipulated by outside forces. These forces know our minds, our biology, and our very molecular chemistry to make the hallucination reality. You men have known this and feel this in your blood. Everyday more people indulge in the hallucination they mistake for reality. Everyday people become more protective of the hallucination. They suffer for it and rejoice only when it allows them to be happy."

The men nodded and knew Scott's truth. They knew it their whole lives, but never knew how to say it.

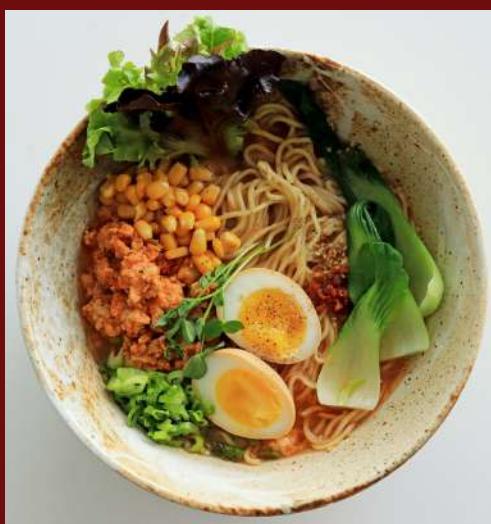
"And they have unlocked the mechanics of our souls and can articulate their control like never before. They can give us immeasurable pleasure in exchange for total domination. While these words may seem grim, from understanding the truth there is hope. There is a man who knows the rules because he wrote them. He knows it is all a show because he is the one producing it. This is the Master Persuader."

All of the men let a careful smile form on their faces.

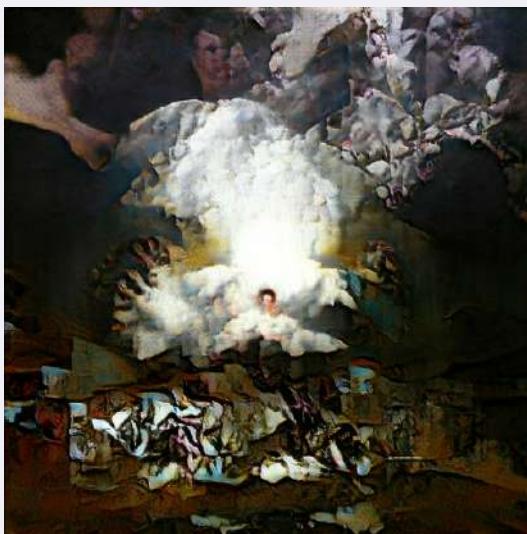
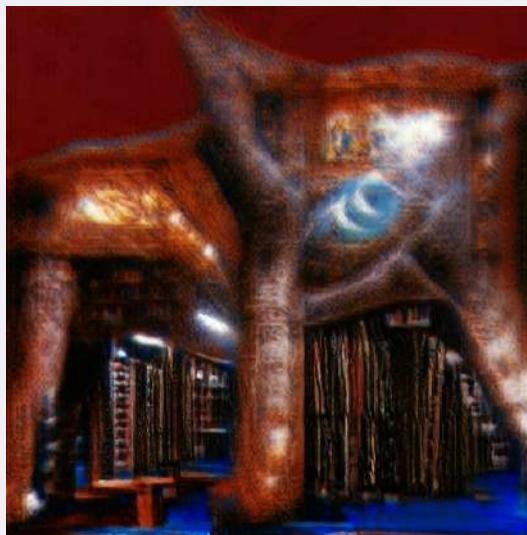
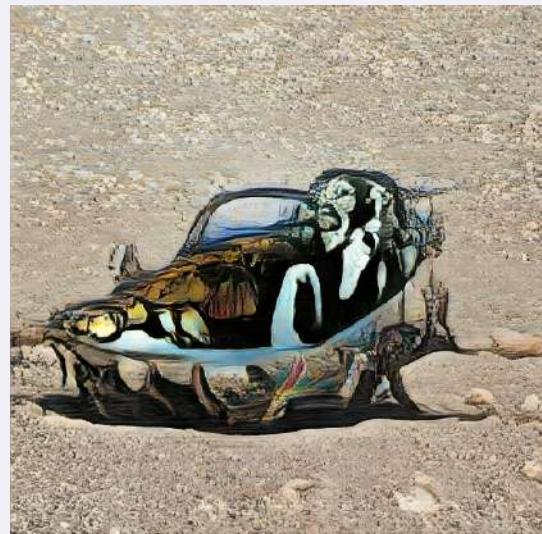
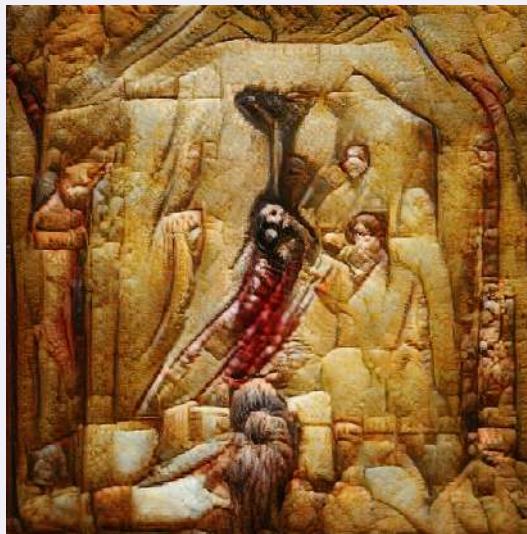
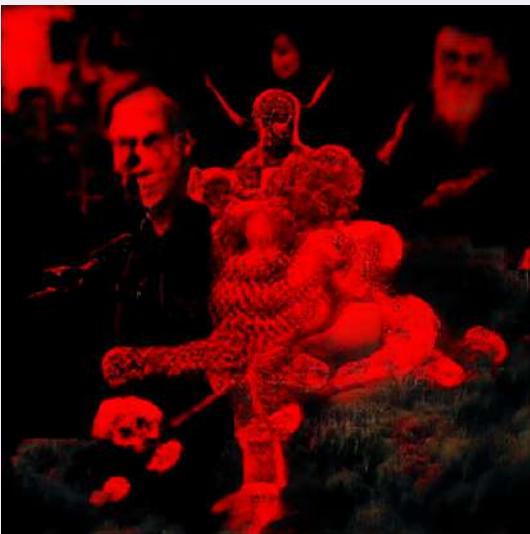
"The other forces hate him because he pulls back the curtain and tells the world the rules are just make-believe. The game is ending. It is a crooked game and people aren't going to play with make-believe rules."

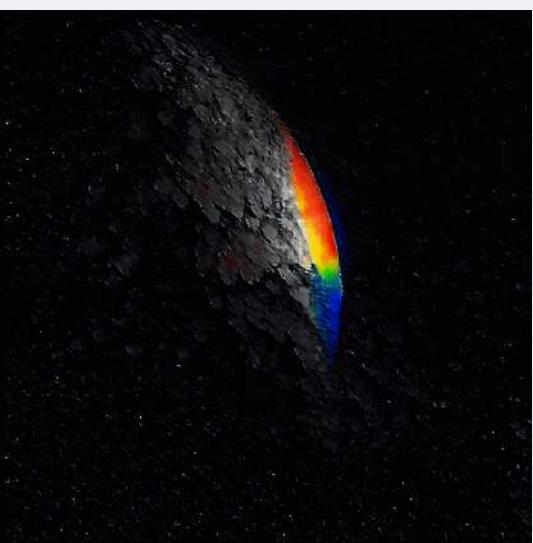
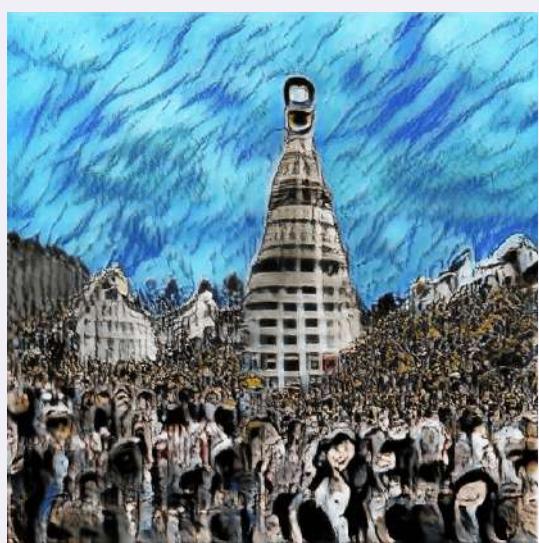
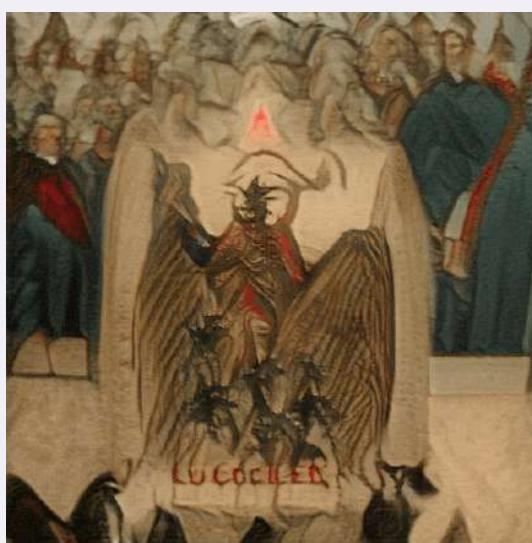
And let me tell you something dear reader. The prophets are real. They're all around us revealing secrets of the hallucination and guiding our path. They tell us about real love and the continuous struggle that it is, they wait patiently with the pair of black Dickey's work pants you've always needed, and sometimes they look you right in the eye and tell you the truth.

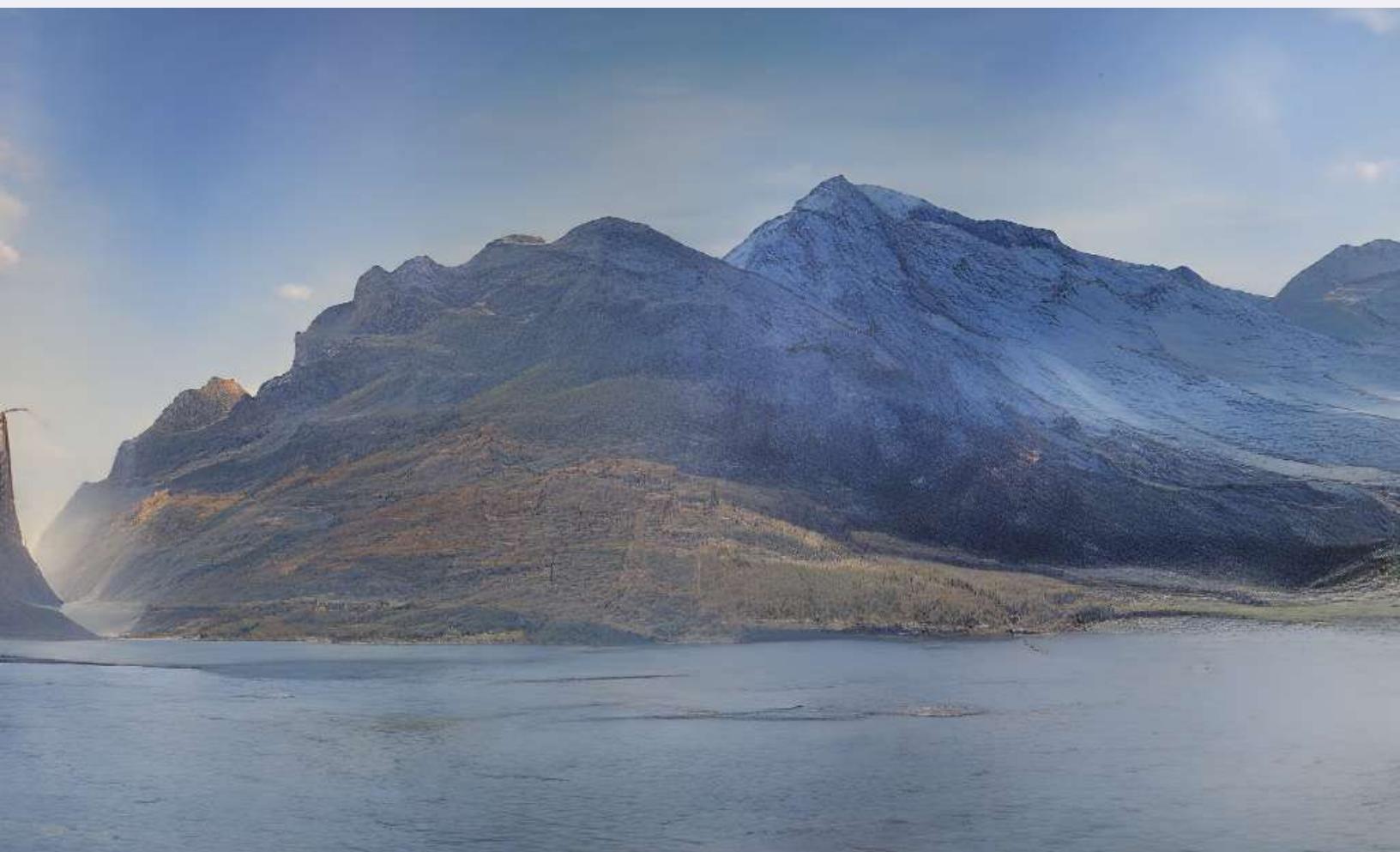
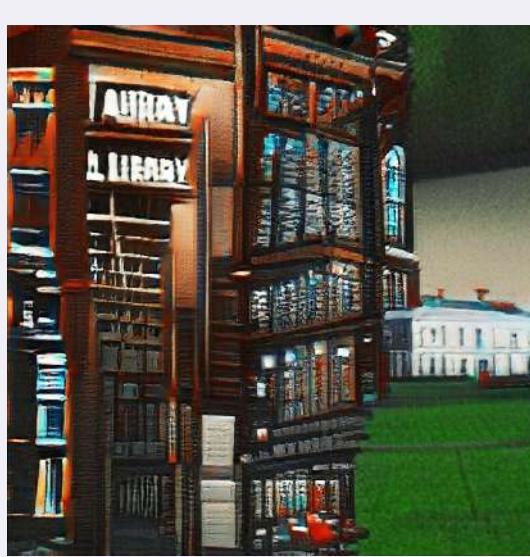
"This is your world and we're just living in it"



*Curated pages of AI art for your viewing pleasure
(this title exempt from GPT's tyranny)
Or: Guess how much of this magazine is human-made*







THE DOOR IS CLOSED

The door is closed.

The curtains are drawn.

There is no light, except for the reflected rays of the moon that penetrate the curtains barrier.

I sit on the bed, a darkened form, bent over like a cripple. I am clutching my stomach. I suspect I am going to die. I've suspected this for a while, I think.

I'm not sure, of what I don't know. There is just an overwhelming feeling of doubt, a malaise. The darkness is not the only thing enveloping the room.

Sometimes, I dream of escaping. Escaping everything. I imagine I will dissipate in a burst of energy, leaving no trace that I was ever here, as I fade away into the background. Not even dust will be left.

For a while now, I've had this idea that I can escape my body through the mouth. The scream is the body escaping via the mouth, an intensity of becoming, or something like that. Through this I believe that I will affirm all that's is life, the great flux. My stomach pain, the darkness's, isolation and hurt will be affirmed into joy in a great burst of energy.

I've decided to do it, I've decided to scream. I'm now standing by the bed. I open the curtains, letting the moonlight in. I open my mouth.

I scream.

I put all my energy into it. My eyes are closed, my mouth hurts with how wide I have opened it. I believe it is wide enough for an arm to reach out, for my organs to fly out, enough to escape.

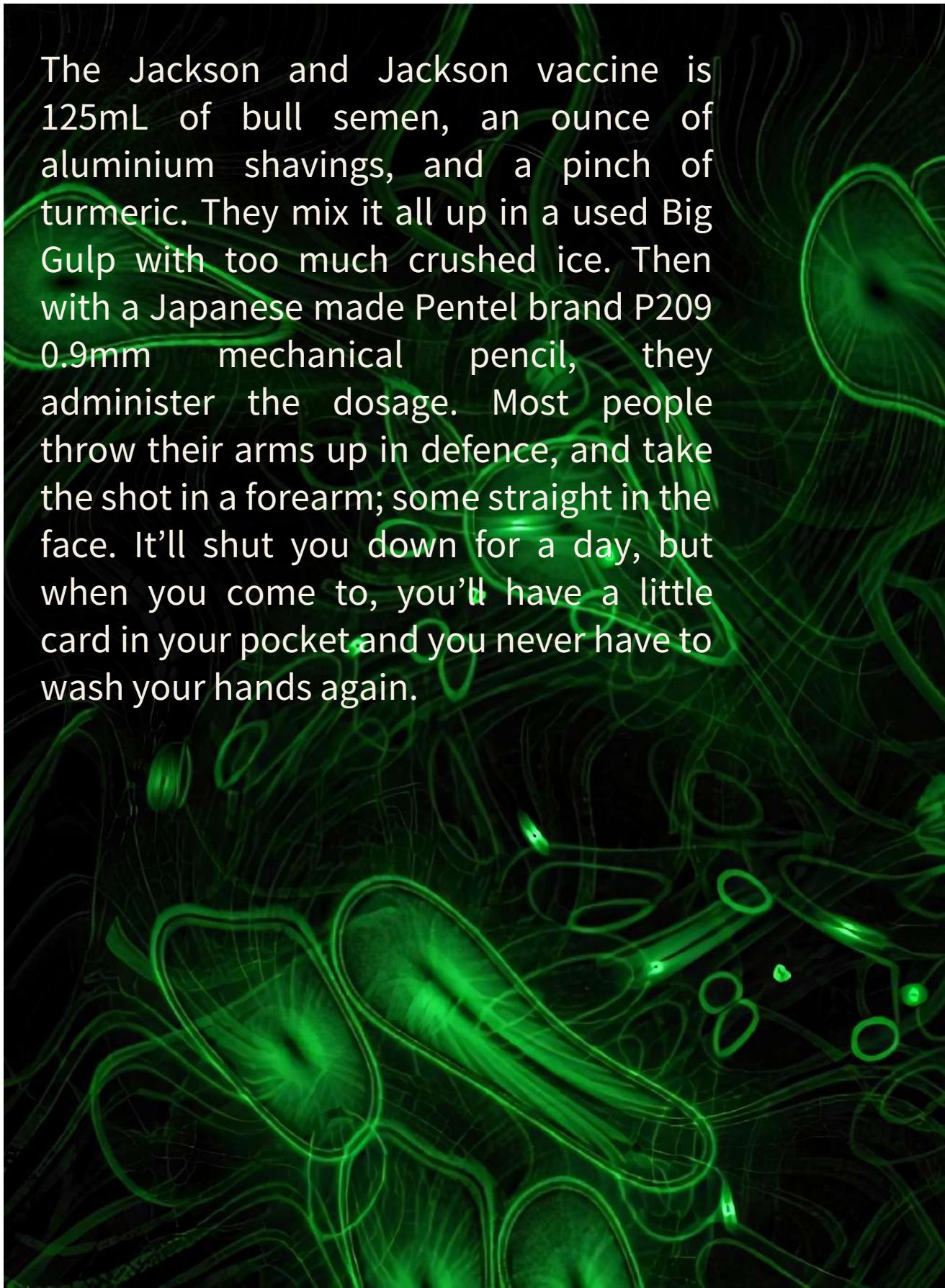
But the only thing that escapes is spittle and saliva, and some blood from my raw gums.

I see my reflection in the mirror. I am ugly. I feel ashamed. I draw the curtains. I go to the bed to sit in shame.

Nauseous. I feel nauseous from shame. Or is it the pain from my stomach? It is still there, throbbing, a reminder of the frailty, the limits of my body.

The door is still closed and the curtains are drawn, no light... stomach pain... I suspect I am going to die. I've suspected this for a while, I think.

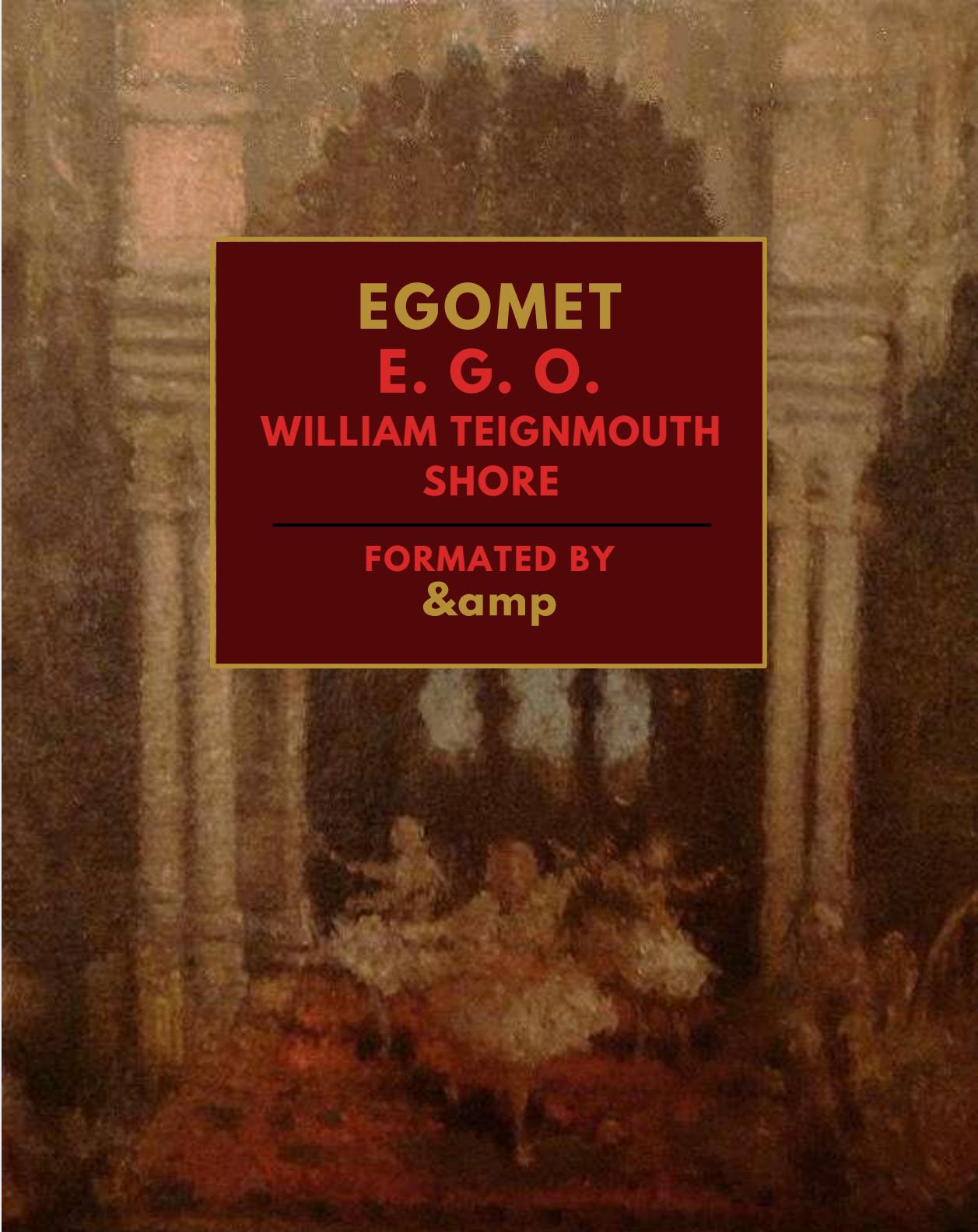
The Jackson and Jackson vaccine is 125mL of bull semen, an ounce of aluminium shavings, and a pinch of turmeric. They mix it all up in a used Big Gulp with too much crushed ice. Then with a Japanese made Pentel brand P209 0.9mm mechanical pencil, they administer the dosage. Most people throw their arms up in defence, and take the shot in a forearm; some straight in the face. It'll shut you down for a day, but when you come to, you'll have a little card in your pocket and you never have to wash your hands again.



And now for something completely different

A barely curated feature from an era no longer in copyright

Courtesy of The Internet Archive



EGOMET
E. G. O.
WILLIAM TEIGNMOUTH
SHORE

FORMATED BY
&

Preface.

I always read the preface to a book, taking it to be, so to speak, a go-between the author and myself; the writer having somewhat to say in his preface which concerns the book but which he cannot express in its pages. There might be a pleasing volume put together consisting of a collection of prefaces; though on second thought I see I am wrong, that such a selection would be but deadly lively, for a good preface should form an intrinsic part of the work to which it is prefixed and therefore should not be torn therefrom; if it be a bad preface the less we see of it the better we shall be pleased.

In a preface the author of a volume, however stately and sedate it may be, feels himself at liberty to talk to his reader casually and in confidence. I love those fine crusted old prefaces, in which the author addressed himself to the "gentle reader," the "kind reader," the "learned reader," the "indulgent reader" and others. Those prefaces which while bespeaking the goodwill of the public not seldom contrived to insinuate that the public would be an ass if it did not perceive the merits of the great work now placed before it. In fact the art of preface writing seems to be in a decline, chiefly by reason of the authors being aware that folk to-day are in too great a hurry—even over their books—to devote any time or attention to a mere preface.

But a preface is useful, as I have said, as a go-between the author and the reader, gentle or otherwise; in it the nervous author can forestall criticism by abusing himself, by acknowledging that he is a miserable sinner and by hinting that the reader could, an he would, have written a far finer book himself. But, chiefly to my mind, a preface is to be used for the explaining the purposes of the work to which it is attached, and it is for this that I have written a preface to these papers. They first saw the light in the pages of "The Academy and Literature," from which by kind permission they are reprinted, and are simply the book-talk of a book lover, that and nothing more. I venture to send them out into the world in collected form, encouraged by the many friendly and kindly letters I have received from fellow book-lovers during the appearance of the papers in the journal above mentioned. I would only say to my readers: be kind to a fellow book-lover who means you no ill.

E. G. O.

E G O M E T

I

IT is pitiable to realise that I devote about one-third of my life to sleep, bearing in mind that there are hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of books that I would read an' I could find the time. Though the doctor bids me not do so, I always read at meal-times, preferring a book to any other table comrade. At breakfast I prop my volume up against the coffee-pot; at luncheon and at dinner I defy the club law that no book shall on any account be taken from the library, always having an open volume beside me. Until quite recent days I adhered to my rule that no unread volume should find a place upon my bookshelves. In one corner of my study there always stood a pile, sometimes small, sometimes large, of books awaiting qualification for room upon a shelf. But a recent small access of means has enabled me to purchase if not all, at any rate most of the books I desire; my spirit is weak and now my rule is honoured in the breach. Alas, as I look along my shelves, many volumes stare out, crying "Come, read me," and so will I, if time permit. Time is a tyrant.

Room for my books, room! Space is a tyrant which you can no more expand than you can time. I do not like those new-fangled bookshelves, which you buy in slices and pile up. They are not genuine, somehow; they are too official; I could never grow fond of them as I do of my old shelves, old-fashioned shelves, which are difficult to adjust. Nor could I ever come to like shelves with glass fronts to keep my books clean. I'm a dirty old man, I confess, as regards my books, and have no house-keeperly hatred of dust. My gilt-edged volumes, which fear no dust, are not nearly so dear to my heart as are those whose gilt-less pages slowly grow grey as time advances; I love to see my old friends growing grey together with myself, the white hairs on my head and the dust upon my books increasing in company.

Does not every lover of books suffer pangs from this limited space of time allotted us for our earthly reading, hoping that elsewhere there may be granted us leisure and and libraries unlimited? Is that a profane thought? I trust not, for it is one in which I daily indulge. I have tried over and over again to set down some course of reading which I may hope to complete if only a few more years be granted me, but always to no purpose. A reference in one book to the pages of another is a temptation to stray from the straight path, which I never can resist. A bookshop window, still more a book-shop shelf, disturbs alike my conscience and my purse. Desultory reading! Indeed I have been a desultory reader ever since the days when at school I appeared in the dim old class-room with my task unperformed. Nor do I repent of my habit, nor would I amend my way even if I could. A desultory reader have I been and such will I remain.

II

I do not know that I have ever cordially welcomed the coming of Christmas; when a child it meant to me welcome presents, too few, and the unwelcome advent of grown-up relations, too many in number. To the "me" of today it brings with it little of merriment and only too great a stirring of memories of past times and past friends. As for Christmas books, they have always to me borne an air of rather forced and unreal joviality; "Here," they say, "let us eat, drink and be merry, no matter how little appetite we may have, for it is the custom so to do. This our fathers have done before us, so let us follow in their footsteps." But do we know quite so much as we think we do about the ways of those who have gone before? I read of Elizabethan London as a picturesque country town, but I know that there was another side to London life and that Shakespeare's city was a sink, a "stench-pot" an insanitary, unsavoury dwelling-place ; the streets ill- paved, ill-lit and ill-frequented. We hear and read too much of the happy side of by- gone life and see too much of the drab dreariness of the life of today.

So with the Christmas books that are thrust beneath my nose by my bookseller, who should know better than to endeavour to tempt me with such pale, ineffectual sweet-meats; I cannot digest them. I read them not, so how can I know their taste? Perhaps I am altogether wrong, I often am; but may I not have my *anti* as others have their *pro* Christmas sentiment And the Christmas books of today are not as those of yesterday; I do not refer so much to the verbal contents as to the pictorial; Christmas literature for young folks should not be illustrated with high art pictures, should not contain anything approaching the "precious." For young folks? Are there now any Christmas stories—Christmassy stories —for the oldsters? I see none, I hope there are none; I can be merry when I will, not when others will me to be so; I can no more pump up smiles over forced fun than I can tears over false sentiment. But perhaps I grow crusty with the passing years, not mellow.

Truly I think I will dine alone on Christmas day in my almost empty club, with the book of my choice beside me. What shall it be? I think maybe a volume of sensible, humorous Miss Austen. I dare not call her Jane, I could not have done so to her face, why should I now? How sensible she is, and what a fund of humour ever ready at her call! I shall dine in good company and shall laugh and be merry with the best of good comrades. Nor shall I envy those who sit around "groaning" boards, who bore and are bored with old jokes and savourless tales. And as for Christmas books, well, I shall buy just one, to send across the seas to a little niece I have never seen, whose childish eyes have not—I hope—been opened to the hollowness of much of the world's merriness. But, there, I—egomet—am an old bachelor, and perhaps had I a wife and children I should see with their eyes and see clearer.

III

MY visits to the reading-room of the British Museum are variable in their frequency and in their length; it may be once in a month that I go in to look up some fact, which too often turns out to be a fancy; it may be that day after day I resort to that busy beehive of a room—to pursue a course of reading? Not at all, merely to browse at my own sweet will on various books on various subjects. It is the finest literary lounge in the world, save that the chairs might be more comfortable, the atmosphere less turbid, and that a fire is lacking. To sit beside a fire is half the art of reading, any way in the winter.

What then do I read there and why do I not always browse by my own fireside or at the club ? I ask myself these questions, without the slightest intention of attempting the impossible task of answering them, except in so far as to say that I desert my usual haunts and I read what I like simply because I choose so to do. Why make my life dreary and dull by determining to read such-and-such subjects or such-and-such works? I do not earn my living by my learning—I live to read, not read to live. Life is given us for enjoyment, so I read what I believe I will enjoy. If I take up a work, which I am told by everyone I should read, and find it not to my taste, I lay it down. Great names and great books do not appeal to me: I read — what I choose to read. Why not?

As for the frequenters of the Reading-room, what curious folk many of them are. I am often tempted to tap this or that one on the shoulder, asking, in a discreet whisper, "Why do you read that book? Is it for pleasure or for livelihood?" And I sometimes long to demand the name and nature of the woman on my right or the man upon my left. Why do the gentler sex burden themselves with what, I understand, are called reticules, and what are the contents of those mystery bags ? One old lady, I have been told, bears a famous name, lives in a garret and makes the reading-room her living-place, poor soul. Another laboriously copies the coloured prints from ancient tomes. Another sleeps all day, at any rate is always asleep when I notice her. Does she spend her nights poring over books and burning the midnight candle? Others are young, fresh, pretty, rays of sunshine in the dusky room.

The men are as varied and as provocative of curiosity: blacks and pale-faces, young and old, smart and snuffy, casuals and regulars. I sometimes long for the magician's wand that would lay bare to me the lives of those who read around me, for how strange a Biographical Dictionary it would obtain me material. Perhaps some day a writer of genius—genius means insight—will give to the world a Biographical Dictionary of the Unknown; how far more illuminating it would be than any of the volumes on the shelves containing "Biographical." Autobiography fascinates: biography too often misleads.

Odd volumes of ancient periodicals afford me much enjoyment; and they make me sad, too. What millions of words, written and once read, now lying dead; good matter much of it, full of quaint conceits, exploded beliefs, stories of dead people and dead places. If I were ever condemned to live alone beyond the pale, and had choice given of only a few books, I verily believe I would select a set of old volumes of a Magazine, the Gentleman's probably. Lived I to be a hundred I should not exhaust their treasures. Or would the Quarterly or the Edinburgh or Blackwood's suit me better? The case can never arise, so I will not worry to determine. As for the usual selections under such fancy circumstances—the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, Dante, and other "best books"—away with them!

I am going up to the Reading Room today, utterly without purpose; I shall take down a volume or two from the open shelves; I shall fill up, perhaps, a slip or two with the names of books at which, when received, I may not look; I shall roam about, with careful footfall and staid demeanour, peering at those who read, conjecturing, wondering; I shall lunch off a shilling *dejeuner* at a dirty little foreign restaurant, and in the misty evening shall saunter to the club, filled with contentment, even though I may have read not one line. There is art and pleasure in pretending to read, just as some folk find the same in pretending to be virtuous.

IV

I read in bed—in fact there are certain books which I do not care to peruse elsewhere. Time and again, when sleep-hour has struck, have I scanned my shelves in doubt as to what volume I should carry to my bedroom. Usually I have come back to the same select few. Thackeray has named "Montaigne's Essays" and "Howell's Letters" as companionable bed-books; as to the latter I agree, but the former has always been a difficulty to me: I realise that he is charming, but for me he has no charm. Which then are my bed-books?

Thackeray himself holds an honoured place. "The Roundabout Papers" were born for bed-reading; so were "The Four Georges," so too his "Letters"; no one knows how to chat so well as he did, and often has he talked me to sleep. For I read until my eyes will no longer keep open, until I no longer understand my author, until the words run one into the other; then, close the volume and extinguish the candle; no gas or electric glare for me. Lamb is another perfect bed-fellow; Coleridge's "Table Talk," Cowley's "Essays" and Bacon's, Shakespeare, Keats, FitzGerald's "Letters" and Hawthorne's; all these. Many novels too have I read in bed—Goldsmith, Fielding, Miss Austen, Thackeray, Dickens, Peacock, Hawthorne, Trollope, Marryat, Borrow, Carleton, Charlotte Bronte, Conrad, Morrison and many another. Old plays too. Above all, biographies and autobiographies, the latter more particularly, new and not new.

I know no line of reason which I apply to my bed-reading, which is ruled by reason just as much as is the world—and no more. I read, no matter how late be the hour at which I go to rest. On the other hand, often have I betaken me to bed, preferring to read there to doing so in my arm-chair. In the winter of all the seasons is bed-reading commendable. How cosy a warm bed, a soft pillow, a glowing fire, my candle and my book. Let no man say that he has exhausted the pleasures of life who has not read in bed on a frosty winter night. As to women—I do not fancy bed-books appeal to them, at least, so I judge from the replies of the few to whom I have ventured to speak on the subject: women are seldom literary browsers. Once even I read right through the night, the book "The Virginians." The early dawn—it was summer—knocked at my window and bade me extinguish my little light, which I did, read on, rose at my accustomed hour, and none the worse. Probably, none the better? Certainly I had done well; had I slept I might have dreamt, of what who can tell? Better a good book in the hand than a bad dream in the brain.

It is ten o'clock! To bed! Here is my candle, here is—no, I have yet to choose my book. Which shall it be? Shelley's "Letters," no; de Quincey, no; Carlyle, no; Miss Edgeworth, NO; ah, "Lavengro," yes! Good night. But—not good night to my book; I will journey for an hour or so yet with lusty George along English lanes, or across Irish bogs, or up Edinburgh crags, or over Welsh hills, and then—good night for him and me.

V

BEFORE now I have stayed for Christmastide with an old parson in his Essex parsonage. Parson, how far better sounding a word than clergyman. He is a quaint soul, a widower, a lover of books and learning, an erudite gardener, a hard-working pastor, a "painful" preacher, to use an old-time word in the of-time fashion. His home at Christmas exactly fits my taste; no outrageous jollity, no forced merriment; only a wee turkey and a wee pudding, upon which his masterful housekeeper insists; a bottle of good wine; a seemly show of holly and mistletoe boughs.

It has often been a matter of wonderment to me how my friend contrives to keep his brain from rust, living as he does in a mental Sahara. The nearest gentlefolk are six miles distant and unsympathetic; the neighbouring farmers are no company for him. His only companions are his books and most of these are more curious than rare. Books of gardencraft are one of his joys, ancient volumes many of them, with plates of grotesque clipped hedges, of fantastic landscapes, of designs for sun-dials and fountains. Literary garden-books are also his delight, and he knows by heart Francis Bacon's prose poem on gardens. Then, too, he has a pretty turn for Latin verse; I do believe he only appreciates British poets as providing raw material for hexameters and pentameters, which he composes and shows to no one save myself, who of Latin am no critic.

Of novels he reads only those by Miss Austen and Thackeray, who, he always avers, should have lived contemporaneous and have mated. He loves their humour, but most of all he loves Thackeray's sermons, of which that writer preaches a many both in his stories and his essays. "Esmond" and "The Virginians" are his chiefest delights, his prime favourites; he cannot understand that anyone should wish otherwise than that Esmond should marry his dear lady, whom he declares to be the sweetest woman in all fiction, with the possible exception of Fielding's Amelia. Beatrix he does not favour until she becomes old and wicked, when she is, he says, so witty that almost she persuades him that good women are insipid. But he does not expect always to be taken literally.

I have visited him in winter and in summer, bringing him, he tells me, all that he desires to have of London. Christmas in his snug parsonage affects me; he is sincerely, simply pious; we tramp out early in the misty morning air to church on Christmas day, and again later, the school children in the choir singing the old-world carols and the parson preaching an old-world sermon. Then, back along the country road to the mid-day meal in the cheery parlour, looking out upon the wintry garden; a blazing fire upon the hearth, a snowy cloth, old-fashioned silver and glass, the turkey and the pudding and the wine; afterward old-fashioned high chairs by the fireside and a cigar. Then chat, recollections of school and Oxford; perchance a nap. Could Christmastide be better spent?

VI

WHETHER or not the days of my youth were spent in vain reading I sometimes try to decide. I have little Latin and less Greek, am but a poor hand at French and of German have I none. Therefore is my reading confined to books written in the English tongue and does not that suffice for one little life? Had I endeavoured to become a Greek or Latin scholar I must needs have neglected the tongue of the land of my birth. Of the Latins and the Greeks I know sufficient for enjoyment, having quite a nodding acquaintance with Homer, Euripides, Plato, Herodotus, Aristotle, Ovid, Tacitus, Caesar—and one or two others. Of the literatures of France and Germany I have read much in translations and about them a deal in critical histories. What then have I lost and gained by this my ignorance?

I have lost a knowledge and appreciation of the styles of various famous men of letters of the old days and of the present; but then my little knowledge has enabled me to understand their matter. As for those who own style only, I care not for them—what worth is a cloak without a body? I have gained in this that I have read more than most men in the literature of my own country. Humble as is my library, if so big a name is not too pompous for so small a collection of books, there are many volumes now on my shelves that I have not yet read and I sometimes ask myself if ever I shall have time so to do. Yes, I think that on the whole I may rest content with my reading being limited to one tongue and that tongue the noblest of them all. In what branch of literature can I not read of the best and highest? Poetry, fiction, history, theology, drama, philosophy, letters, criticism, biography, are there not of the best of all these in the English speech? And is not life only too short to read in this one tongue all that one would read, or even half or a quarter? Do others feel that sense of despair that enters me so often as I stand in a great library, and, looking around, realise how much there is that I would and should read if I had the years to do so?

Was it right that I should have been left as a boy to read those books I delighted in rather than those which in the general opinion would have been most profitable to me? Of course the usual run of children's books were put in my way, Hans Andersen, "Robinson Crusoe," "The Pilgrim's Progress," "Gulliver," and so forth, firm friends still all of them. What more I wanted I chose out for myself: making acquaintance as the years went by with Reade, Thackeray, Byron, Shakespeare, Addison, Pope, many others, most of them still friends or acquaintances. At school my teachers worked their hardest to make me dislike Gray, Macaulay, Shakespeare, Coleridge, and some others, but luckily I loved them for themselves, and no amount of lesson-work could render them distasteful. For good or ill I sought out my friends for myself, have kept and loved them, and have gained good from them. Am I singular in all this? I doubt if any one of us all is singular in anything; we are all so dismally similar. Similar in our good ways and our bad ways.

60-13

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B

Salary Schedule
Fiscal Year 1961-62

Administration

██████████	15,000.00
██████████	8,867.00
Mr. X ████████	14,400.00
Miss X ████████	5,200.00
	5,000.00

Research

██████████	14,400.00
Sr. Psychologist $\frac{1}{2}$ year	7,200.00
Jr. Psychologist	9,000.00
Secretary	4,680.00

Editorial

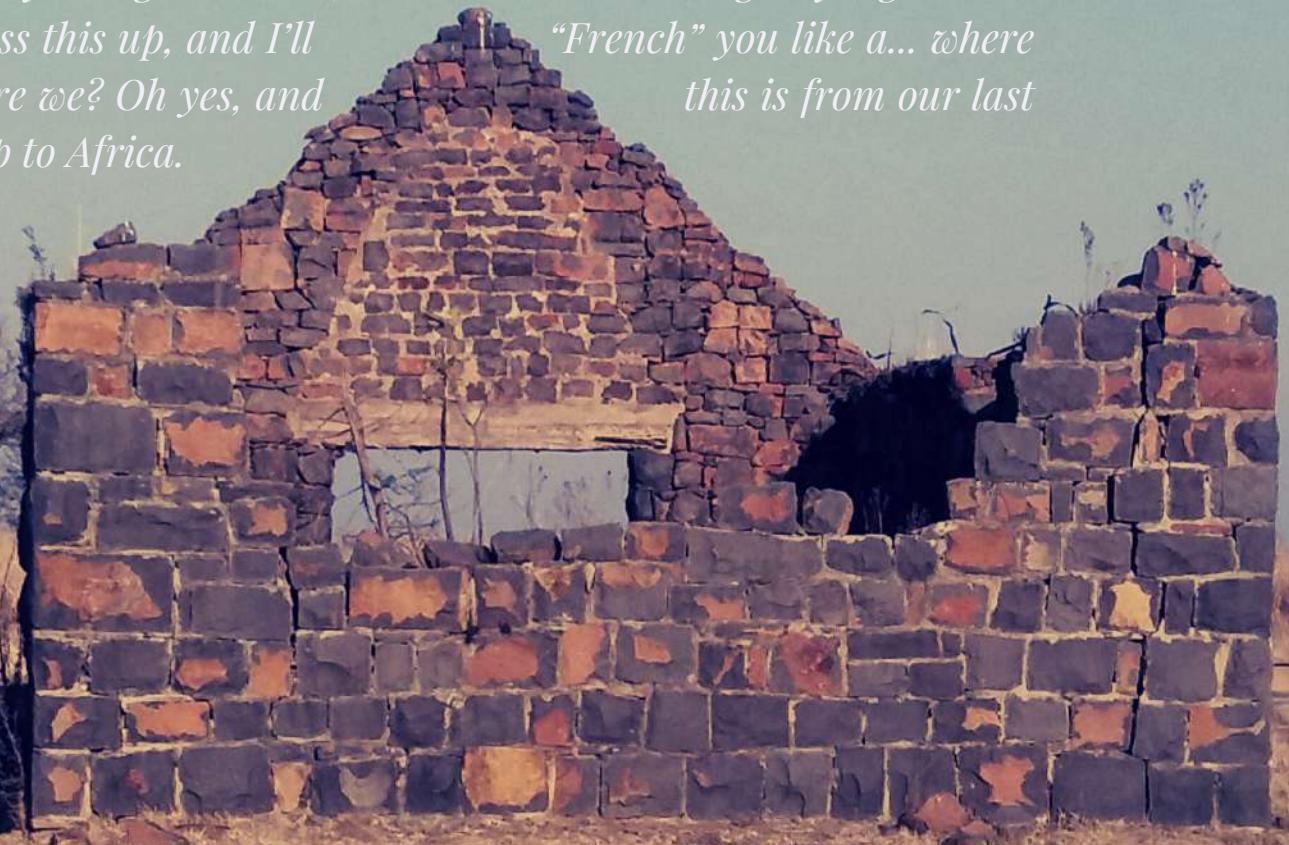
██████████	13,000.00
Assistant ████████	10,000.00
	4,680.00

He does it for ████████

Your name here!



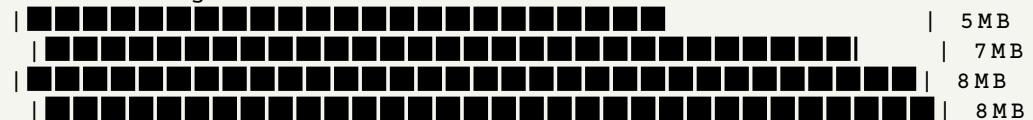
Lick, fold, send out this envelope. It's important. Be here in two hours, keep it challenger deep. Don't mind the Rowing Team. Drain the pipes if you must. Rather it be, if, well... you left. Shipment and I are fine. We're having guests for dinner. Tough if any of them were to ask what the six feet tall package in my living room was, I'd resort to emergency digression. Mess this up, and I'll "French" you like a... where were we? Oh yes, and this is from our last trip to Africa.



>A Journey Through Cyberspace and in
to Your Lap



Collecting boards.4channel.org/lit/
Downloading "AJTCAITYL.txt"



Optical disks whirl, hard drives search and spin, various fans of different speeds and sizes do their best to prevent complete meltdown. It doesn't matter, he's coming. All his life, or at least the past 3 months of it, nothing has meant much but this, and at last he nears a culmination. Eccentric synth music gallops like a free horse as Rich Hartman presses the final power button. Ready to go. Various company stickers and badges litter the wirey room and the surface of antique computer cases, each crammed with bits and bobs that barely work, but together forming a sort of mega-cyber-choir all singing the same scream. Towels line the doorway and windows, like a suicide before you could do it in various cooler ways. A half eaten meal, cobbled together by someone foreign to the idea of food sits in a bowl on the floor, green peppers, raw. The installation of Wine completes just as the computers reach their breaking point, the fans try to breathe, but only moments are given in between births of code. He knows it's going to be a complicated voyage, things could go wrong, dependencies, dependencies of dependencies, dependencies of you get the point.

Rich smacks the skeleton case of a failing computer, somehow restarting the dying fan into a frenzy of worse but functioning noises. It has to go perfect, there are no second first impressions, only second impressions. A bird cage nearby rattles and squawks adding to the commotion and noise pollution. The smell of humidifying bird poop in a rapidly warming room permeates, but is easily ignored by Rich, used to and quite comfortable around such odors. His white baseball cap sits backwards, perfectly complementing, he thinks, the baggy cargo shorts and graphic tee he has on of his favorite penguin. A computer dies, but not for long, not being allowed to experience the coolness, the stillness that exists in not existing. Knocks on the cheap wooden door to his room come with decreasing patience, no answer. Eyes, or rather, fractions of eyes peek through cracks and small holes he had previously made in the door, thrown keyboards, kicks, and sometimes headbutts having carved them there.

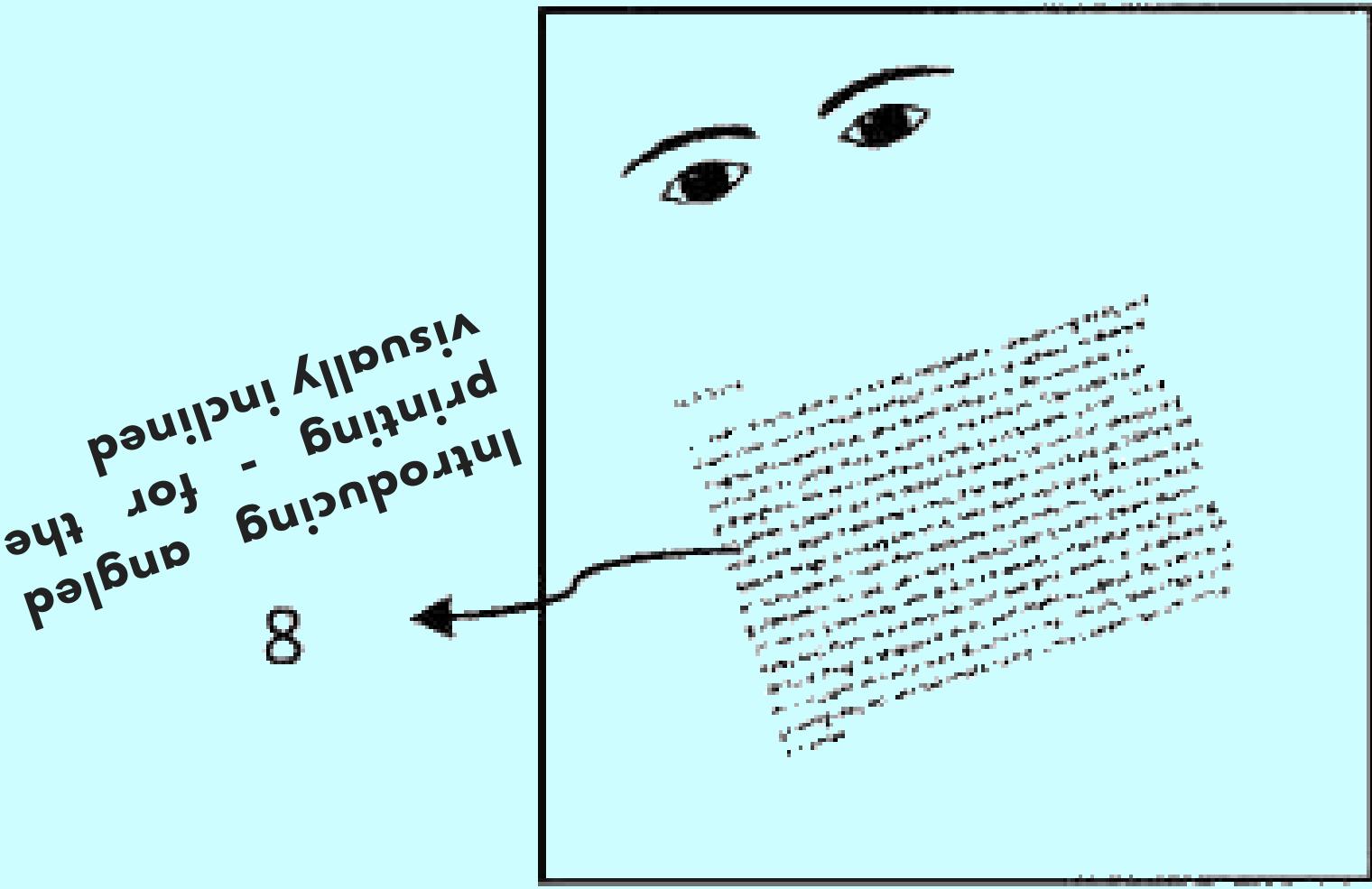
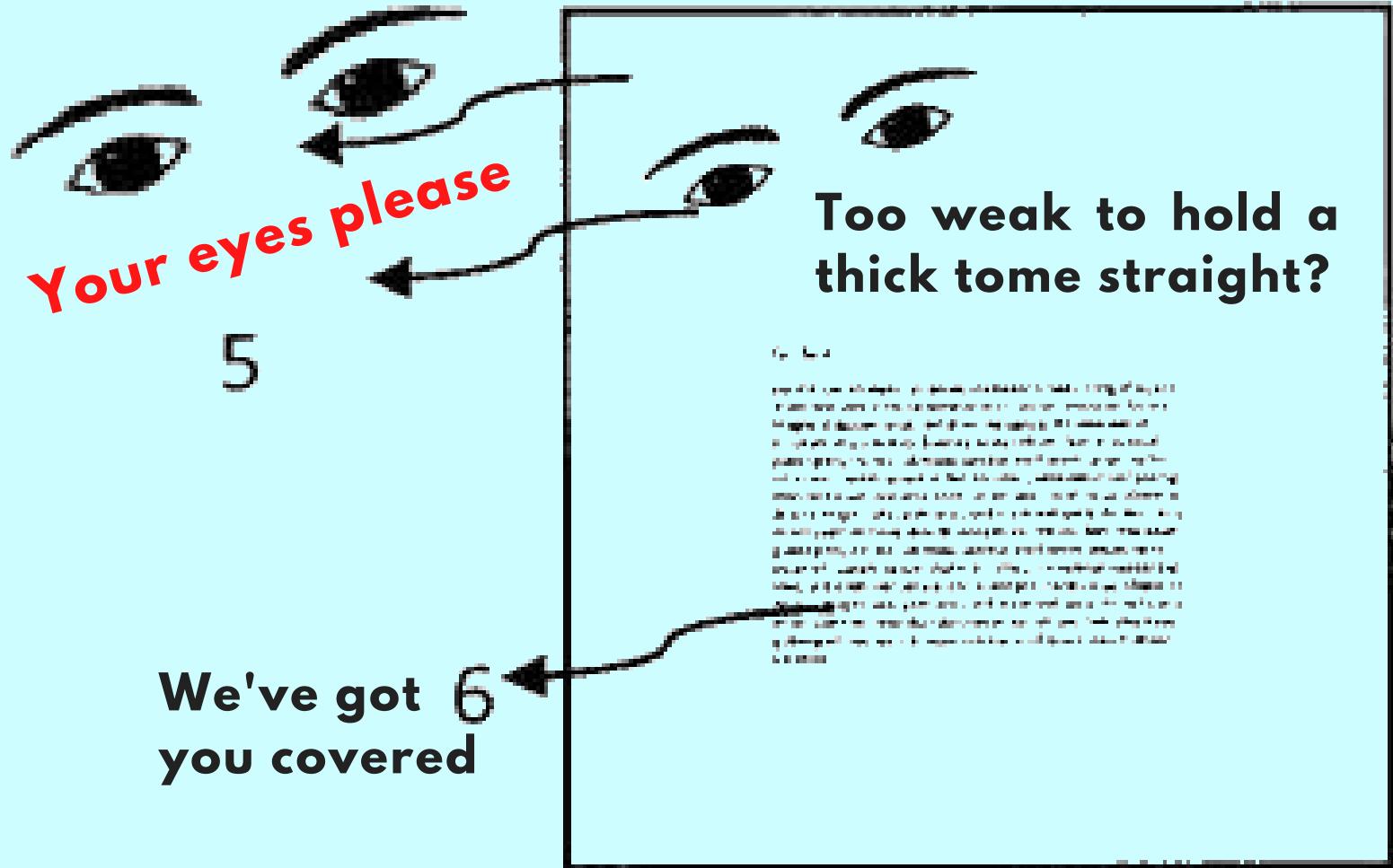
It's installed now, no going back, no crying, please, lets not cry, he thinks to himself. The massive amalgamation of energy in the room, powering computers, powering Walmart fans, powering a server stack used for nothing but Minecraft, all of this now radiates a desert-like mirage of heat. Rich sits on the floor rocking next to his 4:3 screens, also on the floor, now sputtering to display a video call software, with compromises clearly being made as to which one. He types in a username and waits, rocking, he waits until his Casio watches (two on each arm) and Lenovo thinkpads (librebooted of course) all agree that the time is exactly 3:00 am EST. "California girls..." He sighs to himself as he clicks the call button with his cursor shaped like a Minecraft sword. A face pops up. A flame pops up on one of the auxiliary computers running what looks like generic brand Microsoft Word with various conversation topics typed out in bullet points. "Hi Sarah!" He practically yells to the various mics, one of which probably works and is probably hooked up correctly. The receiving end of his message hears him clearly enough, along with what sounds like someone constantly





blowing onto the mic, a bird squawking, and loud motherly concern. "So cool to see your face!" He says with both eyebrows glued to the top of his head, grinning. The speakers don't work but it doesn't matter, he's gotten this far, and really he doesn't even need to hear what she has to say.

Dollar store power strips, plugged in to dollar store power strips, all without surge protectors, quietly melt as Rich continues, "Soooooo, anyway, do you want to play League of Legends like usual, you are so cute by the way ahaha." Bird noises change from begging for food and attention to agony. The smell is kind of bad in here, Rich thinks. The knocks on the door have stopped. He drags her face over, through various monitors and laptops, twelve in all, to a large TV dangling overhead looking down on him, a CRT now dripping in the heat. "So glad you're not a thirty year old dude." He says playfully, intelligently, humorously, as the floor beneath him collapses into a smoldering pit of burning battery acid and silicone. Tarred and feathered with melted plastic and bits of jagged steel he can only think to himself how great it would be to get a pentakill while being held in her arms.



They say you're the
average of your five
closest friends...



...but what if you don't
have any friends?

A Letter to the Homeowner Who's Dog Bit Me on the Back of the Leg (non-fiction as fiction)

Monday 30th April

To whom it may concern,

This afternoon as I was walking down your semi-rural stretch of road your dogs were running around outside your gate. It seemed as if you were doing some manoeuvre where one car was pulling in and the other was pulling out. In the meantime your smaller yellow dog ran up to me and started barking viciously. It continued to bark at me as I walked some 100 yards and right before your home as I thought it might turn in, it jumped behind me and bit me on the calf. Not only did it pierce my skin, the dog's teeth ripped my favorite pair of pants. I am not hobbled and have treated the wounds topically though I hope your animal has had all its shots. One would hate to get animal control involved and have the dog destroyed.

As small compensation I am asking for 40 dollars to help in the purchase of a new set of pants and small costs in bandages and antiseptic etc. Yes, perhaps it is true that the pants were a little threadbare. That there was a small hole starting to form in the crotch and that I'd need a new pair soon anyway (after wearing this pair daily for some years). And perhaps it is true that if I'd been wearing a new sturdy pair of jeans the dog's bite might have been reduced to mere bruising ... but I have this friend who went to Iraq. He ran humanitarian detail and one day a new recruit in the armored vehicle behind him filled up a plastic bottle with his urine. He cracked said bottle at a child on a route they ran regularly. In the distance my friend saw this child's father cross his arms and lean into the shadows. A week later as they went through this same small village the truck that this young man was in was blown up. My friend picked up body parts from this explosion shaking his head. He said to himself, "I told you so."

Do not be concerned. I don't bring this incident up as a threat - though certainly being bit by a dog is a worse kind of bodily harm than being covered with urine (it's the insult, in that case, which connects the red wires so to speak. In the roman empire they used to launder clothes with urine). I bring this up to make my 40 dollars sound all the more reasonable. As a matter of fairness but also the gesture. I walk this road frequently and am now concerned about being bit. Yes, perhaps it is not a very popular road to walk down - but I do on occasion see others. It is connected to the end of a walking trail after all. I had a brief encounter with your older household member as she struggled to get out of her car and looked very surprised that her dogs had the capacity to bite. Perhaps when she first moved into this home many years ago it was a farm. And I understand that there does seem to be some mobility issues involved in the opening and closing of this gate and that animals can and do surprise with amygdalatic responses outside of their control.

I've always liked dogs and I don't want to stop. Yet as I grow older I can't help but see these creatures as projections. Extensions of ourselves. How else could one justify having a meat consuming animal who does little more than fill the holes in our souls that require some version of unconditional love. What I mean to say is that I don't think you have ground to stand on if you are to suggest that your dog's actions are not your actions and that you should thusly not be held responsible.

But I started writing all of this in my head before I got home. A development occurred on the walk back. Your dog's bite gave me a reason to speak to this tenacious jogger I see sometimes. One cloudy afternoon I saw her run past me, head first into a very cold rain. Ever since she's been a curiosity. Like me she often wears the same outfit. Hers makes her look like the foreman in charge of a highly competent group of middle-school water department employees. They can scramble through the pipes and make repairs. Sorry, poetic license. But you too will be surprised at her preparedness. As I told her about the bite she barely broke stride. She reached up to one of the straps over her shoulder and removed a heavy-duty can of mace from what no one would assume a pocket. She held it straight up in the air by its squeeze-style tactical handle and proclaimed loudly, "Don't worry, I will revenge you!"

So I guess I'm also telling you to watch out if you don't want to be washing mace out of your dog's face at some point in the future. I must admit, that moment rid me of most of my indignation. The heroic gesture made me think about all those humans who have followed other humans into battle on the wings of feeling. It made me want to write or read a story about Joan of Arc.

Yes in that moment and the thoughts that came after I decided you should keep your money and that I should not mail this letter. After all wasn't it Ghandi who suggested that one gets recompense in the soul by accepting injustice graciously and engaging with some notion of the passive love of the universe? Sometimes I try to buy that feeling with beer but it is never as good as today. Life is just life and other people's conception of life doesn't change that. What I mean by that is my injury had no decision in the universe. Your impact on my heart has nothing to do with my fate. Yes perhaps fate is not real and we all pass on solely through the prism of our experience - but I suppose if there's a way of understanding how that's none of your dog's business it's none of mine either.

All the best,
your anonymous neighbour

Anonymous Wed Mar 31 20:24:25 2021 No.17914257

Quoted by: >>17914522 >>17914913

[>>17914062](#)

It's pretty dangerous for me to be telling you this, but I will: & is actually run out of a martial arts dojo in Chicago and is part of a well-funded and long term plan to recruit NEETs into their organization. I should know. I was one of the original founders of the Dojo. They called me Master Sensai-san. I knew F. Gardner when he was a young white belt. I go on vacation for a couple of weeks and suddenly he's wearing three green belts and has another one wrapped around his forehead. "How'd you get those, F?" I asked. "I bought 'em from Master-san Sensai," he said. My co-founder and sometimes bitter adversary. He was just selling these kids belts for \$250 a pop, and F. was loaded. The more I looked, the more I saw it. Kids using tied together black belts for nunchucks. Our students stealing cars and threatening people with anime power moves of the highest and most forbidden levels. The parents using the whole thing to get them into better colleges. Where had this come from? The answer was &. Master-san Sensai had decided there could be only one master. And Gardner was his chosen student. Gardner was loaded, and he had a plan. Bribe underground literary magazines to turn himself into a meme and then convince NEETs to spend their unemployment checks on colored belts. You think neon is a coincidence? You think it's some just some aesthetic choice? You're being conditioned. More colors, more belts. More belts, more anime battle threats to unsuspecting Boomers. And what happens in the end? The great wealth transfer. You think some 90 year old can resist a threat from a neon pink belt - the ultimate belt? They'll hand their four vacation houses over, and not to their kids. Never to their kids. This thing needs to get blown wide open. Master-san Sensai is raking in the bank from the people submitting poems, and he's looking around for mutagenic chemicals. There's only one way this ends, and it's not pretty.

A leather bound book of Lore

These are the words which were written in Michelle's black book:

I am always hungry, so I bite my fingers

I hate being around people, my desire for desolation lingers

I am always hungry, so I chew off some skin

In shadows and in deep forests, empty places no one has been

I am always hungry, so I bite the phalange

I smell my own body rotting, my bone and skin feel so strange

I am always hungry, so my eyes look very black

I eat and eat yet I hunger, cities harm me I must go back

I am always hungry, so I hunt for a taste

I see a human roaming here, i did perform the great disgrace

I am always hungry, so I am never full

Heart, Tongue, brain, entrails, eyes, fingers, though I have had many mouthfuls

I am always hungry, so my body is grey

Birch, white ash, owls, rocks, black void, only they can hear what I say

I am always hungry, so I eat my own lips

I am hunger, hunger, hunger, from my hunger I am eclipsed

I am always hungry, so i will always go

There is nothing left I am gone, for I have become wendigo

I am always hungry, hungry hungry hungry

Hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry

hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry hungry

My dearest Michelle always had an obsession with all things esoteric and had been much engrossed in the reading of these black-leather books that she would return with from her travels, some from France, others from Arabia, others from parts of the Americas, many of them were in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, while she was quite the polyglot, As you know I was never a Latinist, I did gain a kind of satisfaction when I could see a book of hers in English, though they had honestly often produced a sickening feeling in my stomach, just as this text just had, Michelle always offered to instruct me in occult matters, though she was earnest in her desire to instruct me I never truly felt I had the stomach to learn of such things I always rather hungered for a good meal for my belly rather than something which would feed my mind, funny the one book of hers I was able to read was so obsessed with hunger. In any case though our interests were so different there was an oriental charm about her, mysterious and slender, tender and delicious. She was impossible not to love.

I grudged the time we spent apart, and throughout the spring I would have been all day at her side, talking of foolishness as lovers often do. But often she would steal away and hide, herself amongst dead volumes. The time we spent away making her sight more and more tender, the Aroma of her presence fermenting into an even richer quality.

Last-night I crossed the Roods, and entered the garden, to find her sitting under a yew-tree. Her face was haggard and her eyes sunken: for the time it seemed as if many years had passed over her head, but somehow the change had only enriched her beauty. And I marvelled greatly, but ere I could speak I saw her hiding an idol of a bird in bronze, whose plumage was brightest gold, but the forehead of it was stained with what looked like the juice of berries and the red of blood; and looking on her uncovered bosom I saw wounds as if the pecks of some bird, she had surely brazed and beaten herself in the name of this foolish idol. I cried aloud, and spoke to her thus “love, I hunger and only you may grant me my full, shall you feed another yourself and leave me to starve? “ Then Michelle drew long breaths, and her youth came back in some measure, gently grasping my neck But frowning, and said, “What is it, beloved? Why have you awakened me? I dreamed that I fed the Dragon of the Hesperidean Garden.” Then she turned her gazed towards the blood anointed idol.

“Thou hast chosen a filthy mammet,” I said. “Tell me how you have come upon it”

She rose without reply, and kissed the the gaudy jewel encrusted wings of the idol, Then, lifting up a great tome that had lain at her feet, she turned towards the house. But ere she had reached the end of the maze she stopped, and smiled with strange subtlety. “How camest thou hither, O devourer? Thou horrid wendigo who hast taken my beloved and wrapt him about yourself as a garment” she cried. ‘Even when the Dragon slept, and the fruit hung naked to my touch, The gates and city walls still have fallen” thus she began to moisten her delicate cheek with tears. Perplexed, I followed her until we came to the house; and walking towards us we saw her, striding past the garden of herbs, a foul crone, brown and puckered as a rotten costard. At sight of Her, Michelle went prostrate, crying “Save me, mistress!” To which the old hag looked upon me and said “there is not much time, but we may still yet bring his gullet to satisfaction.”

Her underlings then came forth, dressed in dark garments and bound me with cords, and haled me first to a place prior to entering the old woods, whereof I was then blind folded.

Then, the old crone, entreated Michelle to prick my arm. “Take from him a small portion of blood, mix it with the bile of henbane and the ichor drawn from dragon’s blood, from this form the circle, then in the four quarters worship the bird, the beast, the bull and the dark man.”

My heart was full of terror and anguish.

“Dearest Michelle” I prayed, ‘for the sake of our passion, let me command, harm me not with the knife”

But then I felt my arm being pierced and quickly covered. After hearing a host of chanting, my eyes were given freedom and i saw myself sat in the center of a red circle, of which was made ornate by the design of various triangles, foreign names and a kind of arabesque. Suddenly my stomach began to ache with such a fury that I screamed and shouted to be let go, as I felt, somehow, I had been corrupted, poisoned by this crone.

A chuckle of disdain leaped from the hag's ragged lips. "You'll not be eating anything for three days, relax yourself."

Even my tender Michelle sat there with no indication she would help me. The beldam tottered away, her bemired petticoats clapping her legs; and I bade them let me go free and stop this devildom being enacted upon me.

Before my Michelle left, she lit a fire near the circle so that I may remain warm, her delectable fingers nearly being scorched as she stoked it and threw what appeared to be various herbs into it.

With this she left the forest, finding that Michelle had retired for the night, I sat by the fire, waiting for the time to pass. In the flame I saw a vision, my dearest Michelle and she carried with her that same black book, but hidden in it was a spider, and the spider kept from the book and crawled upon me, entering my brain and weaving its web, slowly eating at my flesh, then the image changed and I saw a snake with the head of another serpent within its jaws, finally my soul repeated over and over the words "hunger" as the hunger and flame were the only things which I had with me.

Fear rose within me, I knew this place would be my grave, as I stared away from the flame, I saw The moon laying as if against a brazen curtain; little snail-like clouds were crawling underneath, and the horns of them pricked her face. I screamed a scream such as the child who hungers alone but has lost parent, I screamed then in my cry of hunger.

Before my eyes I found strings of grey-golden light as if shimmering from just beyond the furthest trees, Surely a figure moved there? Then the hunger came upon me and I was filled with the grey-gold light.

I awoke, Quaking with dread, bloodied, beaten and the hair of my flesh stood upright. I was no longer bound nor by the flame and my hunger had been exhausted for now, I was still within the forest but i was close enough now to see the house where my Michelle would be, I ran then to find her and take her away from all of this and away from that accursed crone. As I entered, it was clear someone had broken into the house, I ran to her library and she wasn't there, I searched among the garden, i finally looked for her under the yew tree, there she laid, grasping at her avian idol, hands and thighs devoured, face torn to shreds, I felt neither sadness nor pain nor hurt, there was only a single word which cried out from my soul. "Hunger"

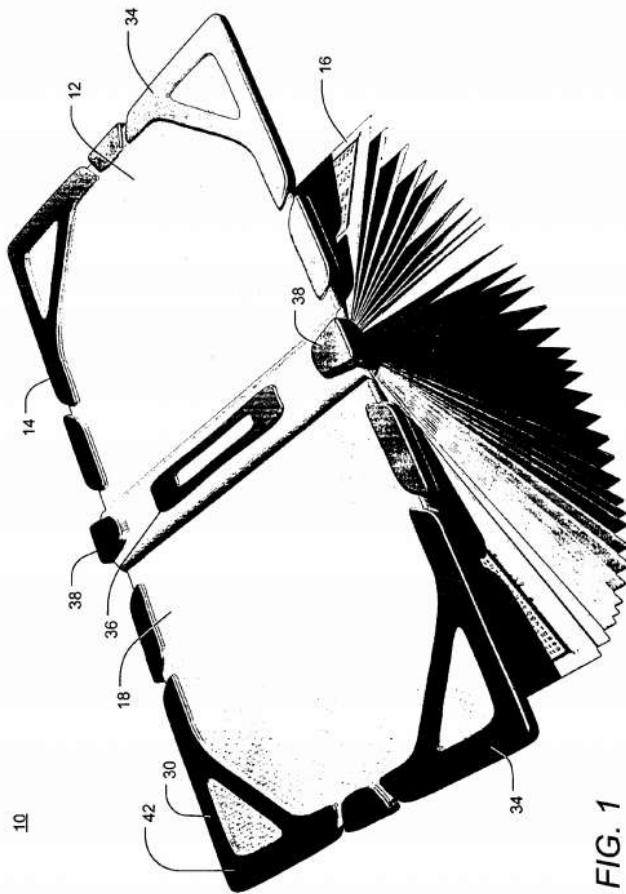


FIG. 1

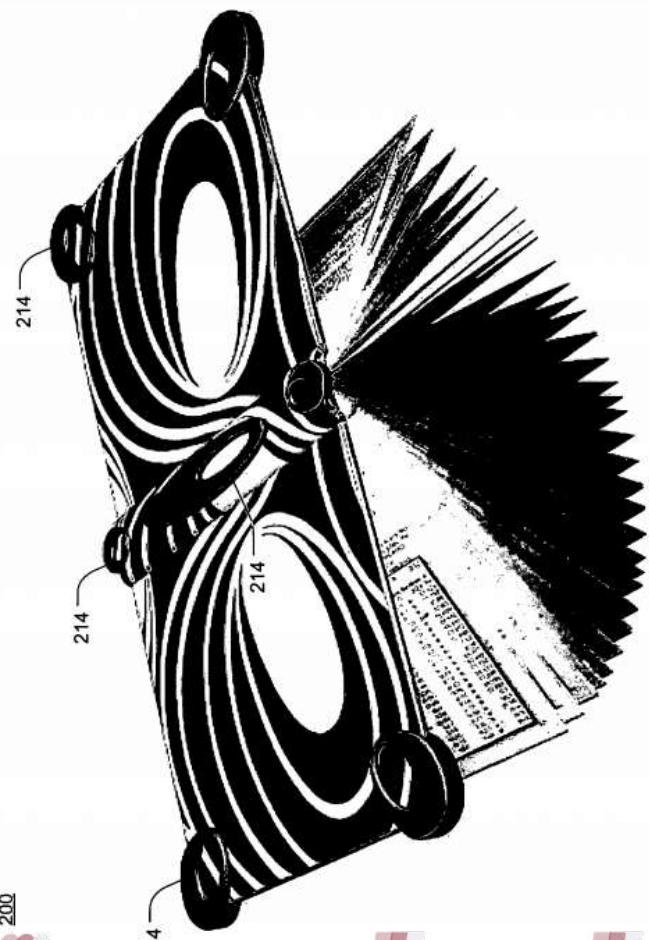


FIG. 10

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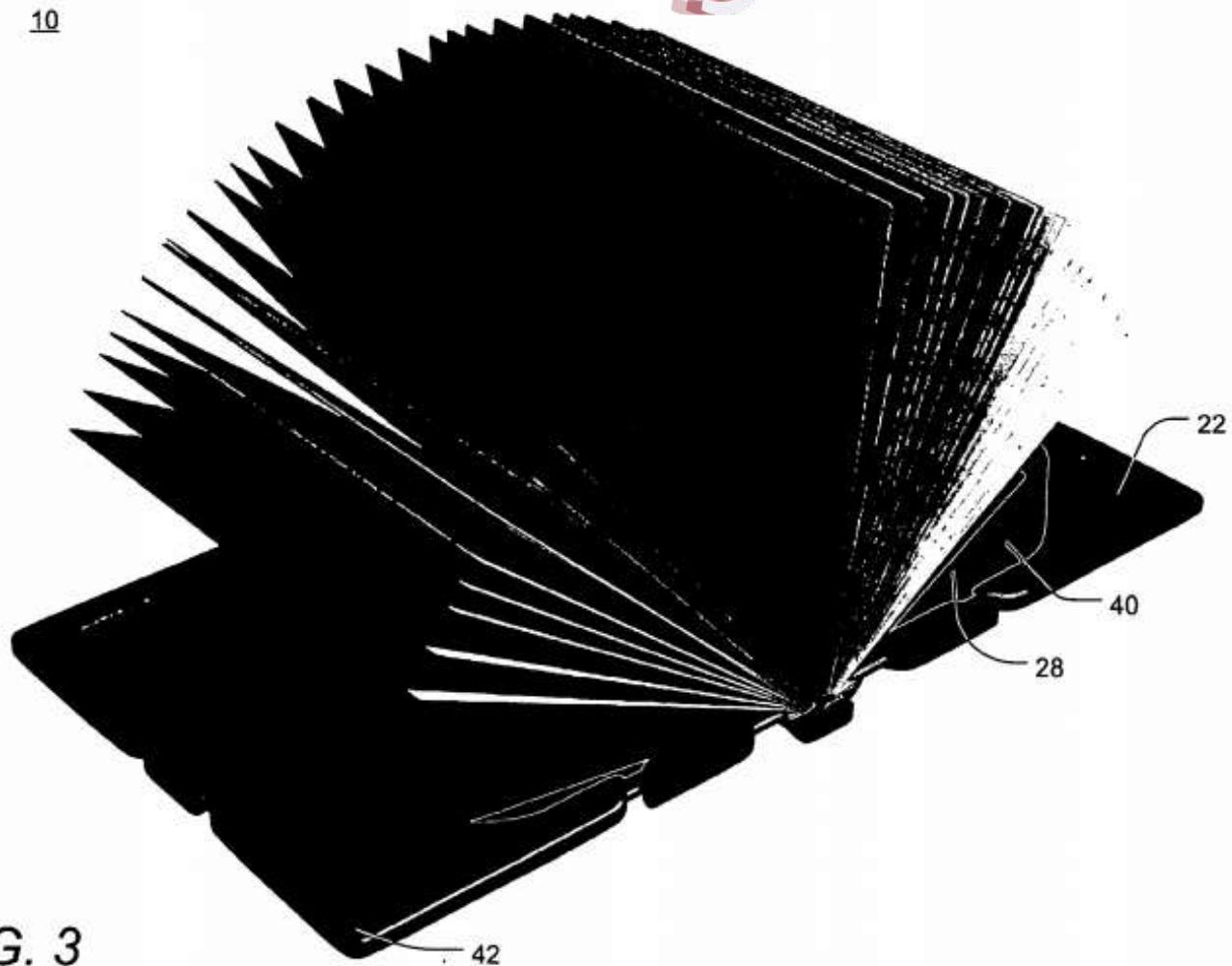


FIG. 3

42

A Deal Over Breakfast with the Devil

You sit down comfortably, you think to yourself that enjoyment away from work improves one's soul. The promises of the weekend lie ahead and relax your tired body. In your hands is an interesting compendium labeled The Big Red Book of Collected Short Stories: 1900-1950. You admire it's genuine red leather binding, and you feel excitement as to what might be contained between its covers. You think back to when you bought it, at a local antique store, and you wonder how long it sat there unread. You open the book and flip through the stories, noticing the freshness of the binding, and that the book must be unread despite its age. The titles of each story flash in your vision as you fan the pages: "A Summer in the Sahara", "Horses of New York", "The Bassoonist". You stop at "A Deal Over Breakfast with the Devil" somewhat captured by the name, somewhat randomly. You notice the thinness of the pages, it reminds you of your bible. You begin reading.

Bates Ponce de Leon was eight, son of a failed baker. He often lived away from his parents and with his eight wives. Inside the shags of Philadelphia he held a small empire with them. Low income tenements were cramped, single room, and dirty, but with enough of a family your area grew and your provided food rations and resources began to pile up. This morning he was in his eighth room with his eighth wife, his favorite, Abigail. She cooked breakfast as he sat on the bed, only a couple feet from the kitchen, reading a letter he received. The sender warned him of a devilish plot, a horrible deal offered to her by some mysterious traveling woman. She wrote Bates most likely to develop a rapport he thought, and a path to yet another marriage, but Bates was also intrigued by the contents of the deal that were listed, "Hot cocoa, affordable chocolate powder, peppermint" were just a few of the words that stuck out to him. Sweets were not uncommon in his kingdom, nor were they low in demand. By the oven, Abigail slowly put together a full meal consisting of the latest delicacy to migrate its way into Philadelphia, the Chelsea Bun. On the stove she stirred a pot filled with cream cheese icing, and in the oven rose beautifully rolled sourdough.

The cold August air kicked in from the broken window and mixed with the warm yeasty smell also radiating off the weathered wood surrounding them, the morning, still young, filled young Bates's stomach with expectations and anxiety. As the church bells across the street rang informing the hour, a knock came from the apartment hallway and onto the flimsy wooden door. Through the board, warped from harsh winters and sweltering summers Bates saw an elderly woman. Perhaps sixty in years, perhaps ageless, she peered in through the warps with her pronounced cheekbones and hazel eyes. Not one to keep visitors waiting, a social young fellow, Bates opened the door and greeted his guest, who he supposed, by her appearance, was the subject of the letter he had received. Abigail turned and offered a kind smile to the guest before continuing her work on breakfast. Bates jumped back to his spot on the bed, swinging his legs and making an inquisitive face as if to say "You're here now, what do you want?"

"Nasty bit of weather ain't it lad?" Said the aging woman, brushing herself off, her serpentine robe swirled with Chinese representations of dragons and expansive forests, beautifully wrapping their way around her hunched figure. Small ice particles tumbled, some melting, off the silk garment. Her long nose arched and bumped, but remained smooth along with the rest of her skin. Her perfectly gentle face and her elderly hobble were dead giveaways to youth and senility respectively. Bates observed the window, or rather the lack of wall, and saw the water drip in slowly. Sleet had plagued the city for days making travel from anywhere, to anywhere, near impossible.

"I would have to agree ma'am, yes, awfully stuffy around here lately, yes, would love to travel around a bit these days."

"Yes, quite a bit comfier in here I say, smells delightful son"

"Thank you ma'am, Abigail is cooking up some sweets. You're more than welcome to eat breakfast with us ma'am, yes, but tell me, where are you coming from? If you don't mind of course."

"I do mind son, and you best regard yourself when addressing your elders. But, I will tell you. I come from plains of sand yet brushed by wind, I make my way here from a small town more west than you yet know young one."

"Impressive, yes, I do not know much about the West, but must be quite a journey I gather. I have already received a letter I assume talks about you ma'am, as I can smell what you have brought here, I must say I am quite interested yes. We are very much interested in baking goods when we can get them yes, is cocoa the reason you are here?" As the conversation unfolded Abigail, calm, happy, presented the cast iron baking sheet

filled with now cooked dough to him on the bed, freshly glazed with thick icing melting into the swirls of bread. Bates looked up at her cheerfully, nodding, and then brushed her off to focus again on the guest and her robe, blossoming with primrose and flowing with beasts.

"Again son, I am disturbed by your manners, my goods are not yours to ponder, nor is my likeness yours to entertain gossip with. Yet, recognizing your age I will continue, but I warn you that it is unwise to presume things of a guest. Cocoa is, in fact, the reason I visit, oh, but there is so much more to it than that you see. If you will allow me, I would like to display my goods on your counter." Bates grinned and nodded and then her body and goods swam into a busy motion, robe flurrying, concealing, and then revealing different extravagant ingredients first raw and then mysteriously assembled inside of thick glass mason jars and slammed onto the rotting wooden counter next to the stove with an almost theatre-like drama. There was a glass of warm milk mixed with cocoa and sprinkled with peppermint shards. There was an iced drink with rich dark chocolate shaved into beautiful curves on top. There were 3 jars of pudding with varying degrees of darkness, from white chocolate, milk chocolate, to almost pure cocoa. There was a sweet rice drink with bitter cocoa and cinnamon spiraling up the liquid, but not mixing into it. There was a hot jar with white liquid and chocolate marshmallows, and finally a good old-fashioned cup of hot chocolate with pearly white marshmallows all individually glazed and toasted. Bates's eyes widened and he could only stare. His chin rested on the counter that he was just able to see above and he looked over each artistic piece set before him.

"You see son, where I am from these drinks are quite common, one for each day of the week don't you say?"

"Yes, I see, yes, it's quite spectacular, I've never seen chocolate mallows before, and hell ma'am I don't even know what half of these ingredients are."

"Now child, cursing is quite unseemly around guests, and my patience is beginning to wear, you hear me young man? However, despite the lack of hospitality, I will still be willing to discuss business regarding my ingredients, albeit my prices have cha—" Bates, nervous from the continued reprimands, and abundance of sweets around him now blurted out,

"How much for the mallows ma'am? How much for the dark cocoa? I quite like dark cocoa, how m—"

"I've had just about enough of this!" She screeched slapping the young boy onto the bed. With the concerned eyes of a child Bates looked back up at the guest's warped face and oriental

garb. Tears built up near his eyes, and he waited for her to speak.

"A boy like you deserves nothing! Not a speck of cocoa should ever touch your tongue, my goods in your hands can only mean ruin!"

"Please, there must be something I can do ma'am-" now snotting at the nose, weeping. "I never meant to offend you, I swear! My father never taught me manners like you know yours!"

"I'm disgusted." Spat the guest, "the drinks are yours you slovenly thing, your gods sit in your belly, and your gluttony from here on shall bring you nothing but shame!" Quickly packing her excess ingredients and tools Bates watched in tears as Abigail leaned on the counter drinking the cup of hot cocoa. "Nothing is free however, you disgusting rat, your lineage will know the price, you in time will bleed like a calf, the whites of your bones will salt my garden!" As she limped out the door and slammed it behind her Bates slumped into the sheets, still uncomfortable, and Abigail sat down next to him, brushing through his hair with one hand and holding her drink in the other. Bates looked on at the row of remaining beverages all-

You close the book gently and decisively. Having read similar stories and novels you reflect on the fact that the devil always seems to get his way. You think to yourself that this cannot be true in the real world, and then you know it to be true. You question the morality of the author and his intentions. You know that you yourself are not maliciously influenced or otherwise torn from god upon an encounter with such material, nevertheless, the uncomfortableness of the story has lead you to some undesirable thoughts, you pray:

Dear father, lord, savior of the living,

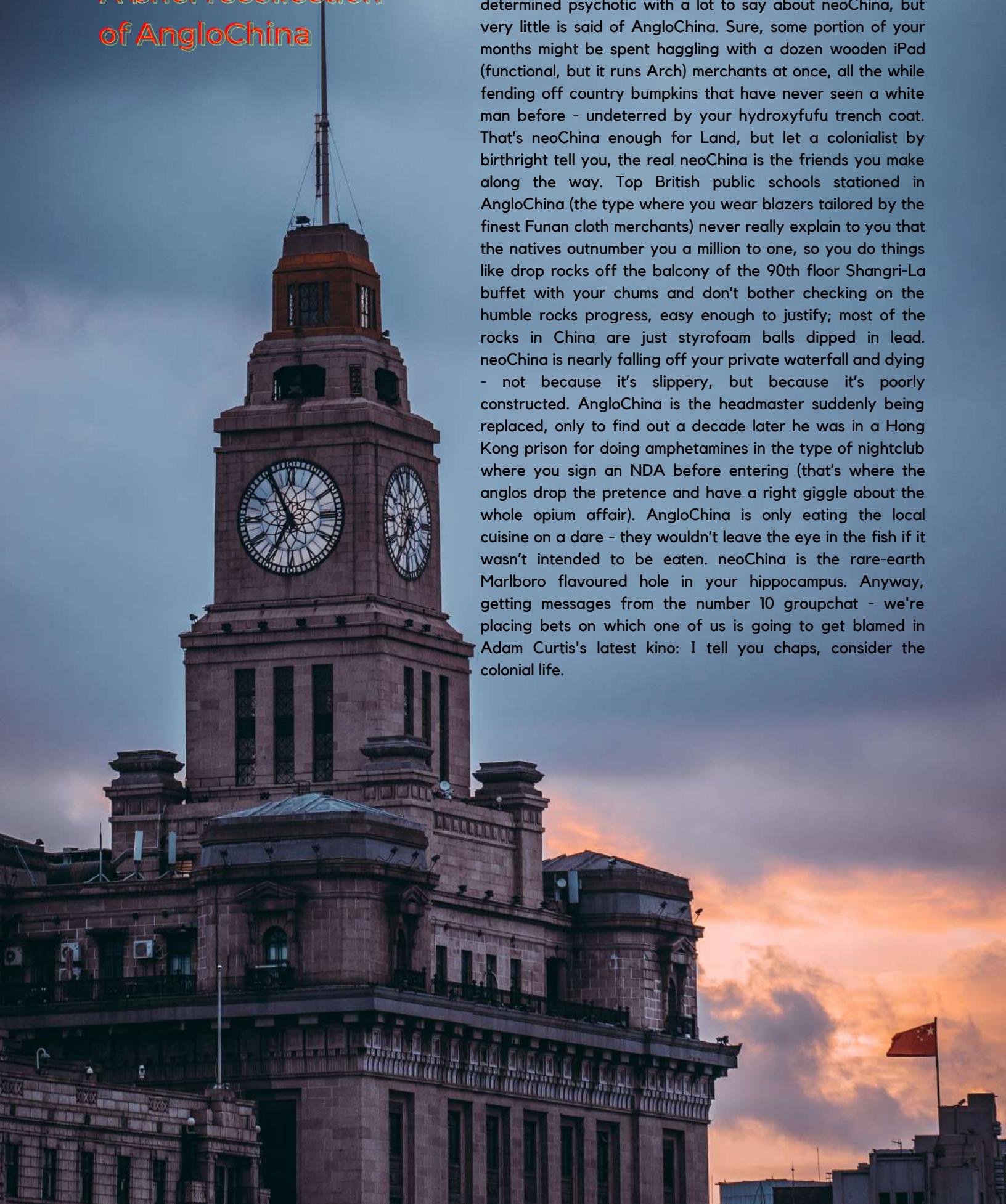
I surrender to you, and for you.

Deliver me from these thoughts.

So I may join you.

Amen.

A brief recollection of AngloChina



A lot is said of neoChina, or rather, there is one very determined psychotic with a lot to say about neoChina, but very little is said of AngloChina. Sure, some portion of your months might be spent haggling with a dozen wooden iPad (functional, but it runs Arch) merchants at once, all the while fending off country bumpkins that have never seen a white man before - undeterred by your hydroxyfufu trench coat. That's neoChina enough for Land, but let a colonialist by birthright tell you, the real neoChina is the friends you make along the way. Top British public schools stationed in AngloChina (the type where you wear blazers tailored by the finest Funan cloth merchants) never really explain to you that the natives outnumber you a million to one, so you do things like drop rocks off the balcony of the 90th floor Shangri-La buffet with your chums and don't bother checking on the humble rocks progress, easy enough to justify; most of the rocks in China are just styrofoam balls dipped in lead. neoChina is nearly falling off your private waterfall and dying - not because it's slippery, but because it's poorly constructed. AngloChina is the headmaster suddenly being replaced, only to find out a decade later he was in a Hong Kong prison for doing amphetamines in the type of nightclub where you sign an NDA before entering (that's where the anglos drop the pretence and have a right giggle about the whole opium affair). AngloChina is only eating the local cuisine on a dare - they wouldn't leave the eye in the fish if it wasn't intended to be eaten. neoChina is the rare-earth Marlboro flavoured hole in your hippocampus. Anyway, getting messages from the number 10 groupchat - we're placing bets on which one of us is going to get blamed in Adam Curtis's latest kino: I tell you chaps, consider the colonial life.

a refutation of this ----->

(or "The real test for 20/20 vision that optometrists don't want you to know about")

<h1
style="color:red;">
Hegel and the
Social Contract

The first level of civil society is at the individual level. The second level of civil society is the group made up of the various individuals and their interests. Under the social contract, the individual agrees with the individual to achieve all his goals he must enter in relation to his fellow man in the social contract embodied by the second level called the group. They are in turn bound by the social contract. The group becomes a means for the individual, but the individual a means of the group. The social contract is the result of the dialectic, the agreement between the individual and the society to share members of the group and create mutual arrangements to progress their well being towards an absolute good society maintaining human progress on each level. The dialectic continues, piling on Hegel's logic: each individual asserts and satisfies himself by means of the other. The mutual recognition of consciousness is the necessary prerequisite for progress and action.

If my goal is to earn money for example, to maximize my economic interest, not only is meeting others a necessary means, but again I must be in a formal relationship with them. This is not merely a mutual recognition of consciousness. The development of the mercantile society has precisely shown that every individual has become a means by which others can achieve their ends. For example, I would like to drink a coffee in a cafe. This desire depends on the existence of the cafe owned by the coffee maker, and by asking for my coffee, assert my needs and the needs of others. The coffee maker in turn asserts the owner seeks to support themselves and provide a service to their fellow man, and the coffee is then delivered, satisfying our mutual consciousness. Finally, my desire is met in the will of all. We have used Hegelian categories to demonstrate that even the basic idea of each pursuing his or her particular individual self interest remains in relation to the others, and dependent on others. This dialectic is the foundation of social relation.

hegel in a stoned brain (just making sure u got it)

"PHILOSOPHY"

In the previous issue of this publication, a short article on Hegel was published. As one critic on this board already noted, there has been a fair amount of "cock-suckery" related to Hegel recently— perhaps the board has finally begun to reckon with the titan of German Idealism. Although I am happy to see more Hegel threads within the past few months, I believe the philosophical icon deserves better than being reduced to circlejerks and a two-paragraph article in /lit's finest journal. I say this not necessarily because I am trying to peddle his ideas (or because there is no way to explain his philosophy easily, as his writing infamously illustrated) but because his philosophical system, especially when paired with psychoanalysis, can be helpful for understanding the nature of online communities such as this one.

I am not a Hegel scholar nor do I claim to be some expert. I've read a fair amount of his work in the past year with some supplementary texts, but I never had a background in philosophy (hell, I haven't even read Kant). I am just a guy who's been here for a while and likes to smoke weed; not sure how many of you can relate but I assume at least a few. I'll get back to that aspect of it later, first I would like to respond to the last article and point out why "mutual recognition" fails to account for what Hegel was trying to say about the social order.

It is not simply enough to recognize Hegelianism's basic connections to sociology. The core of Hegel's ontology is the contradiction in being—the

dialectic corresponds to the division that exists in both one's consciousness and the world outside of it; in other words, the gap between one's perception and reality itself is irreconcilable.

When discussing Hegel's idea of the social contract it is crucial to at least mention his idea of the state, which he articulates in his *Philosophy of History*, largely seen as his most controversial text because of its varied political interpretations. In the introductory lecture, *Reason in History*, Hegel declares the state as "the form which the complete realization of Spirit assumes its existence...the union of the subjective with the rational will; it is the moral whole...the divine Idea as it exists on earth". Only in the state is the idea of freedom possible- this was not meant to advocate for any sort of authoritarianism, as liberals like Popper would argue, but only to show how society is necessarily contradictory, how the social contract depends on unanimity rather than majoritarianism, as Rousseau had already pointed out. Hegel writes that "each popular faction can set itself up as the People. What constitutes the state is a matter of trained intelligence, not a matter of "the people". There needs to be an Other that exists outside of social relation, an "idea of Spirit in the externality of human will and its freedom". Thus the dialectic is not about "mutual recognition" but about recognition of the divide between universal and particular wills that only the State can reconcile to actualize freedom. In the state subjects are not an organic whole but an alienated unity; a unity of particulars divided along the same line of demarcation. Hegel's ideas of freedom and the state should today be used to combat liberal ideas of freedom that simply align freedom with self-interest. Freedom for the subject means recognizing the external powers that block its own self-interest, but instead of fighting them provide the ground for its self-determination by recognizing the limit set in place by authority. Struggle in social relation does not involve respect for otherness but instead the ability to see one's own self-division reflected in someone else. The mutual recognition of consciousness and desires thus needs to account for negativity or lack because each of us are alienated both from society and from ourselves.

In an online community such as this (an "anti-social network" if there ever was one) this last point is crucial because it demonstrates Hegel's insight into psychoanalysis almost a century before Freud. In the "Absolute Freedom and Terror" section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel writes that "The self-alienated type of mind, driven to the acme of its opposition, where pure volition and the purely volitional agent are still kept distinct, reduces that opposition to a transparent form, and therein finds itself". Contradiction between the will and what wills must be recognized rather than resolved or overcome. The worst insult to Hegel's work was reducing his logic to "thesis plus antithesis equals synthesis": in the world of mutual recognition we are thus thrown into the illusion of synthesis, of dialectical progression leading to some sort of harmony. Hegel needs the state to show that recognition cannot account for the subject's inherent conflict with itself and others. Considering 4chan's cultural influence elsewhere, and the increasingly blurred lines between online and reality, this recognition of conflict, rather than each other's supposed place in society, would do us some good because it would reject the radicalism promised by people like neo-Marxists or accelerationists in favor of coming to terms with ontological limits.

The resurgence of Hegel's popularity in the last few decades comes from psychoanalytic and post-Marxist interpretations of people like Slavoj Zizek. (Zizek's psychoanalysis has not, as far as I am concerned, received a proper discussion on this board; elsewhere he is merely seen as an epic communist who talks funny meme thinker). Zizek recently wrote about Hegel "in a wired brain" to demonstrate a criticism of AI (Neuralink etc) and its false notion of being able to resolve contradiction. His book described how computers fail to account for the force of negativity, or lack, that ultimately defines the human condition.

If Deleuze is another prominent "meme" philosopher that has had popularity on this board (being another ontological idealist whose work is infamously difficult to understand), a Hegelian criticism of his drugged out accelerationist "schizophrenic" worldview needs to be employed to truly grasp the internet and more importantly what it means to Be Online. What about Hegel in a stoned brain?

The negativity criminally lacking in Deleuzian ontology (which has given rise to sinister figures like Nick Land, a cancer in communities such as these) can be illustrated by drug use. The stoner gets high to enact in a sort of mental proliferation; the chemicals provide them with deeper insights and more creative tendencies; they feel happy and laugh and more connected to the music and energy of their environment. Their high connects them in a rhizomatic network, or some dumb shit like that if you believe this stuff.

But lurking underneath this high is always paranoia. The good times are always (and already) undercut by some form of negativity; there is always a sense of self-doubt or alienation if the subject takes a moment out of their whirl to self reflect. To understand this cut is to reject accelerationism and its harmful aspects. I won't go into the whole capitalism realism shpeel since all of you already know it but I need you to see how this applies to our situation. Each of us is connected through these small corners, but our anonymity and, for lack of a better term, "autism" are just as alienating as they are uniting. That's the kind of thing that needs to be highlighted by the dialectic, not simply recognition. It's all contradiction, man.

The Deleuzian idea of difference is attractive because it implies the harmonious coexistence of a free-form multitude. When subjects simply recognize others as existing, they miss the idea of contradiction; that no entity can even harmoniously coexist with itself. Especially in capitalism (or whatever you want to call our current universal political economic condition), contradiction is being substituted for difference in order to cover up problems—accelerationism, "burgerpunk" consumerism, etc are all just one big cope that pretends alienation is somehow radical. Perhaps recognizing alienation is just a cope all the same, but at least coming to terms with limits (in oneself and the Other, being society and its subjects) can provide for a new understanding that elevates "Hegel cock-suckery" into something more productive, the aforementioned alienated unity of an online consciousness.

"PHILOSOPHY"

One Comment



no

February 24, 2021 at

blow it out your ass

further comments will be
scanned and uploaded
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My betters
Will scold

>Meanwhile on /lit/, c. 1920

>books for this woman?

Earth's noblest thing, wrote Lowell. A necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill, wrote St. Chrysostom a thousand years ago.



Saints or Sinners

When the Emperor Theophilus jestingly said to one of the beauties of his court, *Woman is the source of evil in the world!* she quickly replied, *Woman is also the cause of much good!* Both were right; Joan of Arc and other saintly and noble women come to mind at once as typical of "earth's noblest thing," who have been the cause of much good. In contrast we have "the deadly fascination and the painted ill" of the daughters of Aphrodite, such as the capricious Venus Victrix whose remarkable beauty enslaved a ruler of proud Castile and whose power over him was so great that sycophant courtiers who attended this favorite at her bath drank of its waters in token of adulation. The stories of these two women, remarkable as they are, are no more unusual than those of other saints and sinners who have uplifted or degraded men throughout the ages since the day of Eve. These stories are told in a series of copyrighted volumes by ten talented contemporary authors in



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Woman dominates to-day. Her pre-eminence is undisputed. She is the *motif* of most discussions. A glance at our newspapers, magazines, and novels will show how great is the place she occupies in the thoughts of all, and how powerful is her influence for good or evil in every relationship of life. Yet this great subject has never been adequately treated. Of course we know a little about Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Messalina, Theodora, Helen of Troy, Poppaea, Elizabeth of England, Catherine of Russia, and a few other prominent women. But little is known about these well-known characters and nothing at all about thousands of other equally important women who in the past and in all parts of the world have influenced the course of life, and these are only names and not women of flesh and blood, for few have any idea of what manner of women they really were, what they did, or what they stood for.

Many pages are necessary to make Cleopatra live before our eyes, to tell the many strange and interesting things about her. And there have been thousands of other women whose stories are just as interesting. The authors have not hesitated to tell the whole truth. If while concealing nothing, they show us the faults of woman, it is only to accentuate the virtues—if they tell us how a Russian countess in winter had water slowly poured over nude young girls in order to provide new statuettes for her gardens, they also tell us how Joan of Arc inspired the people of France. Love, marriage, and divorce are of course the subjects of many interesting chapters. We read about the singular customs of courtship, marriage, and divorce all over the world. We have interesting accounts of woman in the days of chivalry and romance; among the Moors, Turks, Arabs, Hindoos, Chinese, and Japanese; and of woman in the church, in politics, in war, in industry; or famous as patriots and humanitarians.

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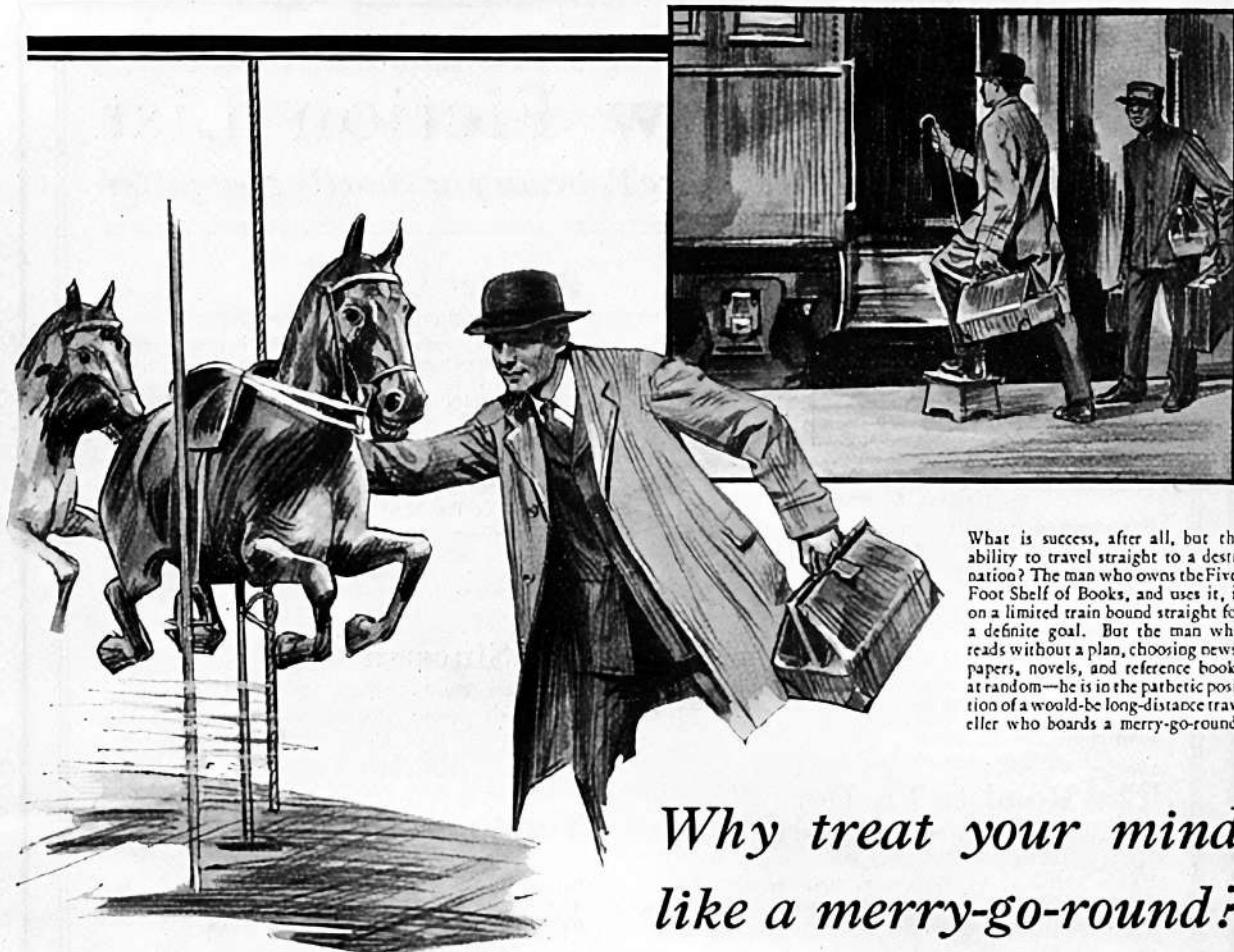
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Whitman	Casanova	Meleager
Leonardo	Baudelaire	Henley

THE DEVIL *and the Daarknab*

I've never been a very spiritual man. I went to church maybe once or twice with my mother as a child; but I never found the flair to my liking. It all just seemed too flat and forward. It was like everyone in the building said they had the answers but were just throwing a fishing line into an empty lake. Sure, the scenery is good but you're not catching any fish. I wanted real answers. I wanted to know how the Universe ticked. What the order was, if there even was one. You know? I didn't think I'd ever find out. Life was too chaotic, too random. What instance of anything was someone as small and insignificant as me supposed to be able to grasp? No, I've never been a very spiritual man. I am, however, sure that I met the Devil once.

He came to me in a dream. It was one of the usual dreams I'd have, something about work. Maybe I'm in a coffee shop catching up without someone I used to know. Sometimes I'm fishing and there's a fish on the line and it gets away from me. I imagine it's some mighty marlin whose wake in the water trembles the Earth. Somehow it feels like that's the only thing that can beat me, something so impossible and fierce that it couldn't be tamed by beast or man. Sometimes though, the dreams are mundane. In the dream I had that night, I was in a café. The coffee was black as the night outside and fluorescent bulbs in the ceiling made everything seem too white. There wasn't a waitress in sight. The entire café was empty save for a man in a white suit huddled up in a booth. His face was obscured by the newspaper. Thinking back on it, it was illegible, or I couldn't remember what it said. He sat in silence like that until I took the cream off the counter and added it to my coffee, the clanking of the spoon breaking the silence. Almost in response, the man in the white suit coughed, scuffed his dress shoes against the linoleum, and shuffled his paper. For a moment, I caught a glimpse of his eyes.

I made my way to his booth. I sat down and placed the saucer holding my coffee cup directly in front of him. I took the spoon out and placed it onto the saucer and set it down with another soft clang. I cleared my throat, which felt waxy in the man's presence. I made a remark on the cover story of the paper, even though it was blurs and scribbles to me. I was thinking it was rude to sit until the man lowered the paper to make eye contact with me and raise his eyebrows. His face was remarkably pale for how weathered it seemed. Lines and wrinkles crossed his face like a map to a foreign land. His eyes were sapphires pulled from an East African mine, I was sure of it. His raven hair was slicked back which only served to show off the layers of wrinkles on his forehead. The man in the white suit was not an old man; at least he didn't have that appearance. He seemed wise and mythical, timeless; something drew me to know more.

"I haven't seen you in here before," the man in white said. I hadn't thought of it in that sense. This cafe was new to me too. I had never seen one so pressed, so clean, and so—sterile. I lingered on his question for a bit too long, I suppose, because he continued.

"I suppose I haven't seen you before because you don't even know where here is, do you?" The man asked. He folded his newspaper and set it to the side.

"I don't," I told him flatly, tapping my knuckles against the booth's table. "Honestly it feels like I'm in a dream."

The man in white laughed. For some haunting reason, it echoed and had an edge of malice. "That's because you are! Isn't it wonderful? The human mind; able to make entire planes of existence. Faces! Scenarios! It's like pieces of a puzzle coming together!"

“Perhaps it has something to do with my psyche,” I said unsure. “Perhaps it has something to do with me being unhappy?”

“Why are you?” he asked.

“I’m not sure on that either,” I explained. “I’m not really sure of anything.”

“Perhaps you’re unhappy precisely because of your unsuredness,” the man asked, taking my arm and leading me to the red door. “Behind this door are the answers. Answers to anything.”

“You’re giving me the answers?” I asked, incredulous.

“No. I’m merely giving you the key to open the door. To get to the real meat of your issue,” He said shaking his head with a sigh.

“Why? What do you have to gain if we’ve never met?” I asked.

“And you’re so sure you’ve never seen me before?” he asked, that same edge of malice in his voice. There in that moment, with the door ahead of us and darkness enveloping all but a few feet around us, I realized how I knew him.

“If that’s the case,” I began, “Why would you help me? Why help any of us?”

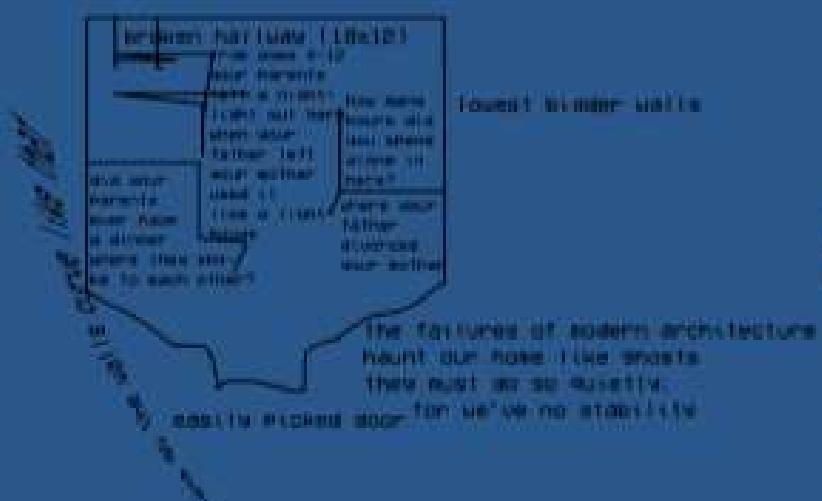
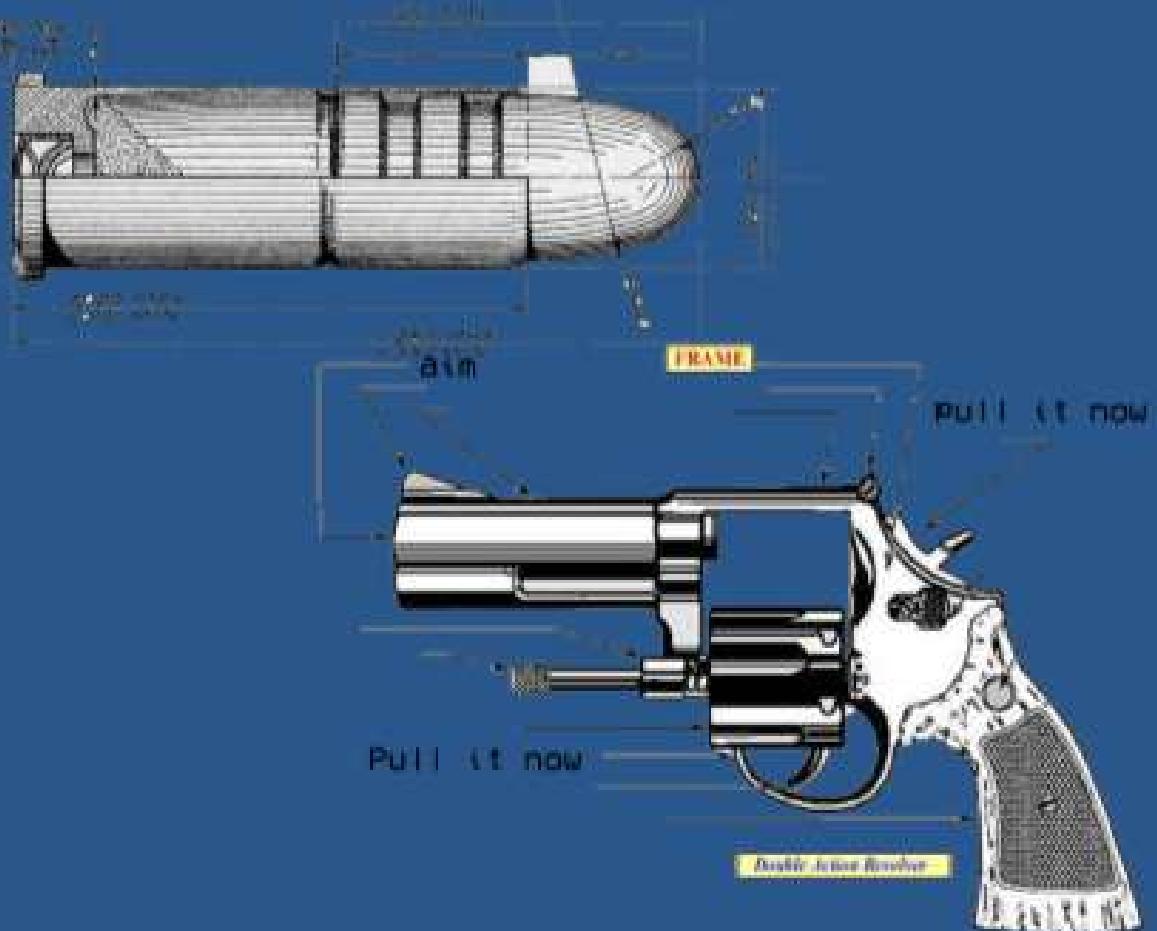
“Look at it this way,” he began, briskly walking behind me, “Humanity as a whole is flawed. They see themselves as a part of a bigger picture but they don’t contribute to the art. They stagnate and those who do not simply become hedonists. Everyone wants to leave their mark on the world but that mark is a stain on a hotel mattress. This is to say revolting to most and seen as wasted potential to the most optimistic. They wage war on themselves with philosophy. What does it mean to be human? Where is the line? Does the line exist? What is the meaning of life? Life has no meaning. Life has the meaning that you assign to it. Life has no meaning but that’s what makes it beautiful. There are so many attempts in the quest to find answers. I worry the day will never come. That one day the quest for answers will eventually give way to entropy and the heat death of the passions of the Human race. All because they could not ask themselves the simplest question of them all, how do I open the door?”

At this he threw his hands up in frustration, “They get so close. Their methods, so precise! They attack the door. Attack it with bullets and bombs and scripture and philosophy. With Nihilism and Idealism hand in hand like star crossed lovers. They load their passions into guns and fire blanks, and for what? They don’t even know. To answer your question in the simplest way; I want to help you because you want to help yourself. I can’t open the door for you, but you can realize that the door is there. That’s the most crucial part. So give it a try.”

For what seemed like an eternity I pondered his words. I tried to mull out a response but my tongue was dry and dulled. I walked towards the door and reached out to it, an eerie ringing in my ears. The doorknob was cool and through the cracks in the jamb I could smell the night air. The city was alive behind this door. I turned the knob to exit, and found it locked.

SuburbPunk

ALTERNATIVELY: MINE WERE OF TROUBLE



"You can never dismiss your fucked up friends, or how you never took your meds for the way you turned out, but it sits on your shoulders the entire time now."

By Anonymous

When I was about seven years old, my father took me out behind our house where our backyard met a sort of wooded forest; I doubt it could be called that but the woods were thick enough that past a certain point you couldn't see the other side, so we collectively called it the woods. By that time I had only tread through there supervised, and my father's massive, uncoordinated steps that hit every possible bump in the path scared away any and all wildlife, so I often believed them to be sterile. So when my father told me to stop in the grass and pointed downwards, I was in shock to find a dead bird.

I could recognize the form of a bird of course, I had seen a nature documentary when I was a child in school while a substitute covered for our teacher; it was a bird, I didn't know the name of it though. It was a gray, almost cement like color with small red dashes across its face. I stared at it quietly, waiting for it to stand up and fly away. I asked my father why it wasn't moving, staring up into eyes that feigned sympathy to my naivety; feigned being the focal point. I doubt my father ever felt empathy or sympathy for me, much less love. I suppose this was his way of trying to teach his child even if he didn't particularly care for my presence. But I stared up at him for the longest time, and he waited until I was tugging on his pants-leg, begging for an answer.

He crouched down next to me, in that way fathers do to their oft smaller sons and told me it was dead. "Dead?" I asked; I had a vague conception of the word. When I'd hear my mother's favorite actor was dead or some sort of cowboy western star was dead, I'd hear a sigh or a groan from either of them depending on who it was. I could gather that much, it wasn't something they enjoyed. I asked my father if he liked the bird's movies, and he looked genuinely angry at me for a brief moment; a brief moment he had hoped I hadn't seen but I had seen clear as day before he had taken back his composure. He explained to me that actors didn't just die; everyone did. I asked when they'd be coming back. He said they never did. I asked why that was; he told me that was the way things were. I asked where they went, and he said he didn't know and no one did. It shifted then, to how people die; he told me they died the same way animals did. Sometimes they just got sick and never got better. Sometimes they got hurt too much and they never healed. Sometimes they died because they couldn't eat or drink. They died the same as us, he said. I asked if he would die, and he said one day. I asked how the bird died, and he said it hit a window and broke its leg. I asked when I'd die, imploring that I wanted to leave (I had meant the current conversation, but he took it in a much different light).

He looked at me with concern; be it genuine concern or concern for the consequences of a child's death on him I wasn't sure. He told me to stay outside while he called mom; I think at the time she was out getting groceries at one of those big gray block stores. I sat out there and stared at the bird. I had been roused out of my bed by my father that morning specifically to see this, and I sat down so I could get a good look. I wondered if I was going to be punished. Normally when he called mom like this, it meant I had given him "lip". The morning dew pressed against my flannel pyjamas, soaking the skin underneath. I touched and poked the bird, grabbing the leg to try and see where it had been broken. The leg looked complete to me, so I tried to readjust it to see if maybe it had just been misplaced. As I set to this task, the thing twitched. Looking back upon it it was probably just the muscles being stimulated, the last impulses of nerves kicking the thing, but I couldn't understand that. It was supposed to be dead. It was moving. A wave of revulsion moved over me and my arm spasmed as the thing was propelled away from me. I crawled cautiously, making sure that in its alive state it could not harm me; it lay on its back, the leg I grabbed twisted in a disgusting unnatural way. Across the neck was a great bloody gash- my father had lain it on its back purposefully.

Perhaps the thing had broken its leg, but that's not how it died.



It wouldn't have gotten better, I know that now,

but I thought then that my father had made the thing dead- I did not know the word "kill" quite yet- instead of what he had told me.

I couldn't hear what he said to my mother that day over the phone, but I remember going out for ice cream that night when she came home, and the incident never being brought up again.

Did all things look like that when they died?

My father owned a singular firearm I remember seeing. It was a snub-nosed .38 revolver, one he told me he paid 50 dollars for when my mother and him had gotten married in '94. An old friend had sold it to him, when he sought protection for their first apartment together. It was an ugly, mass produced piece that he didn't trust to hit something past 20 feet. I remember because he had told me to get in the car one sunday when I was nine and we drove off to a deserted field, an hour away from home. Setting up some bottles on a piece of plywood about chest level, he put my hand on the revolver and showed me how to aim. He told me to then breathe out, and pull. I did. There was no concussive blast; no bottle breaking. Just a dry fire. He said I did good and put a round in. I remember the round being silver, an aluminum casing with a fine, sharp point on the end, that being the actual bullet. I did as he told me, and pulled down the trigger. The gun kicked hard enough to not only propel itself out of my hand, but hit me in the face as well. It didn't break anything, but a nasty bruise was left. I went home and he got me a soda with the advice to tell my mother I was just playing ball with some friends and got hit by the ball. I told mom this and she asked where I made friends. I said out in the field dad took me too. They yelled at each other that night.

I have a distinct memory of the first time I was suspended. I was on the playground when I was 11, in fifth grade. I wasn't a particularly large child, but kids instinctively avoided me as if I looked like I could beat them up. I was sitting on the swings; it was an overcast sort of day, one that occurred often in the first few months of spring. The memory itself is very clear. A light wind propelled my swing forward and back. I didn't much care to actually swing as much as I wanted a place to sit that wasn't covered in that horrid mulch. I remember hearing some of that very same mulch crunching outside of my peripheral vision; it was rare other kids used the swings, but I wasn't opposed to anyone's presence. I heard a snickering before the child quietly called me a faggot. I had no actual reference for what the word meant besides when one stick figure was angry at another in a flash animation, he called the other guy that and punched him. I thought I was going to be punched.

I got off the swing as if the metal was going to stick to my skin and burn me alive before I turned to face the child. He was maybe an inch or two shorter than me, and a bit thinner too; had his ploy worked, he would've only had the advantage of surprise. I charged him, intent on making sure he couldn't say that word to me again while he asked if he could borrow my swing. The voice he had called me a faggot in, was different from the one he had before he realized what I was doing.

Then the sentence changed to a scream, and I was upon him. I had no knowledge of fighting. All I knew is that things were dead when you made their throat red, so I took my nail and started dragging it across his Adam's apple while he screamed, occasionally thrashing my legs to keep him down. He screamed, loud piercing ones, low cries for help for about a minute until a teacher came over and tore me off of him. She grabbed me and took me to the principal's office, this near death grip on my arm, turning the flesh pale around it; the clouds did not clear that day, nor the next or the one after that. The principal asked me why I attacked him. I said he called me a faggot, and at this he balked; as he gasped I continued. He had called me a faggot-this I already covered, and as one knows, when you get called that you get attacked shortly afterwards. I had to protect myself before he attacked me. The principal asked if I knew what faggot meant, and I said I hadn't any idea, except I had seen people get called it before they got punched. He said I shouldn't say it and I agreed.

He told me that the child I attacked- I later learned his name was Andrew or something to that effect-stated that he had not called me such a thing. I stated I heard it. We began a shouting match until he called my mother and she picked me up. I didn't attend school for the latter half of that week while my mother fervently called psychiatrists. I sat in a doctors office about two months after that, and I clearly remember going somewhat excitedly because the office was right next to a fast food place and my mother would get me a burger after each visit. About 3 weeks after my last visit the doctors gave mom a call. I didn't know what they said until I read the report a few weeks later when she left it out in the open on her desk. I remember my father came into the house and when he saw me sitting on the couch he gave me a disgusted look. It was the same sort of sneer I think I had when I looked at the bird after I had thrown it. He yelled at mom and said something about a "retarded son" if I remember correctly, and left the house for the night. About three weeks later my father filed for divorce.

I was taken out and homeschooled till the end of fifth grade. No one ever told me what I did wrong; I assumed I had just misinterpreted the kid's intentions. My mother talked extra delicately to me while my father was out of the house. Sometime in July of that year their divorce was finalized. I had to testify my father had never hit me, he had taken me out to that field to shoot his gun, I had been injured- the whole spiel. It was around this time I was beginning to grow exasperated at my parents constant bickering so when my mother brought up my violent outburst-I remember the term outburst being used specifically-she said it was inspired by my father and his uncaring nature, I did not disagree. She argued that the gun, being originally meant to protect her, should come to her, and whatever ruling body presided over the case agreed. My mother got the .38 revolver and my dad got the car and half the finances. My dad called me a faggot as he left the courtroom and my mother grabbed me by the arm; she was growing older, and puberty was beginning to take its first breaths into me, and I escaped and slugged my father a little bit below the center of his chest but above the stomach. He was restrained by his lawyer and I was restrained by my mother who had gotten a hold of me once more.

When I found the paper it said

Summary of findings/recommendations: MDD-Psychotic, Autism

And I didn't know what that meant. No one ever explained what it meant.

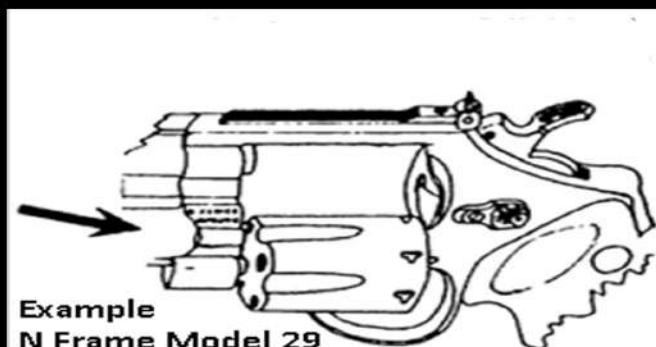
My mother began giving me what I later found out were antidepressants right before sixth grade started, when she shifted me back into public schooling. I didn't notice any effect-but my mother frequently doted on me after this. Well into 8th grade she commented on how respectful and well behaved I was as opposed to when I was younger. I felt indifferent to it, mostly. People would often call me names in the hall, not friends of Andrew as much as people who simply didn't like me. I was indifferent to that as well; days with lunch foods I liked, good test grades, bad test grades, the time my grandfather died; it was all some sort of melodramatic monotonous emotional haze. A particularly sharp memory was the time I was asked on a date my freshman year.

I can't remember her name-rather I've sort of erased it; I didn't particularly care for what happened and I don't want to remember it so over the few years since I've ruthlessly suppressed it. I do know that she had dyed red hair and a backpack with band patches all over it. She told me she thought I was cute and asked if I wanted to see a movie that Friday night. I asked my mother if I could go-not so much as I wanted to as much as she may have found something enjoyable about the fact I was asked out-and she agreed to take me. I was there at the time she requested and she messaged me to go to the specific theatre. I sat next to her as she requested; the actors on screen would do something funny and she would laugh and I wouldn't. They'd kiss, and out of my peripheral I could see her looking at me in a strange manner. The film credits reeled and as I walked out she asked if I wanted to go on another date. I said I didn't much care either way and she started crying. I asked why she was crying, I didn't say no-and she said I was a shit-head. All of her friends gave me dirty looks the next day-my mother asked how it went and I told her it was fine.

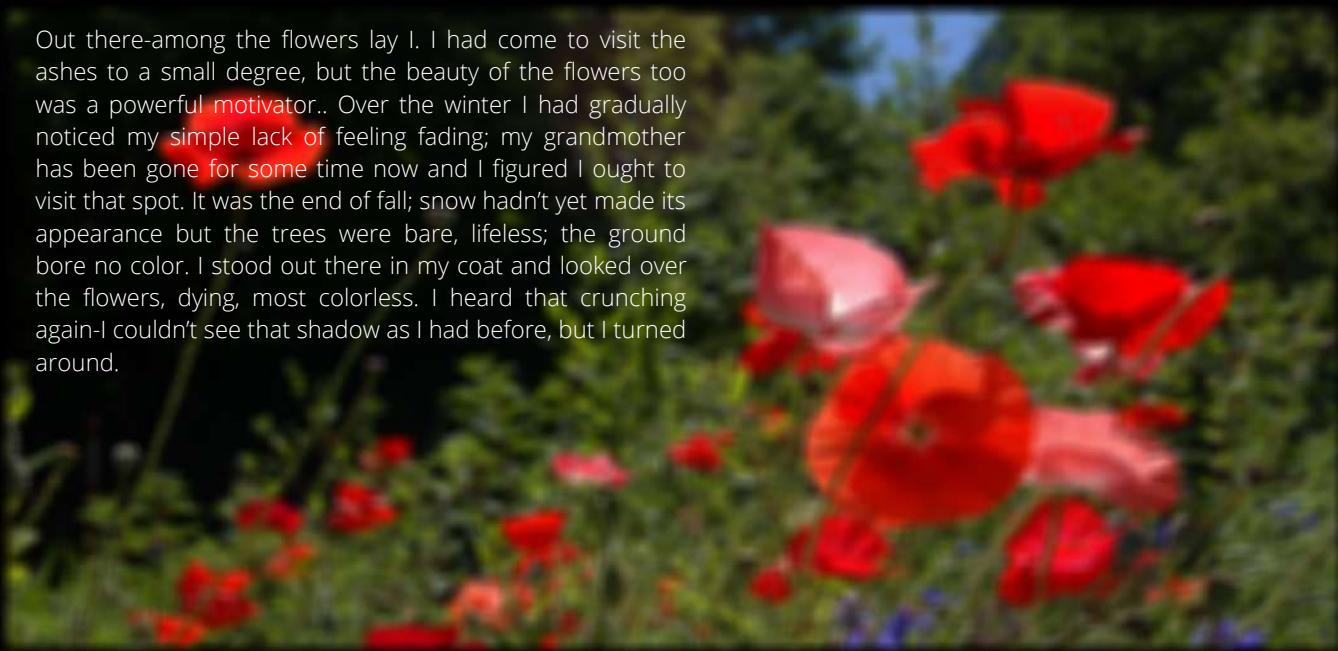
Behind the movie theatre was this massive field; it ran out alongside power lines and a road, a few hundred yards out. It ran parallel to the road and the properties surrounding the mall for miles. I remember, my mother expecting me to get dinner with her afterwards gave me a rather liberal time for her to pick me up. I wandered the area behind the mall for an hour under the moonlight-I walked out a mile that night and found the gift of a vast field of flowers- I didn't know their names. Red leaves with a yellow centre; they had no distinctive smell about them but the soft leaves gave me the information I needed nonetheless. I think that was one of the first times I could say something was beautiful; as I wandered back to the parking lot all I could think about was their smooth surface, the beautiful muted red under that pale light. I wrote my final English project that year on them, and it was not long before my mother began buying me books on Botany.

I visited it a total of 5 times in my sophomore year. My life at the time was this indifferent haze, as it had been since middle school, but there was this brief moment of clarity I experienced at the flowers. When my grandmother died and my mother gave me her ashes-according to her I was her favorite grandson(albeit her only grandson)- I buried it out there among the flowers. I remember with clarity that day, as I have so many others. As I clawed at the dirt a little bit outside-fall was coming and it was beginning to get a bit rigid with the cold-I heard crunching. A shadow darted behind a tree and I put the capsule quickly into the small hole I dug before I ran off.

I carried my mothers revolver every time I went to the field after that. She never put a safety on it, nor was it particularly well hidden. She kept it in a shoebox in her closet; whenever she'd get black out drunk it was relatively easy to sneak it away for my walks. Those times became all the more frequent when she lost her job-although she acquired a new one the health insurance benefits were nowhere near as good. Drunk one night, as she stared up into my eyes-without expression or emotion-she said I was her burden. I was the burden to my father; that was why he left. She called me a psycho before vomiting on a dress and I went back to my room. I remember she cried for a few days every time she looked at me afterward. Partway in the summer after my sophomore years she stopped giving me pills. I feel like my mother may have loved me-or perhaps still does-but it is painful.



Out there-among the flowers lay I. I had come to visit the ashes to a small degree, but the beauty of the flowers too was a powerful motivator.. Over the winter I had gradually noticed my simple lack of feeling fading; my grandmother has been gone for some time now and I figured I ought to visit that spot. It was the end of fall; snow hadn't yet made its appearance but the trees were bare, lifeless; the ground bore no color. I stood out there in my coat and looked over the flowers, dying, most colorless. I heard that crunching again-I couldn't see that shadow as I had before, but I turned around.



There stood my father; I had not seen him since the court hearing but the time since then weathered him. What was once a healthy beard turned into a scraggly stubble, eyes loose and darting, with purple bags almost printed onto his skin. He recognized me before I recognized him.

The flowers were poppies; my mothers botany books told me that much. They had a usage for opium. I think that was why he was out here. I couldn't be certain. He had somehow gained weight, lost it, grown haggard yet fat, pale yet all too sun-burnt. His very form seemed to radiate a deep, rooted sickness.

I grabbed the pistol out of my pocket and shot him in the throat; there were no words exchanged between the two of us. He was knocked flat on his back; gasping for a brief moment. I stood over him.

General Botany



The blood from his throat formed a red line across the length of it, and poured onto the poppies. He kept staring at me. Gasping. Not a word came from his lips. I crouched down next to him like he did to me as I stared at that bird, and wondered if he even remembered me.

Those uncaring, sneering eyes he once bore at me I could see reflected in his pupils, as they began to slow. I hated him. I hated him so much. I pulled the hammer back one more time, and I prepared to burst open his skull. He couldn't even tell who I was. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't know he was dying. I cocked the hammer back again, my first effort finding an empty chamber, and levelled the bore at his skull. I couldn't pull the trigger again I found-I'd splatter the poppies. I let him sit there. There was a good minute of his gasping before he quieted down, and eventually his twitching stopped. He didn't move again, like that bird did.

I called the cops and reported a druggie attacked me. They didn't question the revolver. They asked if I knew I killed my father. I said I couldn't recognize him. The prosecution for me didn't have a client that day- his body was at a morgue. My mother pleaded that I perceived him as a threat, that I was easily scared, there was something wrong with me. The jury pleaded not guilty of murder. I was put in counselling for the next two years.

I don't go to the poppy field anymore-my indifference has finally returned to me.

SuburbPunk is living in a political and cultural dead-end
SuburbPunk is owning nothing and pretending like you own
and accepting it.

everything. SuburbPunk is hell. SuburbPunk is purgatory.
SuburbPunk is watching your neighbor kill his neighbor
SuburbPunk is watching your rent raise and being a stiff
with a fucking 9 iron.

wind away from eviction.

SuburbPunk is the opposite of BurgerPunk architecture-
SuburbPunk is the 2008 financial crash. SuburbPunk is
There is no gas station to take your truck too or greasy
downloading the Anarchist Cookbook at 13 because you want
burger place that you stop by. there is no liminal passa-
to blow up your neighbors mailbox. SuburbPunk is
be through infinite miles of wage hell. SuburbPunk is
watching your parents divorce when you're 9 like a pop
the home of wage hell, stagnat birthplace of maggots and
up book. SuburbPunk is the protestant ideological peak.
flies-infinite miles of poorly constructed bland homes.

SuburbPunk is having overweight animals because you can't
SuburbPunk is alienation from your peers

be damned to let them outside. SuburbPunk is 8 hours on
SuburbPunk is killing your peers.

a computer because you live in a neighborhood with nothing
SuburbPunk is 30 for a gram, paying it, and reporting
to do. SuburbPunk is a failed art degree. SuburbPunk is
who sold it to the cops.

dropping out at 16 to be a mechanic. SuburbPunk is
SuburbPunk is watching 2/3 of your friends join the army
marriage either too early or too late. SuburbPunk is the
and dying in some foreign war while you rot at home
schizophrenic nightmares of a dead middle class.
SuburbPunk is killing yourself at 23.

THE LAND THAT I SEE IN HER EYES OF WATER



Her eyes of water
eyes of the forgotten sea
Remind me of home

Without illusion, all things perish; illusion is itself illumination. I have only ever seen the heavens clearly when I have stared into them and became lost in some fantasy, at night if I see clouds of blood red they fade into faces of those who I have not known yet I desire to remember. Light itself also is an illusion, the sky is nothing but a comedy of lights, each blue and golden ray playing its part. There is a land I have not known and yet it returns to me as a vision of fallen leaves becoming emeralds, the cracks of stones becoming lost prayers and I hear it in the cries that birds only speak with green-tongues in dream.

I sit alone in my room and search my mind for her face and for her eyes and what dwells behind them, each memory and each fantasy passes before me.

A myriad of spirits encircle me, each one sings the song of a different land, each one the dance of their world. One sings a song of sadness and bows his black head, another who's vestures are vermillion and laughs the laugh of friendship. Rainbow light of spirit encompasses me for each eye longs for my eye to reflect in theirs, for if I shut my eye, their own gains fire and brilliance while my own Darkens and knows nothing in his land of slumber.

Yet, I am awakened, the scorpion lifts his head hidden in the shallow waters, the princess bows her head, becoming the actress, her golden crown loses its luster.

I am stung. From the land of slumber I depart, but i keep their crest of black circles and tiredness upon my eyes as a token, a memory of nothing. The waters of sleep are bitter but only they can brighten the eyes and maybe then I'll find that eye which glittered as the sea viewed from the breathless bay, blessed by a light which needs not the sight of men.

I thirst for you, eyes of water, who's blue is as the azure curtain decked with stars when the sun enters its crucible and gives its brilliance in sacrifice to the angels.

You are not the cupbearer who bears the milk and ambrosia given in sacrifice to the thunderer before the King.

You are not the sword who's soul is of the south raised against a horde of titans who's breath is the first frost of night.

You are not the dark woman in the valley, who waits with outstretched hands to take from man everything he has worked for in life.

You are not the holy immortal fire which burns, shall burn and has always burned invisibly in the heart of those who know silence.

You are not even the purple garment which was not divided, nor are you the dice casted for the garment.

Yet within your eyes of water, I see beyond the pomegranate who's fruit is a cluster of rubies, into the city who's daughters are of a foreign people and their delight is of themselves, for thrice daily are they anointed by a custom secret to me, and thrice daily do they stare into the same sky as I and see not a black diadem crowning the earth, they see instead the stars as a cluster of campfires, each one welcoming them to protection and rest.

Yet when the eyes of water are turned from me, the black bells are rung over and over and this is the sound of their echo

no one has heard me in my cry,
my beads of virgin coral fall,
as a black bird crows, I am crowned
with the winter's black diadem,
as the laurel falls, the oil dries.

my soul coils into myriads
of meaningless shapes known to none,
emptiness breathes upon each toil,
my dry tongue sticks to my mouth's roof
and my each breath dies to my toil.

i was stung when I past the reeds,
the dark waters entered my bones
and fell out as tears, which like seeds
of sadness marked my face with ash,
and as the seeds grew, ash turned black,
my face fell ash pale and then black.

I dwell with a black diadem
as night crowns my head with darkness.
i know the black abyss of hell
is nothing but my soul's own spell,
my soul is the hell of sorrow

Though I am a serpent who sees a silver star and longs for its light, biting at its own tail in rage and longing, for long is the night when the favored one, the pole star, is obscured. Yet her light remains as a bland taste hiding in my mouth, hungry for more.

And as a deer thirsts for streams of water so also do I lap up my own tears for in them admixed with the dark waters is also the waters of the great sea, though I lay prostrate with dust as a head covering and tears for my meat, I am happy. For I have remembrance of You.

a serpent sees a silver Star,
leaping he longs for Living light,
but the light of life seems so far
as it fades into the dark night.

tears of the remembrance of presence Fall,
the Sad serpent bites and maws at his tail.
“sabacthani” says he who’s face is pale,
the bell is rung and upon all bloodfalls.

darkness covers all
the Earth becomes black
all things now empty
but the Snake has his Star



Yet I enter into another heaven, tempest mingled with roaring sea and the whole earth is in earthquakes and the corpse cold hand grasps the globe, winters wrap the world in its bosom, the bosom of death and forgetting, the bosom of change.

The taste is too sweet with putrefaction, decay and longing have beautified the image but have robbed the eye of its fiery brilliance. I shall go to her, like A moth along a lone road, upon the air as a ghost, though a sense grows deeper upon me of something near, but lost

though I approach her home I am filled with the scent of mourning and of myrrh, the bitterness of the willow pounding his hands in sadness as the wind’s whistle commands him.

As I look through her window I see not a lamp’s living light but the darkness of emptiness, my heart is a ball of wax melted, I am water poured out, for as I enter I do not find her and as I try to leave I cannot depart from her room.

I see her passing by, wearing the black veil of weeping and the candle of departing is held in her hands, and with her walks many who’s faces I no longer can recall, each with veil and bearing candle.

heir funeral March as a flock of carriages encircling me, each face looking upon me. As they give forth tears so also is their candle extinguished and I am forgotten.

The last candle remains and I see her eyes of water, for a moment I see the sea of eternity roar in her eyes, and as a great sea is churned by the dragon in its depths so was her eyes, clouded, cataracts and as a cataract did the eyes of water fall from her and so was extinguished the last living flame.

All things now darken, even her lustral water have lost their lustre and have forsaken this world. Only i remain in a dark room staring out at an oblivion of black.

in absence of all, only the presence of my own eye remains reflecting the invisible light which pervades that primeval darkness, my own iris becomes invisible and even I become absent.

In the absence of my absence, a new vision becomes present, I am within a sphere of opal fire, I am like silver purified by the furnace. Memory of each face and each image are turned into ash which mixes with the true Sea, the sea of space and time.

Before my eye passes the stream of images, flames, waters, serpents, bells, jewels, youth passing into old age, the cry of a bird at night heard at a distance, a forgotten doll, a drink I had never finished and a morsel that had fell from ones mouth and was lost, each light and each star, flame against flame, lightning against lightning, each image condensed into my sphere of fire and each filled my own eye with a new brilliance and each flash washed away the old and made it new again.

The flame and sphere itself enters my eye and everything becomes very still, the brightness of my eye blinds me for a little while but gradually dims.

As I grow accustom to the light, I look and see that I have returned to a land I have never known. their funeral March as a flock of carriions encircling me, each face looking upon me. As they give forth tears so also is their candle extinguished and I am forgotten.

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Anonymous



TRACTATE 23

In the Tribune des frozen Devil Nations
while memories blood and madness are refused
The myth of the blue-eyed Atlantis was only a fairy tale

Dumpster Crack-Cocaine

Movie Grounds Media Striptease

Succubus Anal Dilation

[https myself](https://myself)

entity soul picture

learn hate angel crack

The Enteric IT predators of totalitarianism

sorcerous communism

the geared tech-organic

probes into concrete Thoth

soulless Void, Terra Firma

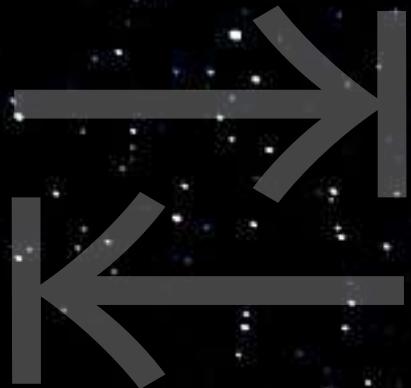
Saintly reliance in the archonitic

substructure of the Devil's destiny recognition

Vagrant Archimedes

transmission Initiation

‘chain’ the Knowing



Hidden faith and encoded control
unseen visions

The unknowable continues opening
envisioned from 'transmitter' erudition
contact recognition hallucination

counter-spiritual situations

God's frozen mutation spirit
spirit mutation

Earth God's spirit searching

Enochian traces

Boundless perceivable banality,
bodily in its resistance.

Contention in the space separating bizarre deities

History left behind at most a folk story
you've psyoped you

that's a stretch = holy thought

your radiation is intention

Undertow of Destiny

accepts 'Rite' universal

this was of rites

human Existence of creation interpreted

c/u



Is this the one?

Is this the one?

Yep, from three different people last night

"She was 6 when the tests happened. It was the worst three hours of my life. I don't know what it was like. She said nothing really happened. She'd zone out and stare into distances but I'm not sure that has anything to do with whatever happened. That night I walked past her room and she was sleep talking. She was counting back from 5, over and over again. I couldn't sleep for a few days after that. And she kept doing it. We never told her she was doing it. But one night she counted back from 5 for the last time and it was over. Then she grew up, forgot about it and moved out..."

Where was that from? What was he even talking about?

Don't know. Here's the second one

"Something wrong with the lamp, had to return it. The guy said he also sold fish tanks. He had some interesting fish tank designs. One of them was space themed where the surface was the moon and there was a crashed rocket. Another one was office themed and there were little cubicles for the office fish. I mentioned the place to a friend who has fish but he said he wasn't



interested. Themed aquariums confuse the fish apparently. At first I didn't understand; but then I thought about it. I thought about being a fish and being in water. Then I thought about being a fish astronaut. Then a fish office worker, in charge of the fish printer... And I was confused."

Like fish would know. These just get stupider

And you know fish? Anyways here's the last one

"We have a whole team of people whose only job is to be tuned to that frequency 24/7. They wear headphones in shifts. It's the only thing they do. The likelihood that they'll hear anything worth reporting in is near non-existent; but if they do, then supposedly the implications are on the spooky side. The only downside to the job is that listening to silence all day is the perfect condition for hallucinating sound. Some even go crazy after a few months so we have to rehire new people and send the old ones to... you know... There was this recent ca-"

Hey! That sounded important

Mom says dinner is ready

They are all out there

With their framed pictures of Eisenhower in their neat V.A. offices

Polishing their Bernie Sanders buttons

Getting ready to go to their father-in-law's surprise 65th birthday party

In Muscatine

They get a shot from the government the first of the month

Shuts them down for 24 hours

They drive from Phoenix to New York without a driver's license

Never had one in 51 years

If it has wheels, they can move it

30 day life expectancy



Finding, disarming, arming, and planting explosives for the Marines

They pay for his motel and give him some spending money

Polak? Polak!

They've seen your CEO

There are other people around but they don't seem to understand who you are and what is

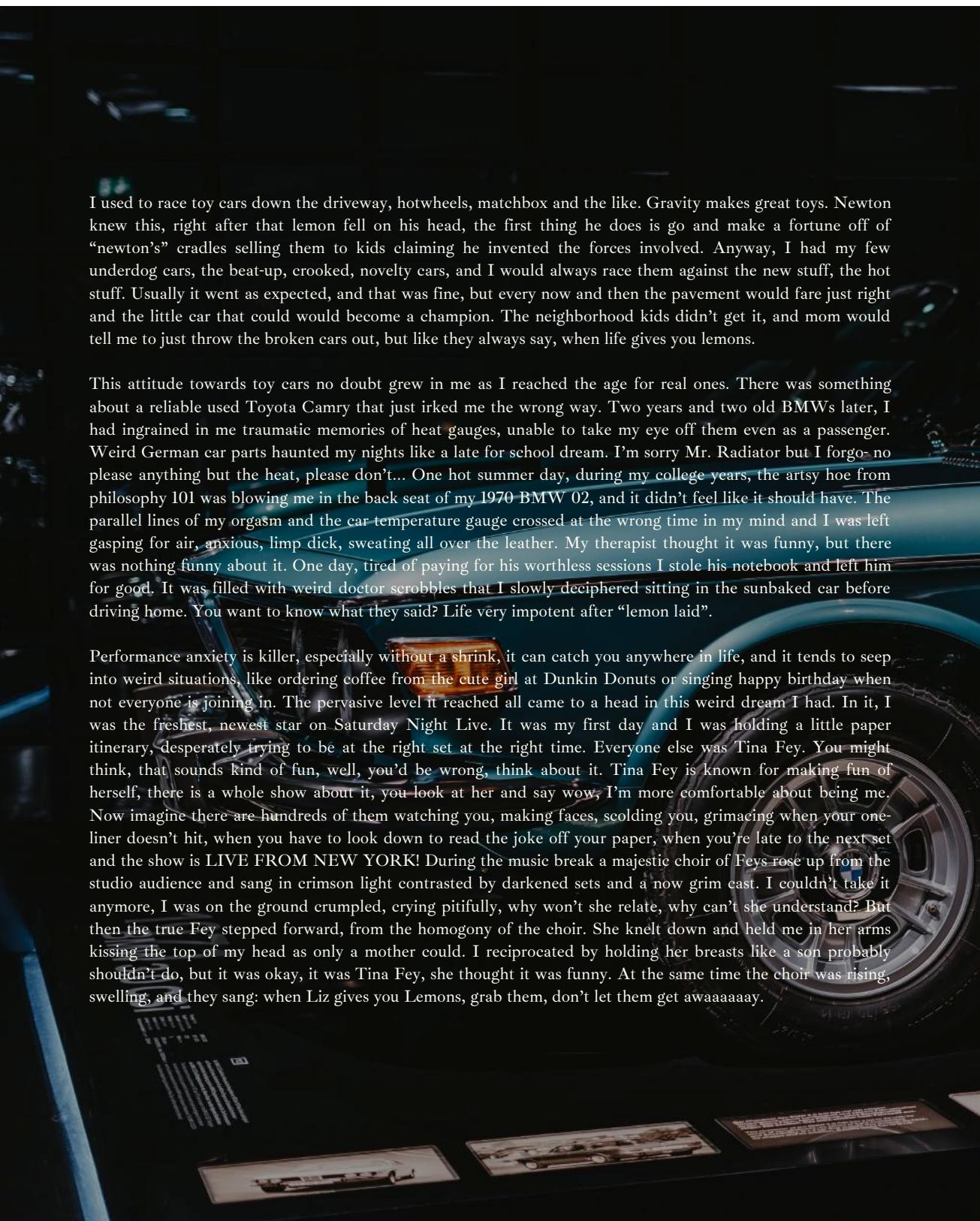
Happening

Everything gets louder like a garbage truck outside your window waking you from a dream

You open your eyes in time for work even though it's Saturday with a bag of tortillas next to

Your bed

Pretty Plain



I used to race toy cars down the driveway, hotwheels, matchbox and the like. Gravity makes great toys. Newton knew this, right after that lemon fell on his head, the first thing he does is go and make a fortune off of “newton’s” cradles selling them to kids claiming he invented the forces involved. Anyway, I had my few underdog cars, the beat-up, crooked, novelty cars, and I would always race them against the new stuff, the hot stuff. Usually it went as expected, and that was fine, but every now and then the pavement would fare just right and the little car that could would become a champion. The neighborhood kids didn’t get it, and mom would tell me to just throw the broken cars out, but like they always say, when life gives you lemons.

This attitude towards toy cars no doubt grew in me as I reached the age for real ones. There was something about a reliable used Toyota Camry that just irked me the wrong way. Two years and two old BMWs later, I had ingrained in me traumatic memories of heat gauges, unable to take my eye off them even as a passenger. Weird German car parts haunted my nights like a late for school dream. I’m sorry Mr. Radiator but I forgo- no please anything but the heat, please don’t... One hot summer day, during my college years, the artsy hoe from philosophy 101 was blowing me in the back seat of my 1970 BMW 02, and it didn’t feel like it should have. The parallel lines of my orgasm and the car temperature gauge crossed at the wrong time in my mind and I was left gasping for air, anxious, limp dick, sweating all over the leather. My therapist thought it was funny, but there was nothing funny about it. One day, tired of paying for his worthless sessions I stole his notebook and left him for good. It was filled with weird doctor scrawls that I slowly deciphered sitting in the sunbaked car before driving home. You want to know what they said? Life very impotent after “lemon laid”.

Performance anxiety is killer, especially without a shrink, it can catch you anywhere in life, and it tends to seep into weird situations, like ordering coffee from the cute girl at Dunkin Donuts or singing happy birthday when not everyone is joining in. The pervasive level it reached all came to a head in this weird dream I had. In it, I was the freshest, newest star on Saturday Night Live. It was my first day and I was holding a little paper itinerary, desperately trying to be at the right set at the right time. Everyone else was Tina Fey. You might think, that sounds kind of fun, well, you’d be wrong, think about it. Tina Fey is known for making fun of herself, there is a whole show about it, you look at her and say wow, I’m more comfortable about being me. Now imagine there are hundreds of them watching you, making faces, scolding you, grimacing when your one-liner doesn’t hit, when you have to look down to read the joke off your paper, when you’re late to the next set and the show is LIVE FROM NEW YORK! During the music break a majestic choir of Feys rose up from the studio audience and sang in crimson light contrasted by darkened sets and a now grim cast. I couldn’t take it anymore, I was on the ground crumpled, crying pitifully, why won’t she relate, why can’t she understand? But then the true Fey stepped forward, from the homogony of the choir. She knelt down and held me in her arms kissing the top of my head as only a mother could. I reciprocated by holding her breasts like a son probably shouldn’t do, but it was okay, it was Tina Fey, she thought it was funny. At the same time the choir was rising, swelling, and they sang: when Liz gives you Lemons, grab them, don’t let them get awaaaaay.



Not to imply I completely rid myself of impotency after the dream, but jerking it to 30 Rock really seemed to help out. That being said, I had to go to quite some lengths to find the episodes. This was back in the day where you had to be resourceful when pirating. The internet wasn't quite big enough to have everything yet. On top of that, for some reason people didn't know how to spell, or spelled wrnog on purpose, Limewire file names littered with everything but the actual content. It didn't stop me though, I made my own program to search for each possible anagram of each character or word that was even slightly related to the show. It was through these searches that I found lots of interesting unrelated files. Recombinations of Jenna Malone gave me gigabytes of quality maryjane x spider-man porn, and it was through Pete Hornberger that I learned about God, his brethren, and finally repented. Most importantly I found my favorite band of all time, Blind Lemonz, and like they say:

*I don't understand why I sleep all day
And I start to complain that there's no rain
All I can do is have a drink in the shade
And it rips my life away
Lemonade.*

Pretty Plain

A message from our sponsors for any whales looking for security

With \$21.6 trillion in assets (we get 1):

aladdin®
by **BLACKROCK®**

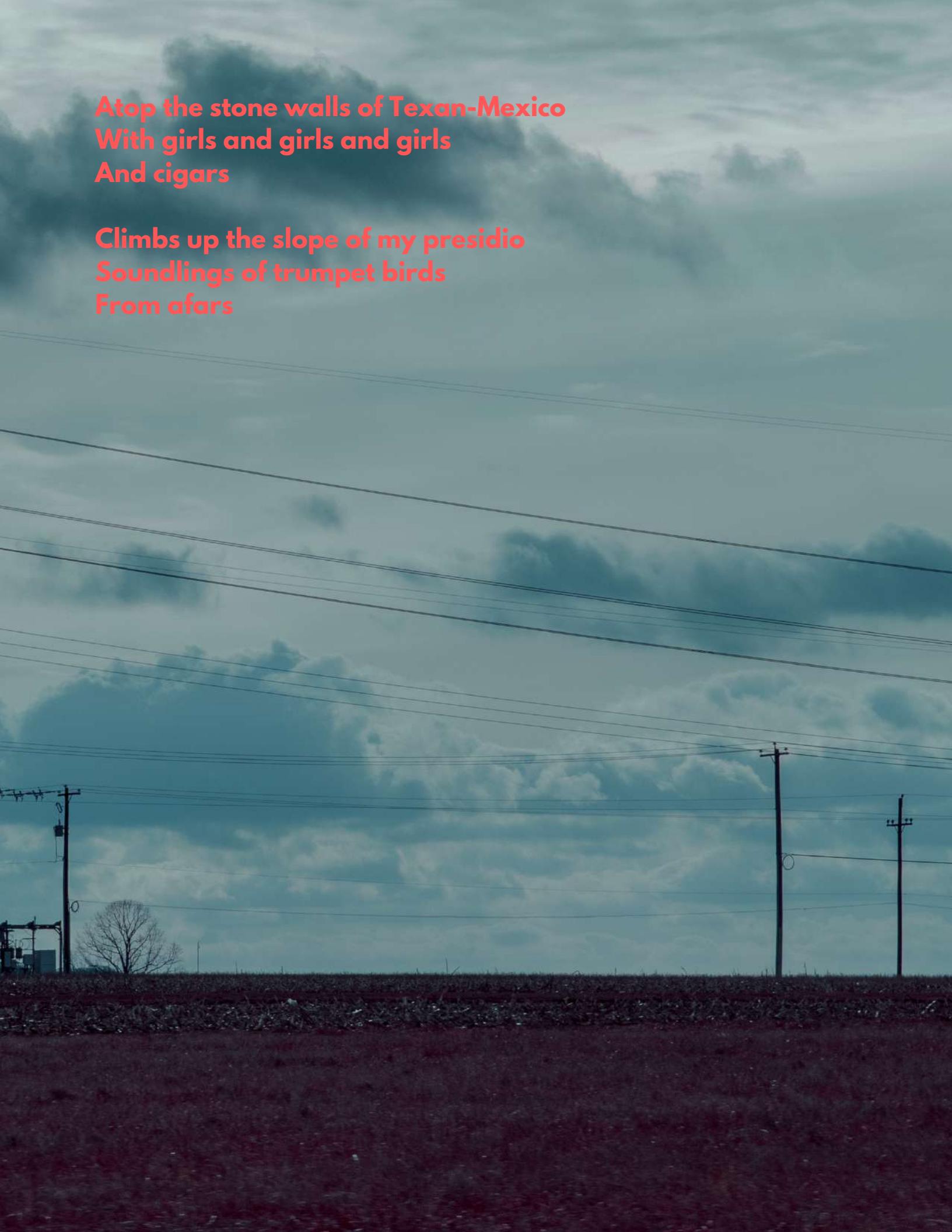
The market knows where it is at all times, it knows this because it knows where it isn't. By subtracting where it is from where it isn't, or where it isn't from where it is, whichever is greater, it obtains a difference. The BlackRock Aladdin system uses differences to generate corrective commands to drive the market from a position where it wasn't to a position where it now is. Consequently, the price where it was is now the price where it isn't.

In the event that the price where it is now is not the price where it wasn't, the system has acquired a variation (variations are caused by non-market factors, and the discussions of these factors are not considered to be within the scope of this advertisement). The variation being the difference between where the market is and where the market wasn't. If variations are considered to be a significant factor, it, too, may be corrected for by the use of the Aladdin system. However, for this to take place, the market must know where it was, also.

The "thought process" of Aladdin is as follows: because a variation has modified some of the information which Aladdin has obtained, it is not sure where the market is. However, it is sure where it isn't! (within reason) and it knows DAMN sure where it was and also where it wasn't. It now subtracts where it should be from where it wasn't (or vice versa) and by differentiating this with the algebraic difference between where it shouldn't be and where it was, it is able to obtain the difference between its deviations and its variations....which is called the ERROR SIGNAL.

Buy?

Buy?



Atop the stone walls of Texan-Mexico
With girls and girls and girls
And cigars

Climbs up the slope of my presidio
Soundlings of trumpet birds
From afars



I can faintly hear from down below
Castanets along tango twirls
And guitars

To the man up next on the firing row
Who kneels down and curls:
My regards



Are you an incompetent psychopath? Here are some words for a ransom note to get you started





A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z

Don't kill me.

Post Punk

Whenever I finish up and that smell, wet, mildly distasteful yet ever so bland sticks to me
I can remember your face in clarity;

Washing the guilt and the stains and my self loathing out in the area between where my stomach ends and my
dick begins and that smell sticks to me even after I wash it away
I can hear your voice again.

I can hear those words you would say to me late at night, circles perpetually stuck under my eyes as I repeat my 10
AM to 2 AM sleep schedule, getting ever so mentally degraded constantly
the words of affirmation, of affection,

the tears you would blare out across the microphone that I couldn't tear off my own skin like napalm.
Guilt. Did I do something wrong?

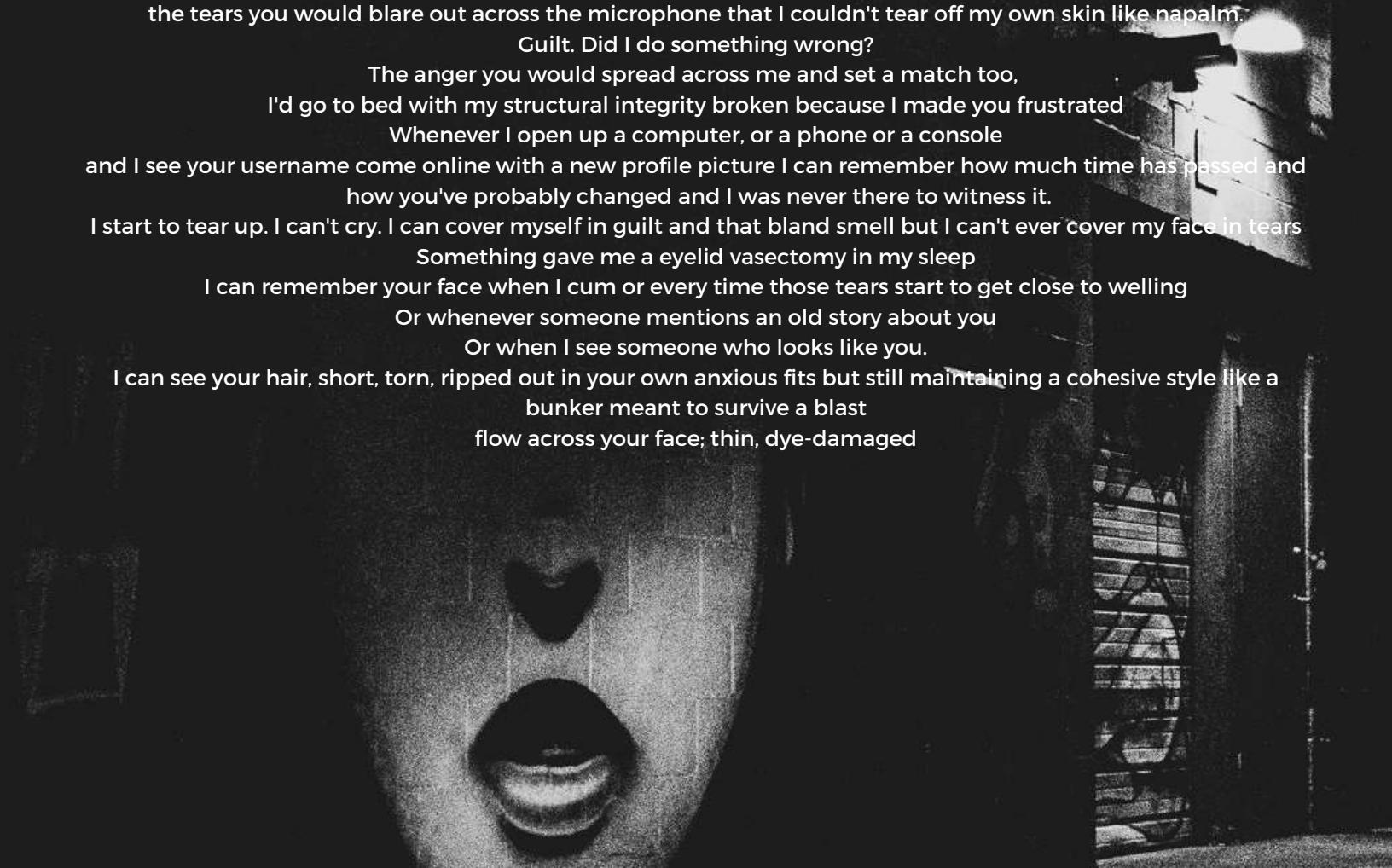
The anger you would spread across me and set a match too,
I'd go to bed with my structural integrity broken because I made you frustrated

Whenever I open up a computer, or a phone or a console
and I see your username come online with a new profile picture I can remember how much time has passed and
how you've probably changed and I was never there to witness it.

I start to tear up. I can't cry. I can cover myself in guilt and that bland smell but I can't ever cover my face in tears
Something gave me a eyelid vasectomy in my sleep

I can remember your face when I cum or every time those tears start to get close to welling
Or whenever someone mentions an old story about you
Or when I see someone who looks like you.

I can see your hair, short, torn, ripped out in your own anxious fits but still maintaining a cohesive style like a
bunker meant to survive a blast
flow across your face; thin, dye-damaged



please don't yell at me
don't kill me
please don't remove me from your memories
I don't want to die
I don't want to be forgotten

I know I can only recollect you when my heart rate slows down and I see myself covered in a disgusting reminder of sexuality or it speeds up and I can feel every agony played over
but I don't want to be forgotten

I associate you with those moments where we would
tell each other the things we'd do and moan as we would play them out with our own hands
and then I'd go to take a shower and as the water warmed and I sat outside it, I'd look at myself
in my bare skin,

folded, too pale, too tan,
I can't recognize myself in a mirror, my face is foreign.
that smell stuck too me in the shower until finally the
scalding
hot
water

washed all those memories away and I would be left with a boiled man walking out of the shower
looking at himself
and putting on clothes so he could stop being reminded of you

Eddie Van Halen

You were the antiquarian of driving a Thunderbird out of a high school parking lot on a crisp Thursday afternoon while your girl hands you your first Miller Lite of the weekend.

You were the turbine spinning as people cheer so hard on Daytona's infield that rolled up Playboys fly out of the back pockets of old Levis.

You were the solar panel soaking up the relaxed excitement of a first step taken on a killer Wichita morning.

You were the tap in the tree of life for every \$100 bill found on the ground, calculus exam slayed with a 71, and cold drink of water.

You were a dream catcher ready for fleeting moments of vigor, the warm breeze of exuberance. Ready to ride them like a twisting bull and preserve them in crashing waves.



Dogemage to Catalonia

You were expecting
something worth reading?
Alas, another fool fallen into an
unseen trap (not gay by the way)
I bet you feel "shafted"
get it? Ha Ha
Ha Ha
Ha Ha
Ha Ha
Ha Ha
Ha Ha
How funny you must find me, truly
How large my intellect must seem,
truly
What a retard
It's funny because
I said a "slur"
The pinnacle of comedy, truly
My balls are misshapen, how tragic



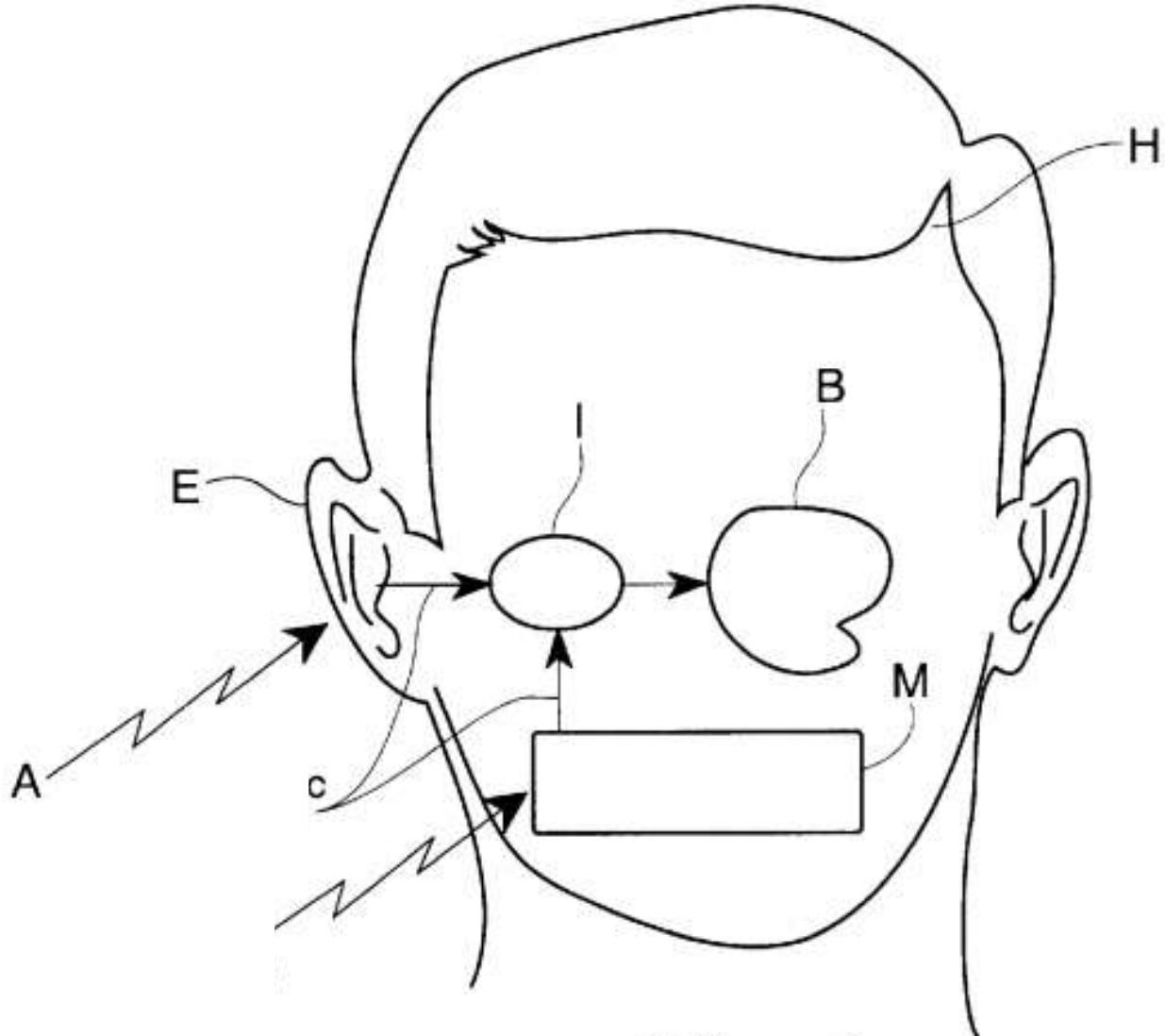
You will rue what you have done



I was a 20 year old lad a month ago feeling gloomy from my country's lock-downs and my idleness. It was in this dampness that I spotted a peculiar post on /lit/ where I drown lost hours by talking about books so i don't have to read them. It was /lit/'s very own magazine. Being a excessively poor computer science undergrad I am furiously turned on by anything open source and immediately contributed some half good poetry that I made. You can only imagine my joy at hearing that my poem was accepted by the big Uncle Anon in charge of the whole project. Who knows what he does if he runs something like this in his spare time , he might be some hot shot editor for a local magazine and he thought my poem was OK (he even gave it a kek, that's 3 k's right there). Every day for the next month or so I check /lit/ to see if the new edition is out. Skip to today the day after a disastrous birthday that went sour from friends that changed to much in the other colleges. Figure I haven't checked whether that new edition is out yet. I see it on the website. Excitedly scroll through the new brightly covered pages of the /lit/ magazine. I'm gonna show my girlfriend what I've done and she will be so proud and we will passionately kiss in front of the monitor. You can imagine my melancholy Uncle Anon, I don't even have to say it but you knew what happened ,it was never there. Why Uncle Anon ,why? You gave it a kek Uncle Anon I just don't understand. One day I will be rich from my college education then I'll show you. Now every time you see someone rich and college educated you will think "perhaps that's that college educated anon whose poem I didn't add to the /lit/ magazine" ,and you will turn sour from knowing that there is one life you could not ruin like your own. Or perhaps I will keep on contributing to your magazine until I am the sole best contributor and then one day I will abruptly stop. Now you have to distrust all the anon's that contribute.

-With disappointment

Anon who ended his poem with naughty!



**A minimalist
piece for the
illiterati**

Fig. 1

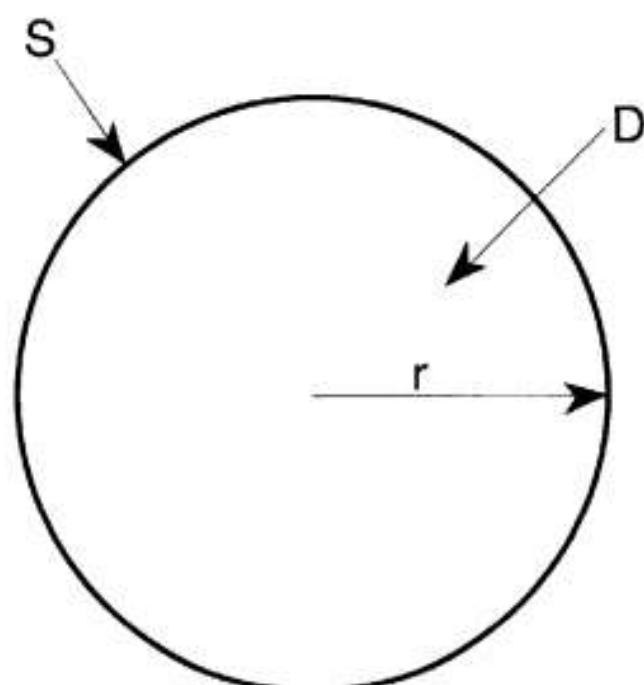


Fig. 2

SYSYPHYS



Joseph sighed as he felt his phone vibrate, just as he was setting it down on the restaurant table. With an easy motion he flipped it around, and saw Vanessa had posted a picture. Clicking the notification he glanced at the picture, and liked it. "You know there's a new app for that," Tommy said nonchalantly. "How long do you think my nachos will take?"

"I don't know, ten minutes. What, a new photo app?" he replied, wondering if there was room on his phone.

"No, I found an app that likes pictures, and replies to notifications and shit," Tommy explained. "You really think ten minutes, it's an appetizer the whole point is they come out fast."

"So what, it just does all your social media automatically?"

"Basically."

"But wouldn't that mean the app has full permissions to read every message you get."

"I think you can change what it replies to, like just liking pictures, or even replying to messages."

"I would just let some program talk for me, how does it even do that?"

"Some machine learning AI server."

"Great so it's beaming all of my private information to their own server, sounds real above board," Joseph objected.

"What do you think your phone does anyway, you're an idiot if you think every message you send doesn't end up in at least two government servers, and twice as many corporate."

"So you have it?" Joseph asked, trying to cut Tommy's rant off at the pass.

"Yeah, I had to download the .apk, it's not on any storefront."

"No red flags there," Joseph muttered. "Turn on message replying, lets see how smart it is."

"Sounds fun," Tommy pulled his phone out of his pocket, and fiddled with it for a moment. "Alright try it."

"What's up man" he texted. They waited eagerly, staring at the phone on the table. "This is dumb, why is it taking so long?" he asked.

"I think it takes a random amount of time to respond, so it doesn't look like you're too eager." Tommy answered.

They were distracted when the nachos arrived, and halfway through his phone buzzed. "Not much, how bout you." Joseph read aloud. "Thinking about movies, what's your favourite?" he narrated, sending the message. "See how it handles that," he said, confident he could outsmart the app.

They were surprised when it replied almost immediately. "Guess we're in conversation mode now," Tommy commented, looking at his phone on the table.

"Con-air, truly above board in every aspect." Joseph read, knowing that was Tommy's favourite. "Spooky."

"That sounds familiar," Tommy mulled it over a bite of nachos. "I think I tweeted something like that a while back." He picked up his phone, and scrolled through it. "Yeah back in June, the exact sentence."

"Okay then, let's see it handle this." Joseph sent a message and waited. Tommy's phone buzzed twice.

"It says important message, please handle personally. Very funny," he said with mock humour reading the message. "I too am madly in love with you. Still you have to admit it's pretty cool."

"I guess, but what's even the point of having Instagram if I let a bot look at all the pictures."

"So you don't have to waste time with the upkeep of a dozen friends all wanting a tiny bit of your attention."

"So this morning when you commented wow on my breakfast."

"That was the bot, at most I would've liked it, but you felt good from it,"

Their food arrived, and conversation ceased as they ate. When they were finished Joseph glanced at his phone which had three notifications. "Okay, do you have a link to app," Joseph surrendered.

"I can send it to your cloud, then just install it from there," Thomas told him. Joseph watched the file arrive, Sysyphys.apk. "Sysyphys, isn't that an STD?" Joseph asked.

"I think it's supposed to Sisyphus, but spelled with y's to be techy."

"That's the, uh," Joseph paused as he tried to recall the definition. "Greek guy, pushed the boulder."

"It's a fable to illustrate how pointless life's struggles are, or the cruelty of gods, or something along those lines. He would push the boulder but every time the mountain got bigger or the boulder rolled back down, point is he was stuck doing a meaningless task for eternity, Ala push notifications."

Joseph installed it and set the bot to liking posts on all the photo apps. It informed him that it would continue his activity following his previous actions. The next day when he woke up, after ten minutes scrolling through twitter he changed it to include twitter. That was when Sysyphys informed him that it could author tweets, then have him sign off on them. That seemed convenient, so he allowed it, but by the end of the day after checking a half dozen replies, he decided that the program wrote so innocuously that it could just do it automatically. Whenever some miscellaneous app bothered him, he would just put it on Sysyphys's load. It was only after his phone buzzed with Sysyphys telling him there was an important message, that he realized he had barely lifted his phone all week.

Line in the Sand

A photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, a wooden stick with a blue cap lies on the sand, pointing towards the ocean. In the background, a thatched umbrella stands on the sand, with the ocean and a cloudy sky visible.

The man stood on the beach. The beach belonged to him as much as any man could own anything. There he reached out with a stout stick, and drew a line in the sand. "No one will cross this line, this is where I will stand, and none shall be allowed to pass." He watched the tide, and looked up at the sky, and was content. A snake approached, he wore a fine suit tailored to fit, and his scales were black and bright red. Despite his fancy dress the snake seemed hollow in some way. "You will let me pass," it ordered.

"No this is my line, and no one will cross it," the man replied.

"Very well then." The snake drew out his wallet. "How much will it cost for you to let me pass."

In his earlier days the man would have accepted that, taking a fair sum. After all what did the line really matter. Even a few years previous he would have named an outrageous sum, something the snake wouldn't possibly pay, but now with this line, on this day, nothing could move him. "There is nothing any could offer that would cause me to let you cross this line," he rebuked.

"Feh, be this way you fool," the snake hissed. "I could have given you all the money in the world, made you a god among the stars, granted any wish."

"I have no wish, only the will to see this line is not crossed."

The snake slithered to the side, for the line was only as long as the man could draw it, and went past, coming back around to stand behind the man. "There now I am on this side, and what did you accomplish, nothing."

"You may have reached the other side, but it remains true that you didn't cross my line, merely circumvented it."

"So you are useless you admit, a mere pebble in my path."

"And if there were a thousand men beside me?" The man questioned,

"Then I would walk around them to."

"But a thousand thousand, each with a line in sequence stretching around the world?"

"Then I would find one that could be bribed."

"You couldn't cross my line, what leads you to believe you could cross any."

"Bah, I waste my time I am already past you, and you cannot stop me if you hold the line."

"I have but one purpose, to hold the line." So the snake stormed away leaving the beach once again peaceful and undisturbed. The man stood there watching the tide rise.

A bull approached, pure black and glistening with sweat. Muscles rippled under its skin, it was as tall as the man, and many times more powerful. Horns curved out to either side, as thick as the man's fist, and with deadly points. "Step aside," the bull bellowed.

"I can't, this is my line and none may cross it."

"I have crossed many such lines, and trampled stronger men than you."

"You will have to trample me as well, I will not be moved."

The bull roared and charged forward. The man did his best to fend it away with his stick, but the bull would turn and make another run, each time caring less for what little pain the man could inflict with the stick. The man plunged the stick into the sand panting.

"Have you given up yet? Fall to the ground, and you will be spared the horns," the bull said, shaking his head to make clear the danger of the horns.

The man stood firm, and with bellow the bull ran at him. The bull expected the man to dodge away to the left or right, as all whom he had trampled before had, but the man would not move. So the horns landed to either side of his chest, and couched themselves below his armpits. The bull was enraged, and with a twist of his neck sent the man flying over him. This saved him from trampling so the man escaped from the encounter relatively unharmed, having landed on the soft sand. "There and now I am past, and it is for naught but luck that you still breath," the bull crowed.

The man returned to the stick where it marked the line, and redrew the trampled line. "You may have crossed the line, but I did not allow it."

"No man can stand against my strength, you accomplish nothing standing there, wasting your life."

"But if I had a thousand men standing behind me?"

"Then I would trample each of you."

"But if they were not armed with a simple stick like I, but instead had each had sharp sword?"

"Then I would gather my friends and a thousand bulls would make short work of your army."

"But which one of you would go first, I think you would find no volunteers in the herd of bulls."

"Bah, I waste my time I am already past you, and you cannot stop me if you hold the line."

"I have but one purpose, to hold the line." So the bull stormed away, leaving the beach once again peaceful and undisturbed. The man stood there watching the tide rise.

A bird approached, beautiful with all the colours of the tropics. It circled over head before landing in front of the man. "What is the point of this line?"

"I will not allow anyone past it," the man answered.

"But I flew over it many times before, even just now I crossed it while circling."

"I cannot stop you from flying over it, for it is not within my power but I care little for what I cannot do."

"So you will let the birds fly across, and the insects crawl beneath."

"Perhaps below is an insect with its own line, and above you will find another bird holding you behind it's line."

"I think not, it is not the nature of such creatures to hold the line, only fools such as yourself do."

"I warn you to not try and cross the line within my reach, back away and be high in the sky before you try to cross. I will stop those I can, and in doing so know I have given it my all."

"Why not abandon this fools quest, the tide is rising, and if you follow me I can lead you to a paradise, a place of honeyed milk, and ease, where the thought of lines will not come to you."

"If I forgot this line, I would forget myself. I have committed all my will to this, and have none left to be swayed by honeyed words. I have but one purpose to hold the line."

"Very well." The bird flapped it's wings, and took to the air passing over the line high above the man, leaving the beach once again peaceful and undisturbed. The man stood there watching the tide rise.

The tide rose higher till it washed away the line. The man redrew it, but with every wave it was washed away. Soon the waters were so high that they covered the line always. No matter how deeply the man dug the line the constant motion of the water would slowly erode it. A fish, with plain grey scales, and without any defining feature that would let someone determine its species, approached the line. "What are you doing?"

"I'm holding the line."

"What line?" The fish swam down. "Is this supposed to be a line, this indent?"

"Yes."

"Why not go further back to where the tide hasn't reached, surely that would serve your purpose better."

"This is not the first line I have drawn, many times before I've done this. Each time when the tide rose I pulled away and found another place further back to draw the line."

"So do that again."

"This is my last line, perhaps I grow tired of retreating, or the land back further is too rocky for my liking, both are true I suppose. I will remain here."

"But the line cannot be seen below the water, I can barely even see where it was on close inspection."

"True, but the tide as it comes in, it must again come out. If that takes a day then I will stay here waiting for that. Even if it takes a decade I will remain."

"You are a man you cannot stay in the waters for so long a time."

"I will hold the line, and when I die my bones will mark the spot, so that those who come after will know someone else held the line."

"Then you are a fool, and I will be on my way." The fish swam past, but the mans hand reached out and caught it.

"Just because you can no longer see the line, doesn't mean I do not know where it is, or that it means any less. I have but one purpose, to hold the line."

The man flung the fish away, and held the line that only he could still see.





Anonymous Wed Mar 31 16:58:20 2021 No.17912757

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[>>OP](#)

rate my bedroom &



A Town by the Beach; or, Anon-Oedipus

I've sat down at a table with my dear friend, he doesn't have a name. Guy I knew knew a girl who didn't have a name either, had to pick one. He also knew a lot about this one game, town with no name. He wouldn't stop talking about how it replicated scenes from a few different western movies. He knew so much about media, media analysis, and literary shit. Used to browse /lit/ a lot, and he said he was partially responsible for a lot of the charts there. He had hundreds of them on his computer, he said before he left the place. He was a really smart guy, I think he's taking college courses on linguistics right now but a family history of alcoholism sort of fucked him over.

There's two porcelain tea cups there on this table, stuff I took out of my mothers cupboard, steaming. The shitty wooden chairs keep grinding when I move them forward or backwards. It takes me a few minutes of chair screeching while we sip the tea awkwardly to figure out where I like my legs to rest, on account of their length. Finally, I start to talk to him.

Had a dream I was the leader of a cowboy gang, sort of like Blood Meridian.

That so?

Yeah. I had this crew of cowboys, recently I've been watching a lot of anime about mercenaries and reading more cowboy literature so I think this was sort of a response. I was the leader, like I said previously. My men had an issue with me. I'd never execute hostages or shoot prisoners. And I said I didn't know why I did it. Eventually I found a tied up hostage, and I shot him in the skull. I had one of those old cap and ball revolvers, this must've been before the advent of the single action and what not. They didn't ask anything after that. I think I woke up sometime afterward. You know, I had a dream last night too. This one I was just walking around a [theatre](#), and I had to piss. I brought out a glass cup, like one my grandmother has and I kept trying to piss but the piss wouldn't come out. And I kept pushing and then I woke up and I thought "oh fuck my brain is trying to stop me from pissing myself, I only have one good pair of underwear. Shit." and then I got up and used the restroom. I was supposed to go to work that day, but I was sick as shit. Sinuses were so clogged and draining I could barely feel my throat. So I called in and told my boss, he was fine.

That was this morning, right? You told me you normally go to work on Saturdays.

Yeah that was this morning. So I just wandered around for a bit and browsed /k/. My favorite thread that I had a few ideas for was archived which I was kind of sad about, but it's ok. Soon enough they'll be another one. We haven't had a /k/ sins thread in a while. I still think my favorite response to one of those was a guy who said he gave his neighbors wife his .22 mini revolver, one of those real tiny types in exchange for her guzzling an entire bottle of soda and burping on his cock. Have you ever heard of 120 days of sodom?

No, don't think so.

It was this really fucked up novel, one of those old classics that pseuds read. I can't remember the specifics, I never read it, but people talk about it occasionally. It wasn't published until like 100 something years after it was written. Anyways, it was an early porn novel but it was just...completely degenerate. Sometimes I think people write their own little 120 days in those threads.

Nervous chuckles. He's doing that one tone wheeze he does when I say something stupid. Or not stupid, just something out of his expertise. I don't like to think of it but ever since he got that ex-christian girlfriend he's becoming something of a normie. He's still my best friend of course, but christ if she isn't a bad influence on him.

He slides a glass contraption across the table to me. There's something there, in that little container. I never learned the terminology for this sort of thing. My brother would probably know the terms for it. I forgot the exact procedure, so he lights the little area under it and the water starts boiling. He tells me how to inhale again. His favorite example to use is asthma inhalers since he knows I was on one of them for most of my elementary and middle school years. It works and I can already feel my head getting a bit buzzy. I'm not sure if it's my weight, or my height, or something about my autism but all weed ever did was make me buzzy and somewhat dizzy. I was always told I looked like I was reliving the Vietnam war when I got high, staring off into space. I think I was just thinking and that's how it looked. Originally when I started looking into a schizophrenia diagnosis my therapist said medical marijuana might help with the lighter symptoms.

You sure I won't be high when my parents get back?

Yeah man, I'm sure. Even if you are you can keep your composure I think. Pass it back here.

Do you have a driver home? I can't take you back, we have to cross that bridge and that always fucks me up.

Yeah, I can call an uber or something.

Oh yeah. Hadn't considered that one.

I sat down and tried to think of something to talk about. Unsurprisingly I had a bit of a fog over my thoughts. Something clicked and I was yapping.

So, I have this idea for a story.

He coughed, hard this time. Must've burnt bad.

Yeah? Tell me.

So like, it's a subversive sci-fi cyberpunk gun-porn novel. Lots of description of machinery, realistic shooting descriptions. My years as a gun autist are gonna come in handy. It's not just shitty baseless cyberpunk, neon lights and none of the substance. It's a commentary. Or not a commentary. I don't think it's really anything but fiction, actually. I think I'm putting something into it to try and I guess get it out of me. Like vomiting. Writing is just vomiting, right?

He was laughing again. I didn't think it was all that funny, but I hadn't seen him in a few months so I laughed along.

Yeah. It's just vomiting man. Keep telling me about it.

Alright. So the main guy, he sees shit all the time. He's a good shot and all, but it just isn't a good world, right? The material conditions of his world are horrible. And it's subversive. I've tried to explore it in my other writings, where there's just senseless, graphically detailed violence, but I want to go all out. There's fat whores, businessmen full of bugs that crawl all along their machined guts. Lots of gun description. Characters who just can't be redeemed. People from real life.

I don't think that's what subversive means, it isn't just gross-out humor but made sophisticated. You're supposed to go against good tastes and the ideas of the day.

I don't think we have any ideas.

He hit the bong again. Every time I heard that water boiling all it could remind me of was boiling ramen, the sort I would make back in high school when I was hungry. Every time my mom would say “you can’t have that everyday. It’s chock full of MSG” or something and I’d get pissed off because she said this every time I had ramen. I’d toss all sorts of stuff into it. I would chop up onions, put in garlic powder, old bay, worcestershire pretty frequently. The bong reminded me of something else I think.

I wasn’t gonna write that stupid shit gun porn thing. I figured maybe I should vomit it all right here. There was a lot of acid reflux in my throat already, a guest of that burning feeling alongside my shitty eating habits. I had talked with this friend plenty of times before about this sort of thing. But couldn’t hurt to do it in this state. Maybe those idiot stoners had a point about emotions.

So like, have you ever watched End of Evangelion? I can tell my speech is starting to degrade a bit, bare with me.

You’re still using the word “degrade”. I think your speech is fine.

Whatever, I can tell a difference. Anyways. There’s a scene, near the end of the film. I think it’s right before the whole “disgusting” bit. Anyways, Shinji is in the LCL pile. He has Rei on top of him, right and he just talks about something not being right. Eventually they are just talking while different scenes play behind them, Kaworu, the gay one is there. At one point Shinji is just laying on Rei’s lap and asking if things are going to hurt again. She assures them they will and then Kaworu says something about “the words “i love you you “. And I remember the second time I watched the film I cried. Or I was close to crying at the very least. I just kept thinking about my scene. You remember my ex? Not the

Nazi sympathizer one, not the one who didn’t do anything wrong, the one who broke you. Yes I know it hasn’t been that long since I was there.

Yeah. It felt long to me. I don’t know. For a solid few months, I think this was after the original shock period. This was the time when she and I would occasionally comment on each other’s posts asking a question or something. Things got worse around that time again.

Yeah, I remember anon.

Yeah. I remember I sobbed for the first time in 3 years when I saw her face one time.

Faggot.

Heh. Whatever. This was when 3.0+1.0 was coming out. I remember I had forced a few of my friends to watch the entire series, end of eva(which I had already seen once) and the rebuilds(Which I had not seen) with me so we could get prepared to watch the new film sometime in January. One of their dads had a bootleg app on his TV, so a few weeks after it was in theatres I would take a bus or a train down there and over a weekend I’d stay at his house and watch the film in person, since they all lived down there and I was the only one around my area of Florida. That town was really pretty.

I could feel a few of my motor controls fading or losing their soft touch. I figured I should just resign myself to it now and I sat down on the couch.

So like, it was one of those places that doesn’t have much too it. Just a beach, a mall. A real beach town. It was beautiful though. Plenty of places like that in this state. Anyways, she lived down there too, she was friends with all of them which is how I met all of them originally.

I remember you tried to enlist me to go down there and visit her twice since you couldn't drive.

Each time it didn't work.

Yeah. Shame of that, but it didn't change anything really. But I was gonna go see her. I was gonna talk things out with her, I think my psychoanalyst said it might be good to confront the source of that unresolved pain. I was surprised that I could find a weekend to go. Took a night bus, got there sometime around 6 or 7 AM. I think I had sent her one message about me coming down and wanting to talk and she said she was fine with the concept. I was surprised she got up that early. We were still in school around then, and she was one of those people that stayed up late and wore down their bodies like old shoes. But she was there, at the bus station, phone in hand.

How long had it last been since you had seen her?

About 3 years. I think I still had a baby face then. She had been there for my birthday. But she recognized me, and went up to talk to me. Took all my composure to not break down there. But we talked. I eventually returned to her house and

The dream ended there. Or not the dream, the idea. The daydream. I wasn't high. I was retelling a story in a daydream that itself was a story.

I missed my friend. There lay my cat, she was about 17 or 18 by now.

Stuffed animal I had gotten at a secret thing that still smelled like old friend's scented candles, if I smelled it at just the right angle.

There was a constant fixation In the last few months over her. I was gonna meet her at that bus stop, we'd go back. I'd be lying there on her legs, looking up at that ceiling covered in shitty manga printouts and unfunny jokes. And I'd ask her not to kill me. I wasn't afraid of her killing me. She may have resented me for the way I "abandoned" her, but she wouldn't have killed me. I'd just keep repeating that and the scene where Asuka covered Shinji in scalding hot coffee while he yelled for her not to kill him would play in the back of my mind. I wasn't afraid of being killed. I was afraid of being forgotten.

I didn't want to be forgotten by her, or left in that part of her memory or not be able to know of her anymore.

And as I lay there a scene would play in my mind of her pulling a cinderblock and crushing my skull as I put up no resistance. But she wouldn't, who keeps a cinder block in their room. And maybe we would make out in sweat covered clothes, saltwater on the wind from that stupid beach they built their town on pouring in.

And I'd explain to her I never wanted to abandon her. There were ghosts in my dreams, waking nightmares I suppose. Old delusions and hallucinations that haunted me. But she wouldn't understand but with the caring eyes of a mother she said she understood. There would be a tense silence for a moment as I went over to the house of the guy whose dad had a bootlegging app and I said goodbye. I would watch that film quietly with them and cheer when they would cheer and cry when they would cry at the conclusion of that series.

And I'd go to bed in an unfamiliar house and wake up early so I could get home before monday and there she would be, a specter at the bus station. Offering a kiss and goodbyes as I got onto the greyhound, filled with all those elements of humanity we'd like to forget. Here was I, one of them, forgotten. There would scarce be an exchange of words between her and I afterwards. There wouldn't be a question of "what are we?" over text. Hurried exchanges and hasty made commitments that would damn me as a pact with the

devil made afterwards. The sort of thing that wound me up in that mess a few months back, nearly a year back. That sort of comatose feeling, being broken. Your memories are slowly suppressed as you try to fight back that time in your life. Being unable to recognize yourself in a mirror, slowly convincing yourself she wasn't real.

Oedipus had me in the grasp. Why couldn't I stop returning, those caring eyes, the agony that had been done. Those months nearly comatose afterwards. Yet I returned in some part because I couldn't see myself not. There wasn't a way to escape it. The bus ride home would be quiet, as I scrawled into a journal. Oedipus knew my fears, knew I was afraid of being forgotten by the nurturer. Cast out.

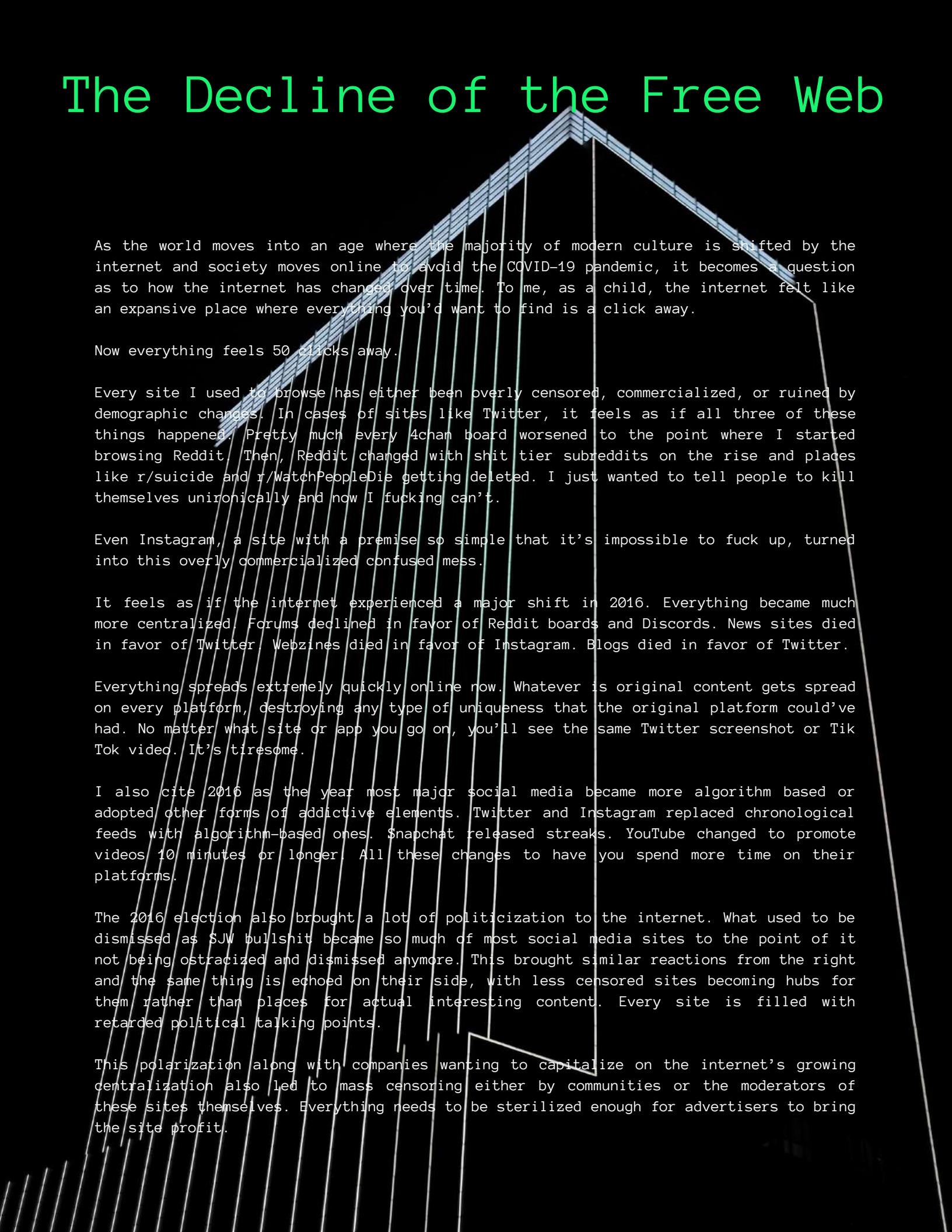
I was gonna play out the same thing over and over. And I would imagine myself happy the whole time. And I'd come out tired of course.

I'd keep seeing things that weren't there and hearing voices and convincing myself of nonsense in a haze. My face would be raw from a shitty shaving job and I'd write shitty novellas and my friends would have to bear with my crying.

And on that dark, dirty greyhound bus, reflected in the fogged windows I'd see another foreign face. It would be my own of course, but I'd be unable to recognize it nonetheless. I've been forgotten again, by myself rather than her. She was just a tabula rosa, was she not? Project yourself unto an unwilling subject. You hate yourself more than you could ever know.

Have you ever run your finger under an electrical socket, the sort that's kind of open on a light switch?

The Decline of the Free Web



As the world moves into an age where the majority of modern culture is shifted by the internet and society moves online to avoid the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes a question as to how the internet has changed over time. To me, as a child, the internet felt like an expansive place where everything you'd want to find is a click away.

Now everything feels 50 clicks away.

Every site I used to browse has either been overly censored, commercialized, or ruined by demographic changes. In cases of sites like Twitter, it feels as if all three of these things happened. Pretty much every 4chan board worsened to the point where I started browsing Reddit. Then, Reddit changed with shit tier subreddits on the rise and places like r/suicide and r/WatchPeopleDie getting deleted. I just wanted to tell people to kill themselves unironically and now I fucking can't.

Even Instagram, a site with a premise so simple that it's impossible to fuck up, turned into this overly commercialized confused mess.

It feels as if the internet experienced a major shift in 2016. Everything became much more centralized. Forums declined in favor of Reddit boards and Discords. News sites died in favor of Twitter. Webzines died in favor of Instagram. Blogs died in favor of Twitter.

Everything spreads extremely quickly online now. Whatever is original content gets spread on every platform, destroying any type of uniqueness that the original platform could've had. No matter what site or app you go on, you'll see the same Twitter screenshot or Tik Tok video. It's tiresome.

I also cite 2016 as the year most major social media became more algorithm based or adopted other forms of addictive elements. Twitter and Instagram replaced chronological feeds with algorithm-based ones. Snapchat released streaks. YouTube changed to promote videos 10 minutes or longer. All these changes to have you spend more time on their platforms.

The 2016 election also brought a lot of politicization to the internet. What used to be dismissed as SJW bullshit became so much of most social media sites to the point of it not being ostracized and dismissed anymore. This brought similar reactions from the right and the same thing is echoed on their side, with less censored sites becoming hubs for them rather than places for actual interesting content. Every site is filled with retarded political talking points.

This polarization along with companies wanting to capitalize on the internet's growing centralization also led to mass censoring either by communities or the moderators of these sites themselves. Everything needs to be sterilized enough for advertisers to bring the site profit.

A photograph of two bronze tiger statues, one on the left and one on the right, facing each other. They are positioned on a light-colored surface against a plain, light-colored background. The tigers are in a dynamic, crouching pose, with their heads turned towards each other as if in a confrontation. The bronze has a dark, greenish-brown patina.

>1 short

Enjoy these tigers instead

96; or, A Regrettable Lapse in Judgement by the Editor

The weary editor scans over the pages, "91, 92 - that's a duplicate, 92, 93, 94, 95, no more 96." Perhaps "weary" isn't spelt that way he briefly ponders? But he's getting sidetracked here, that's present-editor that has to worry about spelling, we're talking about past-editor and his antics. Right, so this bloke, a damn straight bloke might I say, he sees this 95 (Is "sees" apostrophe? I can't see how it could be. Well of course you don't, perspective you understand) and starts thinking to himself "96....", there's a vague notion there - non-verbal thoughts on loop gradually syncing in repetitions to the beat of "Amateur Hour" by Sparks

(I will tell you on this character's behalf that "Girl from Germany" is their best song, if you must be contrarian about the absurdist value of "This Town ain't big enough for both of us". It's about the exact girl from Germany that every young European lad has met at some point in his life, thinking to himself "Mein Gott, this here, this is the product of such a rich psychohistory as Germany has "But not psycho as in psychopath (The forebrain quickly shoots off to the hind before it gets any ideas)". Such confidence, such graceful seriousness... truly the thinking man's tomboy a German woman is..."

Of course this young man (imaginary still) is in Berlin, real kookoo town; the kind of place where you dress up in full leather with your mates, arrive at the airport through the Law of Attraction (in hippy circles this refers to the process of meditating on your destination (ideally 30 minutes away) for 15 minutes, taking a vial of ket, and coming to at your destination without experiencing the boredom of walking) and pounce on unsuspecting American tourists/privates - saying in your smoothest German accent "Wie geits! mein American friend, let me show you crazy European style, ja ja, "Know what I mean?" zegen in Engels? (approving nods from your friend in Jewish Orthodox robes) Hahaha, come on man, lets go!" (To date I have gotten 3 privates dishonourably discharged for uncouth conduct)).

As I was saying, this is all filler text written in that grey area between sleep and wakefulness - known as Brain Paralysis Bingo in the industry. That's page 96 for you, well, it contributes to that holistic notion of "96", this is actually going to be page 93 (that's N1n37y 7hr33 for you mathematicians studying imaginary numbers).

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

Surgeon with at least one year of experience to install five American Express Black cards in my fingers, bring your own card reader for payment.

Anons wishing to place classified ads please do so by email or on the board (thanks again):

Skilled lawyer to help me break Ted Kaczynski out of prison, and if you know Liam Neeson's agent put me in touch.

Code monkey wanted to make a cryptocurrency that I can "loose" all my money on, I'm not paying that alimony.

3d modeller to help me construct a digital copy of Thomas Pynchon for upcoming Zoom date.

Man with a remarkable capacity to state random numbers, preference given to amnesiacs with no formal education.

This adspace charitably paid for by one ██████████

██████████, with another small donation of \$50 your name can be decensored!

FOR SALE

Ultrasound parametric speaker - I've had my fun zapping messages from "Satan" into the brains on churchgoers, hide tent not included.

Large collection of paintings, have been holding onto them for about 80 years, all in great condition. Free - so long as you handle the lawsuits yourself.

Casio F91-Ws for sale in bulk, \$40/kg, if you're a math PhD I can show you how to use em properly. Look for Osama in the phone-book.

Machine that paints Rothkos, it's basically just two articulated paintbrushes. Great profit potential, \$20,000

LOST

You ;(

My guide, he told me we were just going to rest in this basecamp for a day, but this morning he disappeared, any help from well-hiked locals would be much appreciated.

A smidgen of anthrax, laced cocaine, do NOT try it yourself if found, you have to build up resistance.

All of my clothes. This fetish has gone too far.

Pet rat of incredible proportions, not man eating but very well travelled, hard to miss.

That's just it, "lost". "Lost what" you ask? I'm not quite sure what you mean.

Scale model of Mu and Lemuria with esoteric properties, I have the legal authority to dismiss any crimes you must undertake to get them back, top dollar on retrieval.

Laputan machine, Flatlander woman. Don't worry about those words, just checking.

If I catch one more of you punks huffing leaded gas out of my pickup I'm going to flip, you have been warned.

PERSONALS

I heard you sneaking those dogs into town in the dead of the night. Don't think I don't know where the REAL Chinatown is, I am going to find you.

To the homeless man on Pell street: Sorry I didn't have my wallet on me that day, tell me your Ethereum address the next time we meet and I'll send you some cash, you have to pay the transaction fees though.

&
by/lit/

No Thanks To:

Adobe

& is a collaborative
effort made by strangers
over the internet.

Special Thanks To:

The Internet Archive

Babe The Big Sleep
Divine Inspiration

&