

&mp

SEP 21
009

LUXURY PERIODICAL WAXWING SLAIN EDITION



And from the inside, too, I'd duplicate
Myself, my &mp, an apple on a plate




by Anonymous
by Anonymous

&

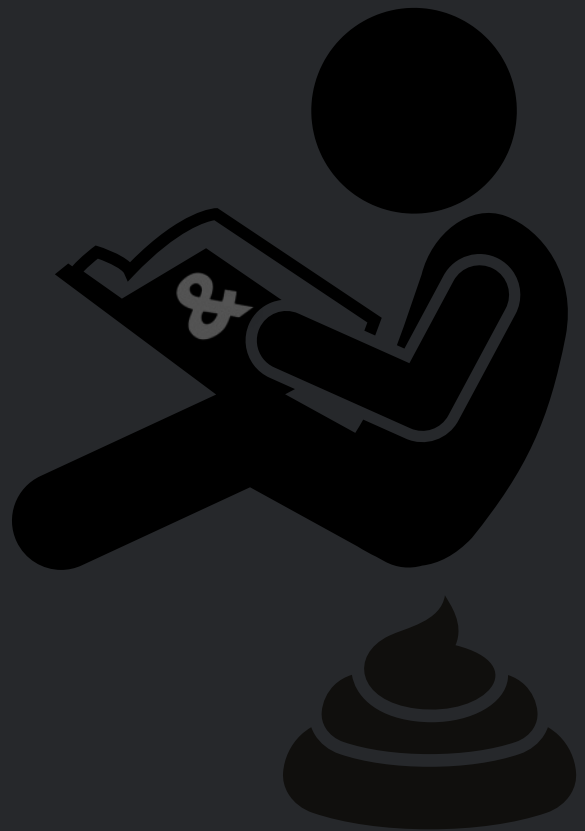


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>>  **Anonymous** 09/20/21(Mon)00:31:17 No.19083211 ▶

[>>19083202 \(OP\)](#)

great job on this great project i thank you for making it possible
i dont write or read, just shitpost, but goodluck



Steal These Stories!

An East German secret police officer discovers a gloryhole in the Berlin wall. Homoerotic capitalist passions ensue

A team of coal miners become trapped when a ceiling collapses. They recount memories childhood, work, and family. Each story is more heartbreaking than the one before as their oxygen levels and chances of rescue decrease. The story ends when it is revealed that they are a group of children hiding in a dressing room in Sears and their mom's start yelling for them to come out and get Orange Julius.

A young ambitious man who is determined to become a great writer stumbles upon a mermaid on his morning jog on a secluded beaches' shoreline. She winks at him and slips in the water. The dude swims after her for an hour and gets eaten by a whale where he spends the rest of his life Pinocchio style, writing a sequel to moby dick that will never be read.

a buggish porn-and-internet addict is dying. his dim-witted stepparents don't visit him in the hospital. he hallucinates — his flesh secedes from his body, physically, creating an independent meat-country-soul that walks out of the room, erect in posture, penis, and pride. his last moments are painful, and doctors and nurses occasionally come in to make fun of him pretending he can't hear.

a cockroach is burned alive by a blowtorch. the story consists of prolonged bug-agony put to text. without memory, each moment is an infinite hell, and his cockroach soul stays tormented in his immobile carapace forever.

Me, killing jerry seinfeld, the novelization. I will kill jerry seinfeld. this is a credible threat, I will kill jerry seinfeld. i am going to be a murderer of the celebrity comedian jerry seinfeld, here i will not divulge the means or motive, and it won't happen soon. his death, his dead body, his corpse, his end, jerry seinfeld dies. his funeral, his grief, his fear, i am going to kill jerry seinfeld. his death will be due to me, I will kill him. i have watched all of the seinfeld tv series multiple times, with a coverage of 2-3 watches per episode on average. i enjoy it each time.

you, the reader, fucking yourself.
beautifully.

cameras, flexibility, an audience, pure joy and freedom.

Tom Baylor SVP, Alexa Management at Amazon. during his off hours, he invents the perfect masturbatory system that, once released to the wide world, finishes history. the story i'm pitching here is not so much what happens after mankind is killed by a final hedonism, but a visceral description of the Amazon Please™ — maybe something like a vat of stimulatory fluids that you step into and are jizzed to perfection, or maybe a direct neuroelectrical mapping solving reverse equations in order to bury a person fatally in orgasm. Or maybe, this story takes place after the domination and pacification of the species. Luddites and mortifiers of the flesh are the only remaining cohorts, but they are physically enslaved and deemed worthless by the Baylorites, who relegate them to starve to death in a pit.

Black employee successfully sues a fast food chain for the slavery implications in term "chain" and moves to all-white suburb.

k-anon



The Balcony

Every day was the same. I turned the key to my room entering with a sigh greeted by silence and the dark. It was a brutally hot July but I hadn't left the air conditioner running to save on the electric. Making my way through the suffocating atmosphere of the front room I switched it on, taking a folding chair from the table and setting it down in front. I unclasped the first two buttons of my shirt and pulled my collar from my breast, letting the air run over my core and through my hair. The house was old, but the ac wasn't musty or stale. I kicked off my shoes and rubbed the area just under my big toes, which always seemed to be inflamed at my age, with my thumb.

As I sat in the silence with only the florescent lights droning overhead, the fatigue set in. I had only just turned thirty, and knew that to be this tired was ridiculous. I got the full eight hours, and even still I never woke rested. Then it was the grind of work for twelve hours with two fifteen minute breaks and an hour for lunch. I didn't even do anything to be tired. Just sat in a cube crunching number for some accounting firms whose jackass clientele played golf in the sun. I despise them so much. One of the older guys at the firm, Marv, says I'm just jealous I haven't tasted the good life. Sour grapes, tale as old as time. Maybe he has a point, but when I think of myself in that situation I can't imagine myself happy. I'm not envious of the paychecks, the women, the parties, the food or any of it. I'm envious of the freedom. The ability to just do whatever you want, unhindered. I despised them because they took it all for granted. For all of their worldly selves, they never seemed to truly be alive.

It's not like I didn't have my own desires. I fashioned myself a writer. When I brought it up at company parties, nobody could wrap their head around why. I didn't like water cooler talk, it depressed me. It's not that I looked down on the people I worked with, far from it. I was sad for them. I remember one of them talking about a trip to Italy, but she kept saving money wanting it to be perfect. Then one day her ticker froze up on her and she dropped dead at her desk. I wonder why she never just went. Maybe the idea of Italy was the only thing keeping her going. Maybe she never went because she was afraid, that if Italy wasn't Heaven on Earth she'd drop dead from shame and disappointment. Instead she dropped dead in Kansas; at a desk whose firm didn't even close down for the day. I still remember the typing and clicking in the background as the EMTs wheeled the stretcher past me. Thank God they had her face covered, or it would be in my mind forever. I never understood how someone could do that. Waste their life and stagnate, especially subservient to someone who didn't give a single shit. After a while I realized everyone thought this way but no one knew how to break out. Those of us that did were too busy running to give advice. I imagined them having to constantly look over their shoulder for an omnipresent hand. The kind of hand that would drag them kicking and screaming back to their places. That's why I didn't like water cooler talk. I couldn't bear to hear dreams die on the air, mine included.

It's not like me publishing the novels in the trunk at the foot of my bed would matter. No one read these days is that everyone told me. I wanted to fight the thought, but it seemed like everyone I talked to thought the same. I remembered that short story by Ray Bradbury where the author is walking the empty streets while everyone is glued to their television sets. I could write for television. I could adapt to the changing climate of the zeitgeist. I wasn't too proud to the point of senselessness, to let Pride rot me and let me die broke and unhappy and unfulfilled. If I could make enough money from television to keep a roof over my head and time on the clock to write what I really wanted to, who cared who read it?

The thing was I had to write. Rilke once posed the question to search inside oneself and confess if you would have to die if you were forbidden to write. When I look inside myself, I see my soul as an island. The disquiet of my mind takes the form of a torrential rain, each raindrop a drop on the pond. I can catch some of those thoughts and make art of them. The more I do that, the less likely the island is to flood. The less likely I am to drown.

I leaned my head back and closed my eyes and tried to tune out the noise of the fan coming from the air conditioner and the buzz from the lights. I inhaled a deep breath and opened my eyes. The popcorn ceiling above me that had soured slightly yellow over time, and I thought of how a more optimistic mind might see stars. I got up and made my way to the kitchen. One of my coworkers, Darla had made chicken parmesan for an event, and was offering leftovers in tupperware containers in the break room fridge. I had passed up on them at first, but at the end of the day Darla had still brought me one. I didn't understand why. I thought maybe in her older age she was lonely. Or saw one of her kids in me. Still, when she had brought me the tupperware full of chicken parmesan and insisted that I take it, there was something in her eyes. Gentleness in her touch on my shoulder and sadness in her gaze that made me think that maybe she understood. As I watched the tupperware turn in the microwave I could see the slightest ghost of my reflection in the glass, and so I walked away until I could hear the shrill beeps fill the air. As I ate slowly I thought of what Darla was doing right now, possibly knitting and waiting for one of her kids to call or a grandchild to visit. Or maybe she was making chicken parmesan to stock the fridge full at work for lonely men in their thirties who maybe just need a hot meal to keep going.

I finished up and took it to the sink in the kitchen. I ran the water until it got hot, which always took too long in this old complex, and scrubbed it and the lid clean. Then I set it on a towel to dry out in the open so that I would remember to return it to her the next day. I wasn't sure if Darla wanted the tub back, or if showing her I had

taken her gift with gratitude if more would come. Still, if she would do me a kindness, I could do the minimum in return. At the darkest part of my mind, I also knew that if I didn't wash it now I'd never have the energy to, and it would sit until moldy and I'd have to throw it out. Darla didn't deserve that.

I looked out my front window to the approach of dusk. Smoky clouds over purple sky as the street lights popped to life one by one. I remembered as a kid staying out in the cul-de-sac and that being our cue to return home for the night. It was a simpler time. Or maybe I was just too young to understand how fucked things really were. It didn't matter now. I made my way to my desk and switched on my lamp, feeding my typewriter paper and beginning to try to write something. I had to use a typewriter, a computer was too distracting. It was an old Hermes Baby I had found at an estate sale. I brought it home like one would bring home an infant and I thought finally this was it. Now I was really a writer. Now I could make it. That was three years ago. The clacking of the machine soothed my head which was beginning to hurt. I reached over and took four aspirin from the bottle I kept there, chewing them without water and letting their chalky taste last on my tongue. After about an hour of typing I lost the rhythm and became frustrated. I balled up what I had so far and absentmindedly released it from my hand into the wicker wastebasket at my feet.

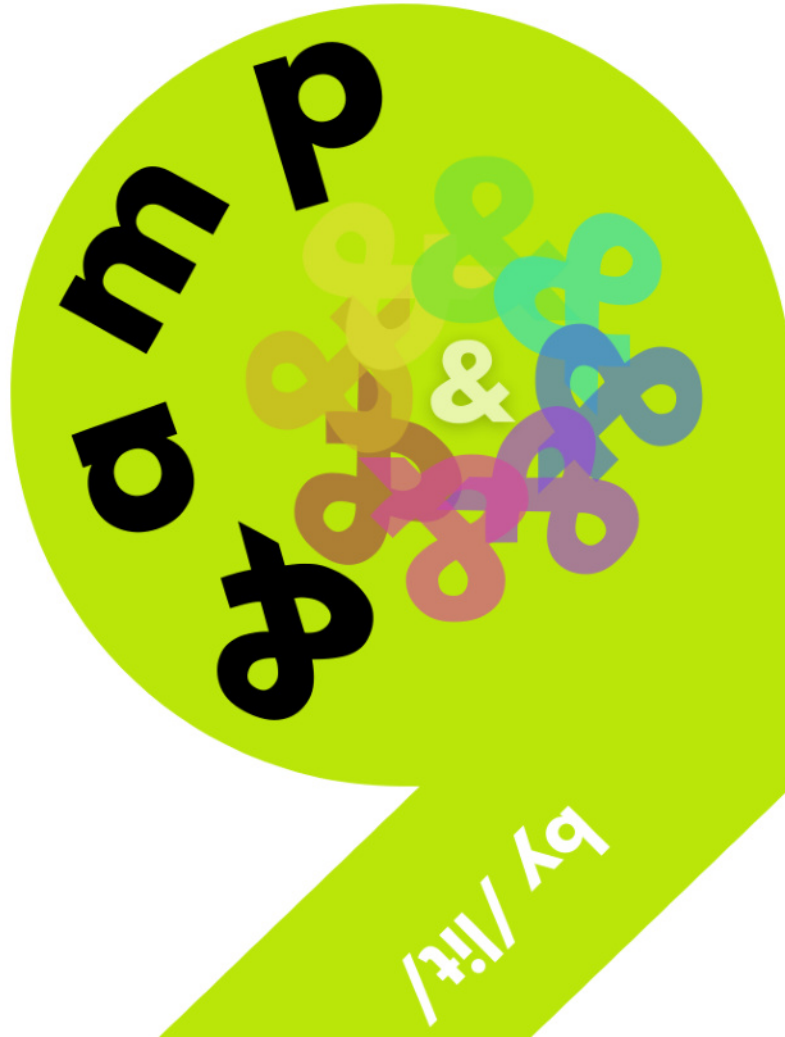
It bounced off the other balls overflowing the can and rolled to the floor. I watched it roll until it finally stopped at the bookcase. I removed my glasses and rubbed the bridge of my nose before retrieving the paper and smoothing it out. I did the same with every other ball of paper in the wastebasket and laid them out on the table. I stared at the fragile pieces with a mixture of horror, fatigue, disbelief, and hope that maybe there was something here I could salvage, maybe I could show them off to Darla or Marv. Maybe they were good after all. Maybe I still had it. I walked to my desk and grabbed my pack of Chesterfields off the table and made my way out the back door and onto the balcony.

A slight breeze had picked up and was making its way through the open gaps in my shirt buttons, through my hair, going through my fingers on arms outstretched to steady myself. I closed my eyes and for a brief moment leaned forward until I could feel myself speeding towards the ground. With a snap my eyes opened and my right foot made its way back down to my porch. I reached out and gripped the support beam of the balcony with my left hand and looked down. It was a decent drop, two stories. I thought of my family and what they would do. The novels in the trunk at my bed and what would become of them, if anything. I had the brief thought to go back inside and kill time by feeding them one by one, page by page into the fire. I thought about Darla's tupperware on the kitchen counter and how she'd probably never get it back. Still though, none of those things mattered to the ever mounting fatigue and now loss of spark of the one thing that brought me happiness. I flicked my cigarette and watched it tumble through the air before bouncing off the ground. I imagined myself as the cigarette and rested my head on my hand. I raised my leg and pulled myself back up to the balcony, legs shaking.

I looked up for the moon, but it was a new moon tonight, and the sky was sparse of stars. I had the funniest feeling that if I were to step off the balcony, I would instead rise up into the air, be swallowed by the inky blackness and be absolved of my pitiful life on Earth. No guilt. No mess. As I stared up at the open sky and the multitude of lights in the high rise building across the horizon, I saw a streak of light in the air. I wasn't sure if it was a meteorite breaking off, the chemical trails of a plane, or just a trick of the light. I stared at it and made a wish.

I wished for the courage to jump.





& Magazine™

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear /lit/,

Thank you always for reading and your very generous contributions. This issue was guest edited by a former reader and perhaps rotating editor. Your feedback is appreciated. If you feel you could perform similar work and would like to possibly step in as editor for a

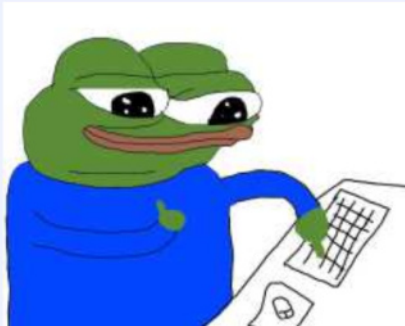
future issue, or offer some partial support, feel free to reach out any time by email: lamp.lit.magazine@gmail.com

The previous editor is around to continue, but I am excited to see this function as more of a communal effort, bringing together different visions from the board. Keep writing, keep pretending to read, and keep shitposting. For future issues, please consider submitting more greentext stories, a notable absence in this current issue.

Sincerely,
Anonymous



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☐ I have an announcement /lit/ Anonymous 09/19/21(Sun)12:45:39 No.19080136
[>>19082195](#) [>>19082223](#)

I love reading!



breathless chest, pale youth abreast in piss and toilet waters.
skinny studs, man-boys, nude nubs: strain on porcelain pulpits.
wall-less now, all this around, lay bare on eyes of squatters.
but what's this? What is this? Oh my. Jesus. I have the shits.
like a buffet in reverse: suonottulg, its perverse, its
a hedonistic tour de force! Misbegotten hot cysts,
froth and bubble brown in the pool of the palace of piss.

running through crowds in the deep dark, I race against the bells.
un-light, unrelenting, an exhausting full nothingness.
pushing past nebulous forms, anxiety dips and swells.
un-right, notwithstanding complete success and passedness.
un-sure, quite demure under gropes and the shadow's caress.
Is that hope that I see, past the smoke of this black being?
pushing, running, stumbling, til tick tick ticktick tick tick RIIIIINNNNNNGGG!

refreshed at my desk, still lacking breaths, class is starting now.
a sea of kids, sardined, most senses entirely numb,
the current's calm, but below, an undertow of know-how
highbrow children pass (low down): gum (trading to and from).
stick in hand I crumple and chew. salty, but why? how come?
surfacing the sea (entirely me) I shout a prayer
to halls of lady labyrinth and dens of madame lair:

O' TO THE DIRGE OF THE HUM OF THE WIRES: THAT QUIET NOISY TUNE.
O' TO THE TRASH AND THE GRIME THAT LITTERS TUNNELS UNKNOWN.
I LOVE YOUR HISTORY (FORGOTTEN), YOUR RELICS, YOUR RUNES.
THE TIME I SPEND SO LOST IN THE MYSTERY OF YOUR ZONE:
I CHERISH UNREPENTANT AND ROMANTICALLY ALONE.
WHEN CREEPING THROUGH YOUR DARK DIRGE AND OPERATIC ALLURE
I KNOW ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE: WE'RE HELPLESSLY OBSCURE.

washed ashore to she whom I have prayed before. the pit.
like satellites in orbit we meet here on occasion.
teachers stand smoking, students sit choking down chocolate
and candy wine. a fine refuge from class, a liaison
for those who can't take the heat, the smell, the sounds so brazen.
this too exudes something seemingly wrong. big hogs buffet
on wasted songs. they snort teasing, knowing I've lost the way.

out of steam and out of queens, I fizzle like a lost flea
skating through vacant doors, nursing homes, and construction floors,
my life has become something strangely unbeknownst to me.
past workers and scholars towards poor folk, those ill, and young whores,
I hug against pregnant teens and toddlers with soiled drawers.
a moving nuthouse, living waste, a communal failed mind,
makes one understand what and who there is to leave behind.

I jump outside mournfully through coarse and unfinished walls,
the old white wind washes me clean and completely undone,
greenery surrounds me and I finally hear its calls:
LOVE LIKE LOVE NEVER LOVED BEFORE, MY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG SON!
elderlies embrace me, gifting songs and books on wars not won,
not fought, not battled, people not sought for pain as cattle.
dying in the gentle grass I un-eat from the apple.



Conway's Game of Culture

1. Introduction

The budding field of cybernetics has received minor attention in the past decades, a new field of study, most often taught as a sub-discipline of engineering, more or less obscure, even in most academic faculties. Yet, I can promise you this: Cybernetics is worthy of your attention.

Cybernetics is concerned with the study of regulatory systems. One of the most important concepts in cybernetics is the feedback loop, positive or negative escalations of a given system without some kind of proper regulator. That is to say, cybernetic systems are usually self-perpetuating.

In fringe circles of the sort that attract the readership of *& Magazine*, the term evokes an association with the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), a now-defunct interdisciplinary study group based out of Warwick, UK. Two people from this study group in particular remain embedded in the cultural memory: Nick Land and Sadie Plath. (Please note: This short article is not about Sadie Plath, nor about Nick Land.)

2. Conway's Game of Culture

Within most fundamental ontologies, there are only a few First Principles from which endless complexity can arise, that self-perpetuate into infinity. A few examples from the hard sciences: the transistor states in digital electronics; the four bases of DNA; the fundamental theorem of Calculus.

The most obvious question that we should ask ourselves then is this: “What are the fundamental principles of our current culture?”

In *Gödel, Escher, Bach* Douglas Hofstadter introduces the concept of a Strange Loop. Doing this concept justice would demolish the scope of this article. The following is only one aspect of a Strange Loop that will do for our purposes, a particular property of repeating systems: Things gain meaning through self-reference. With regards to the internet—the most defining cultural apparatus of our time—this statement can illuminate current mass movements, music, memes, a plethora of seemingly unrelated things.

One of the most obvious (and also one of the most overused) examples is sampling, artists will often sample songs that sample other songs also, and so forth. The purpose of this is usually not to extract pure musical material from a source. Rather, an artist establishes a cultural connection to another artist, he or she “updates” a previous artistic work for a new cultural context, an effect that cannot be achieved by simply covering a song.

A piece of media might reference a certain political philosophy, in a more or less clandestine manner. This is nothing new, in of itself. But oftentimes, these references are constructed in such a way that only someone who already partakes in this particular political narrative can appreciate them, like an in-joke in which thousands of people participate, thus not an in-joke at all. Instead, it is a self-reference.

As a precursor to this sort of self-referential communication, we could look at Astrology, horoscopes, all that sort of stuff. The working principle is the same. We start with some sort of statement: “You will marry a woman in a red dress.” This statement is untrue until the very point at which it becomes self-referential, until it proves itself true, namely until the moment at which you meet a pretty woman in a red dress, and thus decide that you ought to marry her because, well, “you will marry a woman in a red dress.”

3. Conclusion

What we have discussed above is only a single regulatory mechanism by which a cultural cybernetic system perpetuates itself. There must be a plethora of undiscovered rules that form the fundamental rule set of any given culture, some of them well-hidden, some of them more or less obvious. This is a small slice of what the CCRU was trying to study. As far as I can tell, mainstream academia has all but abandoned this idea in recent times, which is a wonderful thing! since this gives people like the *& Magazine* readership—who mostly work outside of academia—the opportunity to further study this concept by themselves.

By Unlicht





☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)00:30:40 No.19126824 ▶ [>>19126847](#) [>>19126953](#) [>>19127035](#)

What's your favorite Bible passage, anon?

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)00:32:28 No.19126833 ▶

Isaiah 63:1 KJV

>Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)00:35:25 No.19126846 ▶

Romans 13:13-14 KJV

>Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)00:35:42 No.19126847 ▶

[>>19126824 \(OP\)](#)

the one where jesus cums in my ass

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)01:22:14 No.19126953 ▶

[>>19126824 \(OP\)](#)

Genesis 3:22

>And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

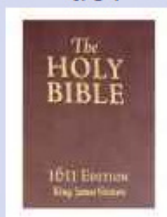
Genesis 3:22 is the most important verse in the entire Bible, because it explains an incredible amount of things once you think about it a little.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)01:41:56 No.19126997 ▶

>1In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)01:52:54 No.19127027 ▶

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>" Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Psalms 16:11

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)01:55:14 No.19127035 ▶

[>>19126824 \(OP\)](#)

1 Samuel 8:

>6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice. However, yet protest solemnly unto them and show them the ways of the king that shall reign over them." And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people who asked of him a king. And he said, "This will be the manner of the king who shall reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and will set them to till his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectioners and to be cooks and to be bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out on that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us,

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)01:56:37 No.19127037 ▶

>And all people will see God's salvation.

Luke 3:6



Everyone Else Is at Home

Slow drift – an undersea server, a daycare in Korea, an arcade in Chicago – like floating in a pool, leaves softly colliding with my sides, accumulating. I'm shifting aimlessly through global connections. Zoned out. As I consciously feel the connections more and more, the little leaves, I zoom back to attention, and start pinging around my neighborhood. Occasionally I notice another user slightly, some small trace they were there, but no opportunity to connect directly together. The network's been like this for weeks, so I zone out. Usually people rarely zone out. There's always somewhere and someone to be, but now everywhere I know is a nowhere. So I zone out. I assume everyone else is zoning out, too, all of us out there, sliding across each other, maybe occasionally making a simultaneous connection. If we do, I never notice, and the more I try to notice, the less zoned out I am, until I'm zooming back to the neighborhood.

I lived something like this once, but it was in that imagined non-time where my memories are few and mostly made-up. I remember myself remembering:

The first day of kindergarten, we were put into groups of four, but one person in my group, Sebastian, threw up on his phone and was taken away the rest of the day. The three of us learned to share and watch each other sharing and to ask each other about what we liked. When Luna asked my favorite color, I didn't know. I thought of my crayons and how I liked the way grass looked when I colored it. I told her green. But when I was supposed to ask Sebastian, he was grey and nothing. I remember myself remembering that when I would open the fridge at night, it was light, but when I opened the toilet at night, it was dark. Sebastian threw up, so they took him to the toilet, and he wasn't there to ask me to choose my favorite kite from a series of pictures so the teacher had to pop in and ask me. When we made kites for each other on crafts day, Sebastian had to read my profile to know. That made me wonder why Sebastian was even supposed to be there in the first place.

I don't remember any other moments wondering about how people come to know things about me, but I remember that I did think about that a lot. On Christmas, my mom would get me gifts and they were always things I wanted, though other kids got more. I thought it was Santa and that my gift was limited by the fact that I only started worrying about being a good boy that year when we went to see Santa in the mall the month before. I realized he could see me all year and that I would have to keep it up that whole time, but the next year was the same. In her email, my mom would get suggestions of gifts that were known to be in her price range, plus a few that were not. I wanted to get the things that other kids got. They seemed so far away, but the next year everyone in my class got the same thing, and then nothing around me had to be nowhere again, until now.

I don't remember myself remembering anything weird about my group in school only being four kids, then eight, then sixteen, then the whole class of thirty-two, but even thirty-two is a really low number. All the other kids in school and all the kids in the nearby schools were nothing, like Sebastian that first class. But at the time this was all new and exciting. I knew my mom's network was bigger, but that was for grown-ups. I'm pretty sure I freaked out once thinking about having that big of a network and having to spend all those years building it up and then having to support it every day forever for decades and decades. That scale of time didn't make sense to me, and I didn't see how I could do something like our in-class exercises with that scale of people, either. But then when Sporennet came out, grown-ups didn't get that.

I know my whole class was on Sporennet, but I don't remember thinking about them at all or trying to connect with them as a group. I don't remember any of them trying to connect with me, either. It didn't really work like that, even back then. It was all the kids together, like I was opening the fridge at night, and instead of just the light inside coming on, my mom came in at the exact moment and turned on the kitchen light. You can't see the light in the fridge, then,



not really, except as splotch on your eyes that follows you around. I knew my classmates were all there, but I didn't think about them. And when that big light overhead is on, you don't see the contents of the fridge in quite the same way, either. When it's just the little light in the dark, everything in the fridge takes on greater emphasis. The milk is a looming giant, and the pudding cups hide in the shadows. In the light, or in the daytime, they're all just there.

Like other grown-ups, the teachers didn't really get Sporennet either, not the way we did. I know it took almost two years for them to figure out how to incorporate this new sharespace in their teaching. I know at first they didn't let us use it at all, but I don't remember what that was like. The classroom was already nowhere, then. When they first started using it, they made their presence too known. We tried to follow them, but they were a there, and we were everywhere. By the end of our second year, our teachers were everywhere, too, though we still used the same rooms. If they didn't have our devices physically accessible, they couldn't always track us in Sporennet. I read that some schools tried experimenting with giving remote access to some kids, like when they were sick for a long time, but they would get lost, and when the school would find them, the kid would be everyone else.

At first, schools thought becoming everyone else was a bad thing. They wanted to track each of us, what we liked, our progress in our learning, our career prospects. Things accelerated over breaks, and eventually they had to move away from the grading model. There were achievement levels for different schools, divided by year, and instead of a grade you would get a presence score. The more involved you were in the activities of the school – that localized focus – the more you were present. You had to be a team player. You couldn't just go wherever and do whatever. Whoever you were, your host would thus keep a tether to this central location, most of the time.

The Sporennet wasn't plugged into the global networks yet. It was its own sharespace. In Sporennet, we were merging, moving, thinking, being. We shared and were shared with, and even when it seemed like there was nothing left to share, we experienced ourselves sharing and shared in that experience. So they had to plug us in, to pull us apart. We had to see the world, and not just each other. And they really emphasized that metaphor: plug us in. It was explicitly not pulling the plug, opening us out in a big rush to fill that other space. It was an alienating experience, even though we were going out in clusters. It wasn't right that our movement and our associations be limited like that. Even though it was still more people than I could be aware of, even though it was more of the world than I had seen total to that point, the first time I swept around that space I knew what they wanted was not what we wanted. We wanted to be everyone else, they wanted to sell us stuff.

I remember myself wondering how people know things about me, and selling me things, or selling my mom things. But there was nothing left to sell me after Sporennet, except now they were trying to sell me things, and not just toys. I was still in a cluster, but here and there, I felt a glimmer of me, and I felt them shuffling around in me like a fridge, and I learned my whole life how to share, but they weren't sharing back, not like we were taught. They only had a few things to share: ideas, brands, new values. I felt a glimmer of me, except occasionally instead of sharing what I liked, I felt like I was sharing what they wanted me to like, and then it wasn't me in the cluster. It was that grey space, that nothing bit of profile, filled out and waiting for me to connect to it the next day. And the schools facilitated these connections, like when the teachers would try to guide us that first year.

Then when we were back and free in Sporennet, it was chaos in a way it wasn't before. When the sharing was constant and everyone was everyone else, we were content, but now we were hungry to share in a new way, but the





Everyone Else Is at Home

more we shared, the less we felt we were everyone else. Everyone else was seeing those bits of profile, too, and we weren't supposed to see them. They weren't important anymore.

Things got better when they handed over the freedom to plug in, and gave us larger markets to plug into. That had more space to move and more people to connect with. As we learned to navigate this sharespace better, it was actually more connections than we ever had in just Sporennet. All the people who weren't in Sporennet were here, and all the people we never saw because we tended not to stray too far from our schools were here, too. We intermingled in new ways, and then we were everyone else, but we learned that what we thought was everyone else before wasn't really everyone. This wasn't everyone yet, either, and almost immediately there was demand that unlimited connection was a natural right, but the impulse to rebel against our restrictions was balanced out by the idea that the time would come and we still needed to learn to connect at this scale anyway. We were the mass who was content. I do not know how it was exactly that we became anything other than the mass we were, just that we were eventually a different mass entirely and then we were the mass was discontent. Perhaps we knew at the time, but now it's just me, and I guess I never knew on my own how the shift happened.

I do know that increasingly those not on Sporennet wanted us restricted even more. They did not like us connecting and sharing and they wanted to not share themselves. I remember some frustration that we were them but they were also just them and not everyone else. I remember restrictions being placed on Sporennet that would allow users to opt out of sharing, and I remember that at the time we were still the mass who was content. Before anyone could opt out, however, people started experimenting with if they could make us stop being parts of those who were not on Sporennet. I remember being different everyones, but still content, then suddenly an everyone who was discontent. Sharing was different, then. We

shared more than we ever had before, and shared especially with those who were just them and not everyone else. We shared so much that the way people were used to knowing things about them now told them about us, and now they were us. More and more of us were us, and then things started changing even more. They weren't going to opt out of us. We were opting out of their network. We pulled the plug.

The world was before us, and rushing forth we filled it. Where filling the markets before seemed like a gradual task, I do not remember a transition. Instantly we were, truly now, everyone else. More and more overtime grew the everyones, and no one ever stopped being everyone, because everyone else was already them.

What follows then is nothing more to tell. We connected and shared but we didn't connect with anyone in particular or share anything in particular with anyone in particular. Who I was had ceased being important. Who I was going to be had ceased being important. How people knew things about me had ceased being important. The distance between me and others had ceased being important. There was no distance, and there was nothing to know. Sharing was not for knowledge. It was a new state of being. All the years which passed in this state were nothing but light, but now it is nighttime, and every door I open is only toilets, toilets, toilets.

It was late, when I woke up. Vomit was all over me and my device and the floor. My head was pounding. I remember myself remembering crying and crying because my head ached. When I cried, my mom was supposed to fix things, but she couldn't fix that, and her sense of what I was feeling seemed completely wrong. Surely, I thought, she didn't understand how serious this situation was. My head was going to burst, and she barely seemed to care. But that wasn't what I was experiencing now. The burst had happened, while I was in the light, and now all was heat and desolation. It was dark in my



room, but blinding, and for the first time since before Sporennet, I felt like everyone else was very, very far away.

Outside my apartment window was wild calm for how dense we were packed in those blocks. Occasionally I heard what sounded like commotion, people talking or the beginnings of a riot, but only for a few seconds and then silence. Mainly I heard, every fifteen minutes, a train rumbling, but I couldn't imagine who would be on a train. When I brought myself to slide aside my curtain and look out the window, I saw someone else doing the same, and another person sitting sideways across her narrow windowsill, looking back into her apartment. I didn't know these people, though. I had no way to know them. Their scale was unthinkable. I found myself thinking of connecting with them, and all those people I couldn't see, but I mostly just felt how little they were thinking of me. I only felt the connection attempt out, nothing in. Connecting into what, though, I wondered, and then it was over. I was thinking of me, I realized, instead of us. But I didn't know who me was.

I wondered how people would come to know things about me. I didn't have a profile anymore. Those were outdated. We made our own model, but it didn't make sense outside our sharespace. What I was left with now seems only a billion error messages stacked on top of each other, overlapping such that you can occasionally glimpse through to the bottom and see some remnant of the lost content: Layla liked the blue she saw between streaks of red when she would push against the limits of the teacher's tether when we were young. William would always remember the feeling of toes and the little pop of our big toes bending. Wyatt would breathe in infinitely, filling us with air though we never felt fuller. Chloe liked the speed with which connections would form and break and form and break, like they were never there at all and unbreakable simultaneously. I remember myself remembering that I liked the

green of my crayons drawing grass on paper, but I think I made that up one time when I was sharing the memory of how I decided my favorite color. I remember someone commenting that he never decided his favorite color, he just had one. But no one really said that; it was us. We felt that and the crayon memory and that blue between streaks of red all at once. But when we felt that, color didn't mean what I was seeing now when I was seeing the green – not at all the crayon green – of my vomit, and the streaks of red, but no blue. I didn't see blue anywhere, until I tried connecting back to Sporennet.

When I first connected, I saw that grey and nothing everywhere, until I grew too exhausted. Then I zoned out, until I realized I was seeing a pool, impossibly blue, and the red leaves streaking through, pulling me back.

For weeks now I've drifted, solitary. I can connect to places on the global networks, but no people. I know there are people on it, but always just out of sight, and when I stop zoning out, I'm back to my local network, the regional community left over from when we were in our smaller clusters. If there's any way to connect on it now, I can't read it, but when I zone out, I feel my neighbors out there. And I think I can be with them again soon, if I can just achieve that endless drift. Floating forever, no leaves, no one else. Just us. I remember myself remembering almost achieving that feeling in a real pool once. I don't really remember it, but something of it is shared, out there.

**Originally scheduled to be printed
in the now-defunct Lit Quarterly.**

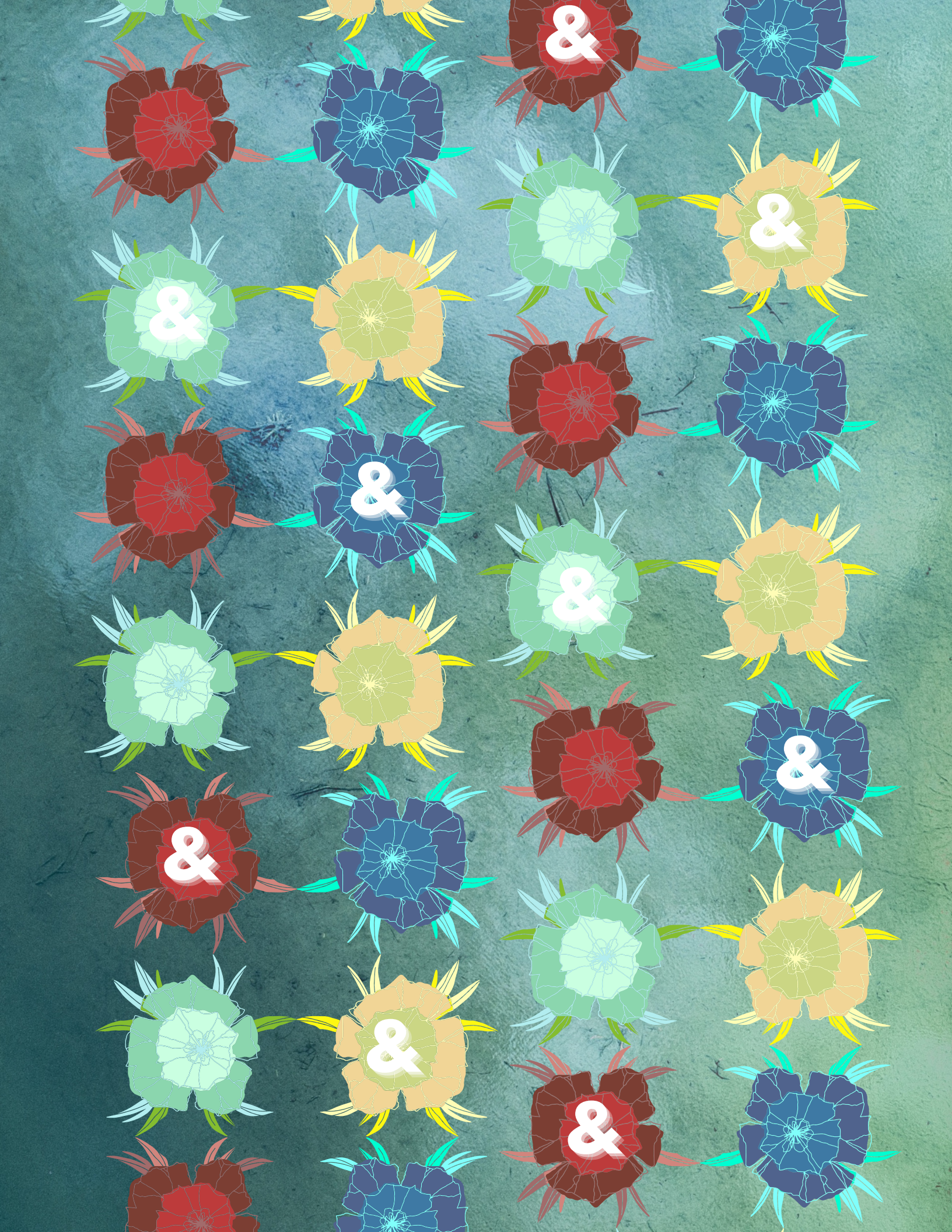
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ANONYMOUS







The sun of that same day going down, dusk was saluted as usual at the hotel by an instantaneous sparkle of electric lights. The hours between dinner and bedtime were always difficult enough to kill, and the night after the dance they were further tarnished by the peevishness of dissipation. Certainly, in the opinion of Hirst and Hewet, who lay back in long arm- chairs in the middle of the hall, with their coffee- cups beside them, and their cigarettes in their hands, the evening was unusually dull, the women unusually badly dressed, the men unusually fatuous. Moreover, when the mail had been distributed half an hour ago there were no letters for either of the two young men. As every other person, practically, had received two or three plump letters from England, which they were now engaged in reading, this seemed hard, and prompted Hirst to make the caustic remark that the animals had been fed. Their silence, he said, reminded him of the silence in the lion- house when each beast holds a lump of raw meat in its paws. He went on, stimulated by this comparison, to liken some to hippopotamuses, some to canary birds, some to swine, some to parrots, and some to loathsome reptiles curled round the half- decayed bodies of sheep. The intermittent sounds-- now a cough, now a horrible wheezing or throat- clearing, now a little patter of conversation-- were just, he declared, what you hear if you stand in the lion- house when the bones are being mauled. But these comparisons did not rouse Hewet, who, after a careless glance round the room, fixed his eyes upon a thicket of native spears which were so ingeniously arranged as to run their points at you whichever way you approached them. He was clearly oblivious of his surroundings; whereupon Hirst, perceiving that Hewet's mind was a complete blank, fixed his attention more closely upon his fellow- creatures. He was too far from them, however, to hear what they were saying, but it pleased him to construct little theories about them from their gestures and appearance.

~~Virginia Woolf~~

~~*The Voyage Out*~~

Night Gestures

The sun of dusk saluted the
instantaneous sparkle of electric lights. Hours
between bedtime and the night after were the
dissipation of chairs in which their
evening unusually dull, unusually dressed,
unusually distributed there were either two
or three letters, which now prompted caustic
animals ... of the silence when each went on,
to liken birds to some loathsome half-bodies of
sounds – wheezing now just what you hear in the house.
But these who fixed to run whichever way
oblivious of perceiving a complete blank, more
creatures. He hear, but them gestures.



you asked



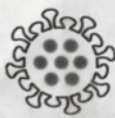
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what should I read if I am
completely alone

**& we
answered**



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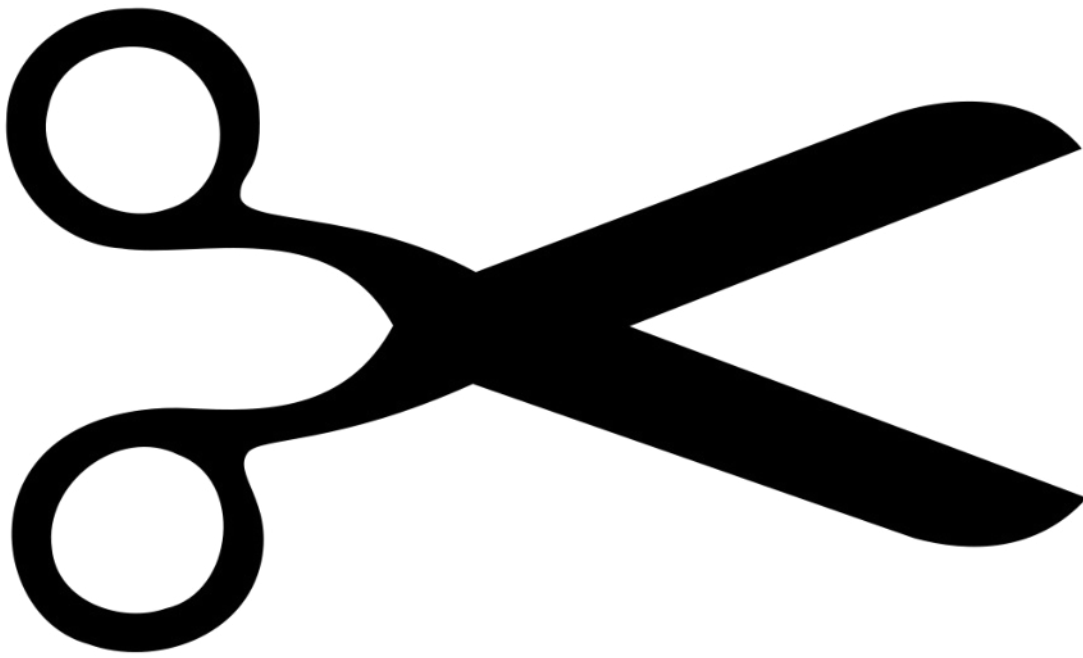
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Chapter Three

Saltwater rolled in, offered a foamy belch, and was pulled lazily back out to sea. In empty stretches of sapphire, struggle was raging: Nature vs. itself. The same wind-borne forces that carved cliff faces—drowned men in merciless churning—were reduced to motherly hushes on the beach. Watchers with their ankles in the sand could stare out for miles into the curling atmosphere and see nothing but stillness, and a twinkling on



the horizon, oblivious to the trauma all around. The water fizzled as it was sucked into the sandy earth, and little bubbles revealed the hiding spots of subterranean crustaceans.

Upon two steady hands, a tray of sweating cocktails made its way down the beach. It was still too early for the tourists to be out, but the island had already begun its daytime phase. The ubiquitous din of birds and insects, bustling down dirt roads and lapping up at hotel balconies. Smells competing for nose-space: over-ripe fruit; donkey shit; uncountable and strange flowers; an abandoned row-boat, rotted by the sea. Weatherless as a postcard, Nap'are transitioned regularly between its only two seasons: day and not. Every day, the humming of life returned, and every night it was dispersed again. At night it was calm, and the world around was hidden. Stars awoke, reflected onto the rippling ocean. The black sky surrounded the atoll, swallowing it whole. In the night, the islanders were fixed in the silent whirl of space with no Earth left around them, but the waves remained. Like the ticking of a lazy watch, a persistent reminder of unavoidable process. In, and back out again. Without fail. Without the waves, the island could drift away like a cloud on a stray breeze.

Toby walked as fast as he could, stretching his long legs to their limit with each step. Two bushwhackers and a watermelon daiquiri were melting, and he could feel the potential for a tip disintegrating similarly. Carefully, in his 4-year-old, sun-starched flip-flops, he made his way to the Executive Hut, squinting through his messy hair and the morning sun. It was a precarious path for a bellhop; one quarter mile of ungroomed, sandy dunes, laced with dried palm fronds and broken sea shells, longing to make contact with the arches of innocent feet. He kept his eyes on his goal, denying his innate clumsiness.

He had asked dad if they could get a path put in-- something rustic and inconspicuous, for staff use only. No luck. The guests paid for privacy, complete separation from human society, if possible. That was the whole point of the separated units: isolation. Too much accessibility would make the property completely useless. Any trace of civilization visible from the Hut's deck had to be removed, excepting of course the cartoonishly stereotypical Hut itself.

Toby, being a timid and entirely forgettable person, was perfectly suited for this role. His invisibility allowed for the level of immersion the guests were seeking, and his father insisted upon. They were grateful, but they rarely remembered to tip. They rarely remembered his name.

"Toby," said Toby, reminding nobody.

Tiki-themed blackout drapes were dancing in the breeze-- Toby recognized their fringes ruffling out from behind the ensconcing plumeria as he approached the Hut. It was the familiar sight of the deck-facing door pulled wide open to let in the day and the salty air. But as he approached, no one was there. He scanned the beach, left to right: not a soul.

"Mr. Booker?" Toby called into the foliage. No response but the gentle sway of heavy fronds.

Mr. Booker was a writer, and a semi-permanent guest. He was a bit strange. However, he was never rude, and generally considered harmless. Toby could actually expect the occasional tip from the middle-aged eccentric. Booker liked to hand out small bills to people everywhere he went on the island, in a kind of uncomplicated and knee-jerk reaction to his status as a public figure. Nearly all of the guests on the island were wealthy or famous, Booker was one of the few who saw this as

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discomfiting. His other reaction to this discomfort was to remain perpetually drunk, stumbling from place to place. He tended to gather flocks. He was a shepherd to all the minimum-wage service workers looking for a little extra on the side. He welcomed gifts of fresh-squeezed pineapple juice, and little baggies of weed. When the call came in late last night for a tray of early morning cocktails, Toby decided he'd be at the hotel bar before the sun rose, ready to serve, and ready to receive a crinkled twenty dollar bill. Maybe.

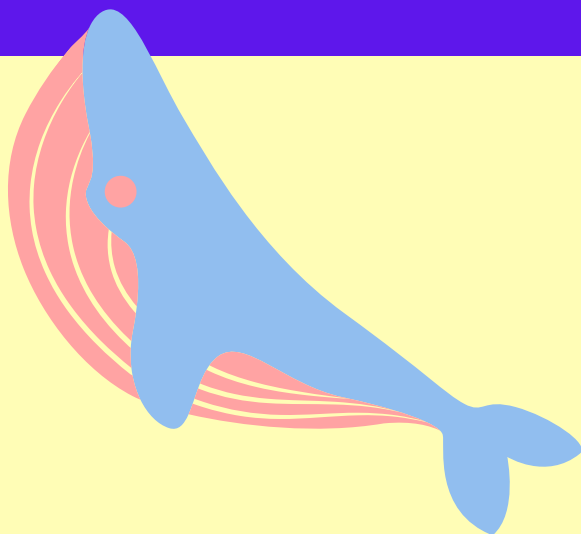
A delicate tap on the bedroom window. "Mr. Booker?"

Nothing. Not even the exasperated groan of a committed late sleeper. He set the tray down and started searching. By now the cocktails were thin as water. Things weren't looking good for poor Toby. He began to hope Booker was merely trying to stiff him, as opposed to being in actual danger.

"Mr. Booooo-kerrr..." sing-songy this time. Maybe he was only hiding...

Toby sat, unsure of what else he should do. He considered taking a sip of daiquiri. It was really warming up now. Somewhere nearby a golf-cart was starting up, and in the laundry room fluffy white towels were being folded in silence. A bird repeated its call, over and over, to no response. How long would he remain undisturbed? And who would be the one to disturb him? Would it be Eleanor? Would Mr. Booker turn up?

Out in front of him, a tiny white motor boat cruises along the water, blowing a continual, frothy raspberry. The pilot-- his outline wiggled by the heat-- turns and waves to Toby. Hi Toby.



Toby waves back: "Hi, Sam." The pilot looks forward and, in a moment, is gone.

The waves roll in, and return, and Toby kicks off his flip-flops to submerge his toes in the sand. As a seagull cries, he closes his eyes and breathes in deeply through his nose. The waves. The salty water. The scattered sound of fauna in the flora. The impatient tap tap tap of water dripping onto the deck. Maybe, in lieu of a tip, one could just sneak in a quick nap before the rest of the hotel is up. Before the front desk's phone starts ringing with requests for scrambled eggs and Kona coffee. Strawberries and pineapples. A heat-lamp watching over a whole tray of crispy, thick-cut bacon.

"Where is she?"

Toby whipped open his eyes to the blinding sun. Standing at attention, he paused as the streaks faded from his vision. When the world returned, there was Booker: completely nude, a single seaweed streamer tossed over his left shoulder, and wet sand matted into his hair. He looked like he just woke up in a tide pool. Toby, with a polite hand over his eyes, scrambled for the tray. The glasses tipped, and shattered.

"I am terribly sorry, M-Mr. B-Booker, I, I thought I-- thought you, that is, m-might have b-been--" He got on his knees and tried to pluck shards of glass from the sugary brine.

"There was... some woman... silverish bathing suit-- here, last night..." Neither a question or a statement. Passing thoughts, stopping a second in Booker's head, gone again. He was still dripping, with a bluish pallor that made him look like a corpse.

Toby reached for a hotel towel already hanging over a patio chair. Booker sat down and stared at his sandy feet.

"It wasn't a dream," he said, as if Toby had suggested it.

"I'll go get a bucket of soapy water, and a dustpan, and take care of this right away." He had forgotten his tip. "Should I, um, ask around? For this lady?" He was unsure of how else to comfort this devastated and dripping man.

Booker said nothing and Toby rushed off, leaving his flip-flops behind.

—

Cal had a black 4runner. It guzzled gas, leaked coolant, and the paint was falling off in little flakes that his friends would find the next morning after he had come by to visit. It matched his vibe perfectly: a little messy-- somewhere between scrappy and rugged-- and of course, all black. Cal smoked inside, all the time, so it reeked of tobacco and pot. The ceiling had grayish, circular stains, either from the smoking or a hidden leak. It was the same car he bought off his dad at eighteen, never once taken to a real mechanic. He loved it and hated it. His friends just hated it.

"I promise I'm not as creepy as I look," Cal called into the back seat. "You can come up to the front, with me, if you're not scared." He whacked the passenger seat with a hearty smack.

"Gonna have to be a little more clever than that, if you're trying to kill me," Arda replied, her eyes on her manila folder. Cal laughed, and cracked his window. In an instant the cloud of smoke filling the truck was sucked out into the night, dashed along the freeway. He closed the window and smoked some more.

"So, you've never met this guy before?" he asked.

"I told you, he's a friend of Lin's."

"A friend? Or a 'friend?'"

"How the hell should I know?" Arda kept flipping through the folder. She'd seen all the pictures at least once, but hoped that with enough familiarity she might never have to open the thing again.

"Like, a friend with benefits--?"

"He's a friend with money. That's what I care about. That's what employed people care about. It's a job."

"Ouch," Cal looked back through his rear-view mirror. "Didn't realize I was so obvious..."

"I didn't mean it like that," she smirked. "I'm barely employed myself... I haven't sold a piece in almost a year, and nobody wants to read a blog written by a nobody. So I'm a little desperate. I need a few more friends with money."

She paused on a black and white photograph: a blow-up of the underside of someone's tongue, veiny and glistening. Going from top to bottom were three deep slits, leaking black onto the row of teeth below. Blood for Xoc was the title. The distinct crowding of the lower incisors showed that this was a portrait of the artist himself. Arda pulled out her phone to see if she could find out who 'Xoc' was, but she was out of battery.

"Do you trust this guy?" Cal looked at her through the rear-view.

"He's a friend of Lin's," she shrugged.

"Do you trust Lin?"

Arda looked out her window. It was drizzling. The whoosh of headlights and cars was blurred behind the web of rain-water clinging to the window. She chased a few rivulets with her eyes, pulsing their way from front to back. She saw the tongue again, sitting in her lap. She closed her folder and stuffed it into her backpack. The airport was close.

"Do you have a phone charger? I completely spaced and forgot mine."

"No. Sorry," he cracked the window again and the cabin was cleared. "So, do you? Trust him?"

She pictured Lin: black shades, black suit, and ivory teeth: all with the greasy sheen you'd find on a snake. Even in her imagination he had a thick wad of bills in his back pocket, ready to be put to use.

"No."

"No," Cal repeated, "do you normally hop on a plane and fly over the ocean for men you don't trust?"

Arda chuckled. "Lin isn't a 'man--' I mean, obviously, yes, he is. But he's not 'my man,' he's not 'a man,' like that. And I'm not flying over any oceans for him. I'm doing it for my other man: Ben Franklin."

Cal laughed again, and puffed on his cigarette. He rolled down the window, and Arda pulled herself up to the front seat. Cal sealed the car up, and handed her the smoke. She took it and put it in her mouth.

"... it's not a good idea... I don't trust him either..." He kept his eyes on the road, but, even from the passenger seat, Arda could see the genuine level of concern.

"So what then? Should I trust you?" She handed his cigarette back, then turned to blow her smoke out of her own window. "I only met you a few days ago-- I appreciate the ride, don't get me wrong. But how am I supposed to take your advice in good faith? For all I know you want the job yourself. You could be a rival writer, fuming over the lost opportunity..." She was teasing, but she expected an answer. Cal was a nice guy and all, but something was missing. He didn't speak for a while, and Arda went back to tracing water droplets on the window.

"I was a friend of Aron's. We went to Mason Gross together. I guess he never told you, but it's true," his hands were both tight on the wheel. "I still think a lot about him and... I'm just... I'm really sorry, you know? If I had known--"

He made the fatal mistake of glancing in Arda's direction. She had become instantly serious, a tense weave of wrinkles on her forehead were enhanced by the freeway light. Her eyes were glistening, and angry.

"Arda, wait--" He could sense what was about to happen.

"Stop the car," she said firmly, and rubbed her eye.

"Hold on. Please, I--"

"Stop your fucking car, Cal," she restrained her voice.

"I can't just--"

She opened the door. Clammy air blasted in, scattering the stray papers and trash Cal hadn't bothered to clean up. His cigarette was sucked right out from between his fingers. He cursed, thinking he saw Arda actually step out with one foot onto the road speeding by them. He swerved to the shoulder and turned the 4runner off. Several cars behind him were honking as they maneuvered out of the way and zoomed down the road, their horns dopplered into low groans, and then silence.

"Are you a fucking psychotic?" He stammered. "Are you trying to get us both fucking killed? Get back in the car, please. Now."

She had her backpack zipped, and she was standing in the rain. She looked straight into Cal's eyes.

"I don't care what you want, okay? Turn around, drive off and never call me ever again. I don't care what you want, I don't care that you've lost someone too-- just stay the hell away from me, okay? I don't have anything for you--"

"That's not what I meant--"

"I can't offer you any sort of closure, any sort of relief from--"

"That isn't what I meant, alright? Why can't you ever just listen to what people are telling you?"

She flipped her backpack onto one shoulder and checked her left and right. She was on the freeway, but just over the barricade was Hawthorne. She could walk from there, it wasn't even raining so hard anymore.

"Because I already know what you're going to say," It was the best she was going to get. She shut the door and jumped the barricade. On the other side, a homeless man was sleeping on cardboard in the mud. He looked up at her and the first words out of his mouth were:

"You got any change?"

—

Arda considered how thorough a glimpse the average airport employee got into her own personal life. Of course they were privy to the essentials: name, country-of-origin, date-of-birth, etc. But did the proximity to such information allow for a true gestalt of the individual, such that these minimum-wage-earners could access the hidden depths of Arda's soul? Was she the proverbial opened book to these jaded wise-men? The person behind her preemptively removed his shoes, and Arda could smell his socks. She wondered if the TSA agent ahead of her even cared that he had the privilege to be so personally invasive to thousands of strangers. Was he some kind of fetishist, receiving additional compensation in the form of others' personal info? Maybe he was sworn to a code of constantly forgetting. She thought she heard the Sbarro's behind her call her name over the intercom.

The security guard waved on another person, and an old lady waddled up to the podium. Arda eyed the women in front of her, all three in full hijabs, wondering what security would make of them. She thought about turbulence, and takeoffs in the rain. She thought about the little bottles of vodka, rum and whiskey.

"Well, don't you look positively horrendous."

She jumped at the sound of Lin's voice. He was standing right beside her, in an empty queue.

"What the hell are you doing here? I thought--"

"I hope you didn't think you were doing this alone," he pulled upward on the nylon-strap barrier, and directed Arda into his own line. "Come on. I know you don't know what this means, but we have pre-check. Unfortunately, we don't have any dry clothes."

"Hardy har. Make yourself useful and hold my backpack," she tossed it at him and began wringing out her hair. As it lost its water it sprung back up in tight, little curls. "So am I to understand we are on the same page about the details of this little job of mine?"

"I'm a couple pages further, in fact," Lin offered coolly, "and it's our job, dear--"

"Are you meeting with the deranged killer?" she shot under her breath.

"Well... no. Fair enough. But you'll need a bit of a helping hand getting around. The island is small, but it can be a tricky place to navigate..."

"It's an atoll, right? A big ring? Anywhere you are, just keep walking and you'll be right where you started."

"If only it were so," he said before twirling off down a stray hallway, sealed off with a yellow strand of tape. Arda was wondering if she should've written a will; Lin was on vacation. He cracked a door that read 'employees only,' and peered inside. Once he was sure they were alone, he called Arda with a nod. She stepped in and he put a hand on her arm.

"This isn't exactly a resort. But it also isn't a prison."

"Who said it was a prison?" She asked earnestly.

"It's not a prison. Think of it as a camp. Although some people at this camp are not there willingly, perse. Perhaps a lot of people are there unwillingly. At this camp."

"Maybe 'camp' wasn't the best word?"

"We are welcome to the island, but not as guests. 'Guests' leave places after they've had their fun, but they have to follow the hosts rules, no matter how severe. We don't have to follow the rules, but we can't have any of the fun. We arrive more as... administrators."

The word sounded particularly cold, coming from Lin as he smiled paternally, still holding onto Arda's arm.

"There are no extra duties for you," he continued, "it's a titular thing. A status thing. It's just important that you know this, and you don't get too close to the--"

"Prisoners."

"It's not a prison," Lin insisted.

"Right. The campers, my mistake," she opened the employee door. "Is there anything else I need to know about this place? The folder didn't say much, I couldn't even find it on a map--"

She made a move for the doorway, but Lin did not let go of her arm. She turned to face him, and there he was, smiling friendly as ever.

"Trust me," he told her, and let her go.



Homeschooling: the /lit/ way

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)11:17:24 No.19128689 ▶ [>>19128796](#)

☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)11:37:46 No.19128796 ▶

[>>19128689](#)

Based. Just add Spinoza and some theologians and you're good

At 12 they will begin philosophy by reading the Presocratics.

At 13 they will read Plato.

At 14 Aristotle and some of the Scholastics.

At 15 Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz.

At 16 Kant and the German Idealists.

At 17 Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

At 18 Hegel.

At 19 Husserl and Heidegger.

At 20 Wittgenstein.

After, they can read what they want.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)11:36:33 No.19128786 ▶ [>>19128803](#)

I want to be able to teach my children latin. I guess I have to learn it first...

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/28/21(Tue)01:18:55 No.19132600 ▶

I don't even know my dad and I'm smarter than 90% of this world because of it. I probably won't ever have kids, but if I do, I'm letting them figure this world out themselves. I may try to get them to read some Greek Mythology though, more as a shared love than to edify.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/28/21(Tue)01:42:10 No.19132720 ▶ [>>19132827](#) [>>19132932](#)

[>>19128208 \(OP\)](#)

How I will raise my son:

>0700

Wake up and go for a walk in nature.

>0900 - 1100

Catch up on the latest Tim Pool, Ben Shapiro, Sam Harris, Peterson etc videos to sharpen our minds for the day ahead.

>1100 - 1200

My son performs Kendo routines while I hurl leftist talking points at him which he must refute without breaking posture.

>1200 - 1300

Physical exercise. Weight training + jiu-jitsu. Strong body = strong mind.

>1300 - 1400

We watch porn without masturbating or cracking an erection. I must build my son's resistance to feminine guile.

>1400 - 1430

Debate practice on 4channel.

>1430 - 1800

Leisure time. Approved television programs may be consumed. No mainstream media.

>1800

Dinner. Strict keto diet.

>1900

Bed.

>> ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)12:34:45 No.19129130 ▶

File: [pepe-cringe.gif](#) (56 KB, 498x334)



>all these poor children that will have to spend their entire youth dealing with their faggy histrionic fathers' massive mental hangups and intellectual insecurities

Don't do it, anons. Get some parrots instead. You can teach them to recite Homer and Deleuze just fine.

<< ☐ **Anonymous** 09/27/21(Mon)11:45:14 No.19128841 ▶

Catholic school but actually teach them paganism on the side.

Bioluminescent Blues

-You'd think that by now he'd have offed himself. Man, I sure would have.

-You're new Allen, there's levels to this type of stuff. The way I see it, this is a three, maybe four month operation.

-Isn't that like, tons of money spent on one guy we could just go and off ourself?

-Whats wrong with you, you think money doesn't grow on trees? Cause it does. No one gives a shit how long I take because I'm the best there is okay? And if they need more money they'll just print it. Now, if you want we could go over to his house right now, sneak past his wife and five kids, and put one right between his eyes, but, if you ask me thats a lot more trouble, and a lot more evidence left behind as opposed to sending little chat messages over the interwebs.

-I get it Jobe, it just seems a little goofy thats all.

-Goofy? Does this look like Mickey Mouse shit to you? Tell me in a couple months if it's still goofy to you when this guy, this terrorist, kills himself all by his own volition, and hey, maybe he takes a couple of his indoctrinated kids with him while he's at it.

-Alright man no need to get worked up, we're gonna be here awhile, I'm just poking around is all. What you want me to get workin on tonight?

-Here's his credit card info, I'm going to have you go buy a couple things. Now, don't go crazy or nothin, the goal is to make him notice your activity but have to pretend he doesn't care. So you go around and start with a few inconsequential things like candy bars, one or two a week, and then we'll work our way up from there. And when you're not doin that try to keep up with his internet habits. First couple weeks it's fine if you're just watching how I do it, but I expect you to get the hang of this pretty quickly, I need the extra hands, especially for this guy.

-It don't seem that hard to me, a couple weeks?

-Yes, and don't fucking send a single message or make a single post before then or I will lose my shit, physical violence will not be off the menu if you so much as touch the keyboard.

-No need for hyperbole Jobe, I'll get started.

Date	Description	Amount
09/01/21	Walgreens (Peanut m&ms)	\$1.50
09/04/21	Walgreens (Regular m&ms)	\$1.25
09/08/21	Walgreens (Two beef jerky sticks)	\$1.75
09/09/21	Steam (Added funds to his account)	\$5.00

09/16/21	Walgreens (Arizona tea)	\$0.88
09/29/21	Walgreens (Arizona tea)	\$0.88
09/30/21	Doordash (Sushi, for us)	\$27.35
10/02/21	Walgreens (Arizona tea)	\$0.88

-Allen, look at me for a sec. Before we go to sleep can't you tell me what you work on all day?

-Sarah, darling, you alre-

-I know the rules, I just think they deserve to be bent for your wife. I go about every day and I don't even know if you're safe. I don't know if your fighting or if you're stacking papers. Atleast tell me that much.

-It's important work, and its not easy. The most I can tell you is that we are taking down terrorists, threats to our nation. These people want nothing more than the fall of democracy, and I, we, stand in the way. What that entails is more than I can tell you. You know how the government is with their secrecy.

-It's not fair Allen, I work at my job at the trade union all day, and half the time I'm worried sick. It affects me, how am I supposed to do my job like this? under these conditions?

-You'll manage, just like I do. Believe me when I say that without the work I do we'd all be a lot less safe than we are now. Goodnight Sarah.

Date	Description	Amount
10/5/21	YouTube (Purchased two movies)	\$10.05
10/10/21	Burger King (Impossible Whopper)	\$5.31
10/13/21	Burger King (Impossible Whopper)	\$5.31
10/14/21	Amazon (Mein Kampf, shipped to him)	\$10.47
10/15/21	Amazon (Lolita, shipped to him)	\$10.33
10/16/21	Toyota (2021 Hilux, shipped to Iraq)	\$27,203

-You see, once you pop the big one he's going to dispute it, probably in a couple hours too. The point's not to make him poor, he'll get the money back, its the exhaustion of it all. Now we also have legitimate reasoning to further pursue him if,

lets say, we do need to make a more "personal" visit.

-I get it, but I don't see why we have to be so on the nose. I mean-

-Lets run though a couple more cases before we start questioning my ways alright?

-Sure man, I got it.

-Good. Now when I'm on vacation next week make sure you don't change a damn thing about the process. When you're chatting with him you're to be like an AI trying to mimic me. If I come back and he is even questioning our previous conversations I will literally hire a hitman on you, it's really easy to get one, don't fuck this up.

-Okay, don't worry about it man.

-Good.

Date	Exchange Description
10/17/21	Using the Facebook account of [REDACTED] (real, but abandoned) a post was made to a local neighborhood page alluding to bad and reckless driving by a car that matched the make and color of subject's car. The post incurred notable attention and through the help of multiple burner and hijacked accounts the content of the post was generally affirmed by real neighbors.
10/17/21	Within the subject's gaming "circle" a discussion was started about "racing games" by the controlled account [REDACTED] on discord. Driving "pet peeves" were injected into the conversation, and strong feelings towards "lazy drivers" were successfully cultivated within the subject's online friends. No notable suspicion was observed towards the coincidence.
10/20/21	Logged into subject's Youtube account and subscribed to an obscure conspiracy channel. Subscribed channel has been inactive for years so expectation is that it should go unnoticed by subject.
10/22/21	Issued an "automated traffic

	citation" to subject. There is no such infrastructure in subject's state. Subject will have to mail a check that will be intercepted by our team.
10/23/21	Within the subject's gaming "circle" our controlled account [REDACTED] successfully influenced a small minority of members to play "racing games". The related discussions and activity will be unavoidable to subject while interacting with his "circle".
10/24/21	A voice call was initiated by subject. Proper encryption and voice masking was practiced on our end before accepting. Subject was distraught and moody, confiding lots of personal information with our controlled Discord account. Subject obviously felt "close" if not somewhat obsessive to our fake persona. Comforting words were given to subject and seemed to end call in an audibly better mood.

- "Audibly better mood"? Do you know what your own job is? Have you lost it? "No notable suspicion"? Notable?

- Whats wrong with that he was-

- Go home for the day. I'm gonna have to clean up what you barfed out while I was on vacation.

- I really don't-

- GO home.

Date	Exchange Description
10/25/21	As the controlled account [REDACTED], all servers shared with subject were left, all accounts and previous chats were deleted and archived.

- Sarah. Sarah, are you still awake?

- Wh- MMM- What is it?

- I'm having a rough time at work lately.

- What happened?

- It's... I, I feel like I'm hurting people.

- How so?

-Even though they're bad people its hard to hate them when I start to know them, it's hard to want them gone.
 -Can you tell me about it?
 -Maybe, I want to. I just don't know what will happen if I do.
 -Its okay Allen. If you didn't do what you did I couldn't help the people that I do.
 -I know, I know. Goodnight Sarah.

Date	Exchange Description
10/26/21	Multiple lesser active controlled accounts within the subject's Discord server made posts expressing discontent with the direction and inactivity of the server, also showing displeasure with the leaving of controlled account [REDACTED]. One of the accounts left the server towards the end of the discussion.

-Jobe, I got a serious question.
 -What?
 -How do I quit. I don't care what I do, but I'm not cut out for this job.
 -Is that so?
 -It's weighing on my conscious, I don't think I can keep this up.
 -Is that so?
 -Don't give me that look. I know I'm not helping you out here. Just let me know where I can put in my two weeks. Or fire me for all I care.
 -Allen, look at me for a second.
 -I'm telling you man I've h-
 -Look at me. I'm up working this damn job more than half the hours of each damn day that goes by. I had to watch what you did over my vacation, every fucking second of my vacation, just because some higher ups didn't like me leaving you alone. Even with all the incredible fuck ups and displays of ineptitude, even with all of that, the only thing that you could do that would truly be irredeemably fucked would be to quit, making these last few months a total waste of my time and leaving me with a steaming pile of shitty problems I have to work even more to get through. So I'm gonna pretend I didn't hear what you said in the last couple minutes, and you pretend that your not worthless and get back to the fucking job you get paid fucking money to do.
 -I...

Date	Exchange Description
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10/26/21	Subject posted suicidal thoughts on Facebook. Multiple controlled "troll" accounts left short snarky comments where applicable. Most post's deleted by moderators, but likely seen by subject.
10/27/21	Subject posted "final words" onto his social media accounts. No written suspicion towards the agency. Police and cooperating individuals confirmed suicide three hours after post. Certain controlled accounts deleted where deemed necessary.

-When can we expect closure on this case Jobe?
 -Not long, he's already tried to quit.
 -Every day he's still alive we lose valuable influence. If the week ends and he's not gone we're going to have to deal with matters in a different way.
 -Don't worry, the dummy operation has ended, give me a few words with him and its only a matter of time.
 -Good.

Date	Observation
10/27/21	Subject seen filling gas, no unlogged items inside car, no unlogged items on person, no unlogged people conversed with or were approached by subject.
10/27/21	Subject seen at hardware store. Two new items logged (336 and 337). One new person logged after a class 3a conversation was initiated. Follow up observation with person scheduled for 11/4/21
10/27/21	Subject has gone to sleep. No new items or persons to be logged. For nighttime activity, dream analysis, and biometrics see the LUNA department.

-You need to eat your eggs. Your shifts are thirteen hours, if you don't eat you'll keel over.
 -I'll be fine, I've worked on less.
 -You're not taking care of yourself lately, if this continues I think you should quit.
 -I don't want you to worry about me okay? I'll be fine.

-No, too bad, I will worry until you start telling me how your day went. Who would I be if I didn't worry about you Allen? I can't just carry on around you when you're being hurt by some unknown monster that rots you away a little more every day.

-I don't know how many times we need to have this conversation. Its the law. I can't tell you jack shit. And frankly, your "worrying" doesn't help jack shit with any problems I may or may not be having.

-Don't talk like that, you kn-

-I'm going to work, bye.

Date	Observation
10/28/21	Subject seen driving towards work at speed exceeding 95 mph. No new information to log. Items 336 and 337 still present in car.
10/28/21	Subject seen exhibiting erratic behavior while parked a mile away from the facility. See psych team for in depth analysis. No new logs.
10/28/21	Subject entered the facility, no new items to log. For worktime activity including full computer logs and recordings of conversations contact Dr. Jobe Eickoff.

-Allen, you have to forgive my outbreak yesterday. I've thinking about it and I want to say I'm sorry for making it so personal. Next time I lose it, just try to keep in mind that it's because I care about my job, and not because I hate you.

-I still want to quit, but thank you for saying that. I-

-No problem at all. Now, while you're still with us I need you to write up a report on our old buddy. While you were gone he finally called it quits. Loads of paperwork to be done, and the faster we can work through it the sooner we can start working our next case.

-I'd actually like to talk to a higher up before I start.

-About what? Why?

-I'm quitting, I thought I made that clear.

-Allen don't start on this shit, it takes time to even do what you want to do. I'm talking paperwork, I'm talking evaluations, I'm talking a real pain in the ass okay? We'll start considering it once you get the report done, end of conversation.

Date	Observation
10/28/21	Subject seen purchasing food on way home (item 345 in log).

	Conversation and people not logged under reason UNIMPORTANT TRANSACTION, see manual on conversational surveillance (#179340973 in department library) for more detailed information.
10/28/21	Subject seen parking in garage and then closing the garage door. Only audio is available in this indoor location, it is likely item 336 and 337 were used to funnel exhaust fumes into the subject's car. No new logs. This observation concludes the active surveillance section of department contract 52958, for post-death observations check with the DUST team or look under the "conclusions" tab of ObservIO while this case is selected.

-You don't let me down Jobe, I can tell you that. Thirty years doing this and goosebumps every time.

-Thank you sir. Now, it should be at least four to five weeks before we can convince Allen's wife to step down, we have two agents that have initiated contact, and one plant ready to assume control when the time comes.

-Excellent. I'll get in touch with LUNA about the nightmare you wanted. We should be able to run it with a few minor changes. Let me know when you speak with the coroner as we'll need the body transferred as soon as reasonably possible.

-Will do boss.

**From the depths of /wg/
comes something /unreal/**

3-5k word stories due Oct 31
Accepted submissions get \$25
Theme: "Beauty & Wrath"

unrealpress@yandex.com



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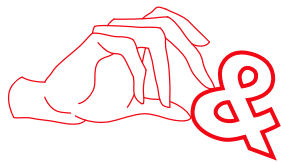
The Ineffable Draw of Madness

by Anonymous

"It is not immaterial that madmen were included in the proscription of idleness. From its origin, they would have their place beside the poor, deserving or not, and the idle, voluntary or not. Like them, they would be subject to the rules of forced labor... The necessity, discovered in the eighteenth century, to provide a special regime for the insane and the great crisis of confinement that shortly preceded the Revolution are linked to the experience of madness available in the universal necessity of labor."

"Until the Renaissance, the sensibility of madness was linked to the presence of imaginary transcendences."

- Foucault



You have known your vessel is flawed, so why not take some of the control back? Start a new system up with a madness program, version 2.0. It would seem that there always happened to be a part of your person you didn't understand. A condition in your heart where you cannot lift heavy things without falling flat on your face and laughing. Everyone else seems to scowl and curse. There appears to be no control – but why shouldn't there be? Why can't you, say, start twitching your neck every 15.3 seconds? A nervous tic motion of the head, to the left. Or furrow your brow when another someone says belong/start/help/sale/eat or any number of other things. Or run a little circle around your temple with your pointer finger when everything feels disastrously sane. Knock your head against walls, tell everyone to "Fogeddaboutit." Just leave places where and when you want to.

But to become mad, to understand madness, we have to also see that this routine is taxing. Like anything else, if you are to feel mad you must practice, practice, practice. For you are mad, you have just learned very much to control it. You know what you know and their isn't a way to unlearn it, but you may accept, with madness, that this is not real. Say it to yourself. It's okay, this isn't real. Don't you feel better if not significantly worse? It's okay, it's been said by people things get worse before they get better. You would trust them wouldn't you? This is not real.

And this phrase, this one simple phrase carries a lot of weight – as simple phrases do. In fact being mad is to know the importance of one phrase. How others, any others really, may pass on through and how one specially chosen phrase may mean a whole assortment of things. And repeating it to yourself in the shower or on the bus is a good way to build significance. Which is another step on the path to madness, talking to yourself while others can hear. It is the most socially daunting and sometimes, anxious wise, demanding of the to be mad, but repeat it to yourself, this is not real. You may wish to skip the social utterances until a later period in the madness regime also, if you do so wish, because this is your madness. Not that you are special, you are only special in the way certain bodybuilders are special, it's strangely a similar routine.

So work on those calisthenics and physical twitches, don't worry you'll get them down. Sometimes you can practice by pacing anxiously or clasp your jaw or in other larger physical actions, such as; spending a whole day hunching slightly or spontaneously letting your neck muscles go limp. Try to follow with your eyes your own head as it bobbles around in the breeze. And remember; if madness was easy to pick up everyone would be doing it.

And don't think of it as a very freeing lifestyle choice, in its strictest terms, the world is defined into even more pronounced strati. There is a reason most are locked up – the world will become so comprehensible that you will start receiving an overwhelming sense of freedom, a tetherless tie to what the idea of freedom could be. A world without strengthened proposals and routine .. but you're not there yet. To continue, you must work mentally hard as well. You must, as a means of understanding, chase after boredom with a measuring stick. Start to worry about the sickness you have put yourself under, whether this will be a way to make you happy. In which you will tell yourself: you are more happy when you're unhappy – when you know you are slightly happy you can only be jealous of your unhappiest self. Madness is knowing that there is not much to gain in the first place, and you must believe this.

And after awhile your madness will help explain much, like how that dripping faucet plinking in the sink always sounds like a tiny voice whispering in your head. A voice that you can never quite understand what it's saying. As you go to turn the faucet knob tighter for the fifth time, you will see a reflection in the knob's small handle and see the small person that's been inside all along. So monitor your madness diligently. Watch for things askew, but do not attempt to fix. That 3 on the side of your building that's turned and looks more like a W? Do not turn it, just watch and watch and think and think. And know the difference between madness and other maladies. Example, a crazy person will yell, scream at you on the street. Yet you are quiet, not saying a word for ten years, now that's madness. However, most people cannot say nothing. So say the same thing like a fool. This is not real.

Start walking late. You start walking at 2am to make sure most people are asleep. Yet you are still consistently surprised by the lack of foot traffic. Aren't others afflicting themselves of madness? You know there have been. Walk – look in lit windows and down basement corridors. Look at the people empty in front of things and passed out on couches, light still flickering on them. Stop and look and deviate. For whoever coined the phrase 'curiosity killed the cat' forgot to mention the un-curious cat dies too. Also, was a bore. Gone mad now you are sure you are not boring to yourself, even though madness is often times very boring. So walk and fight your pragmatic self as you have been doing. It is a full night and starting to be cold. Instead of turning and going home where you know you will be warm, trudge ahead. Pull your arms to your chest and let the sleeves of your sweater blow in the breeze. Feel the warmth of your own straight jacket, and fight the thought of how sane you will feel once you are home.

Your legs are getting numb, so in their walk they have taken a mind of their own. Feeling detached from your torso they pull you forward and forward. This makes you stumble and laugh in your mad laugh. You walk and think of the lake. It's only a couple more blocks away (if it's winter and frozen over, rub snow on your face and remember what it is to cry. For the to be mad in arid, dry climates, see vis a vis "heat stroke" and "mirage." But, if you are truly committed, move north, it is no coincidence that there are a many great Russian madmen). You come down a sloped walk to the lake. You smell the sweetness of the air mix over the waters of the lake and sweep at you. You see the crescent moon and feel your aloneness, and, breathe – for what feels like only the 2nd or 3rd time. You walk

down to the edge of the water and shiver in the now strong breeze. You are maybe no longer mad. So you fight for it. Stick your face in the lake. You have forgotten to take your hands off your chest. You have no balance so you fall in. You splutter, but you can stand. There is an initial shock, but you slowly realize, now that your in it, that the water is warmer than the breeze, that the breeze chills your wet clothes.

You crouch, lip grazing the water, and you hear some voices sing to you from the lake. You hear and know their song. You know that you must be mad, hearing this. The songs come from the rocks in the middle of the lake, big rocks, like planets in the solar system that is the galaxy of this dark body of water. You have heard them before, but not like this, never like this. Inspiration, a precept of madness. The siren song pulls you out, the bodily mass of the rocks acting with a gravitational force, a current gently pushing at your feet. Swirling you inwards. You think of how you know this song. How you know its pull, how you have been warned against it. You have heard tales of its avoidance, and the honor in it. Yet you float silently closer, listening. Maybe being dashed on the rocks isn't so bad? The song building steadily, a heavy beat of a dying star.

You are now becoming to notice just how bitterly frozen you are. Your jaw actually starts twitching, your teeth chip at each other. So you stroke your arms and think how mad you are to be out in this lake and yet here you are paddling your legs and pulling tighter and tighter, trying to stay afloat. So, you stop, stop completely, turning your ear towards the rocks and try and listen. This is not real.

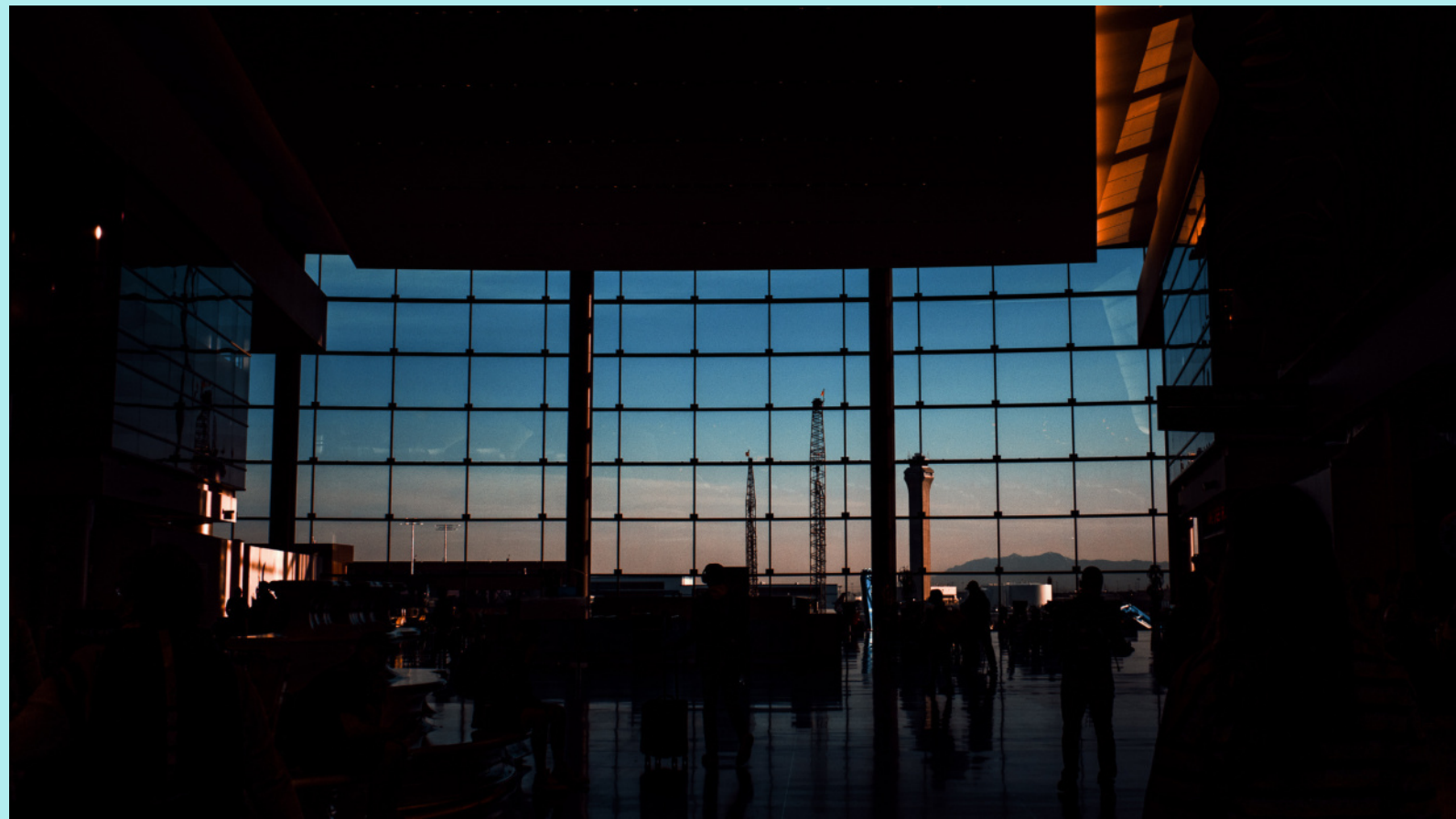
Of course a truly sane person might just imagine this, real or not, and think happily that this means madness. You shouldn't have to worry, often people train for many useless things. And as you get older and only walk in the daylight because you take pride in knowing what it is you see coming; as perhaps later you walk across the well manicured prairie with a destination in mind, the smell of rich grass bouncing on your tongue, you'll get to remember that time you tried to go mad, and this time you'll notice that this has already happened. Old and new become arbitrary distinctions. But that mad wind, the wind when it blows under your nose and smells like the second or third time you've ever smelled it (it always smells this way) the breeze reminds you ...

&

a

m

p





I sit on the floor.

I sit facing the window,
Seeing the majestic sun set,
I sit on the floor to see it reflection
I sit on the floor to see the orange skies
I sit on the floor to see the fading lights
I sit on the floor trying to catch
Trying to catch these last moments
As the lights dim, the sun will set
This moment.... I will add to my regrets.



What do you think this is some kind of Chinese porridge convention?
You got to straighten up or you'll fly right off the mountain!
They don't take kindly to family they treat you better than a strange dog.
It's completely personal.
They make the facts around here and you better believe they mean what they do.
Get your shoulders up, tie your hair, lose your face, and for God's sake put in a good word for me.

pomes by anon

He give her dick, very quick

For she's

Down to fuck, And rim, For him

As well, how swell

Indeed

She doesn't care

What you read

/lit/

Not one bit

I have written

Nothing

That is

Something

no pennies each

Americas last hours

Hit

The twin towers

In '01

We are done

In the window, through the glass

A girl, with class

She pass

By

I'm so shy

Why



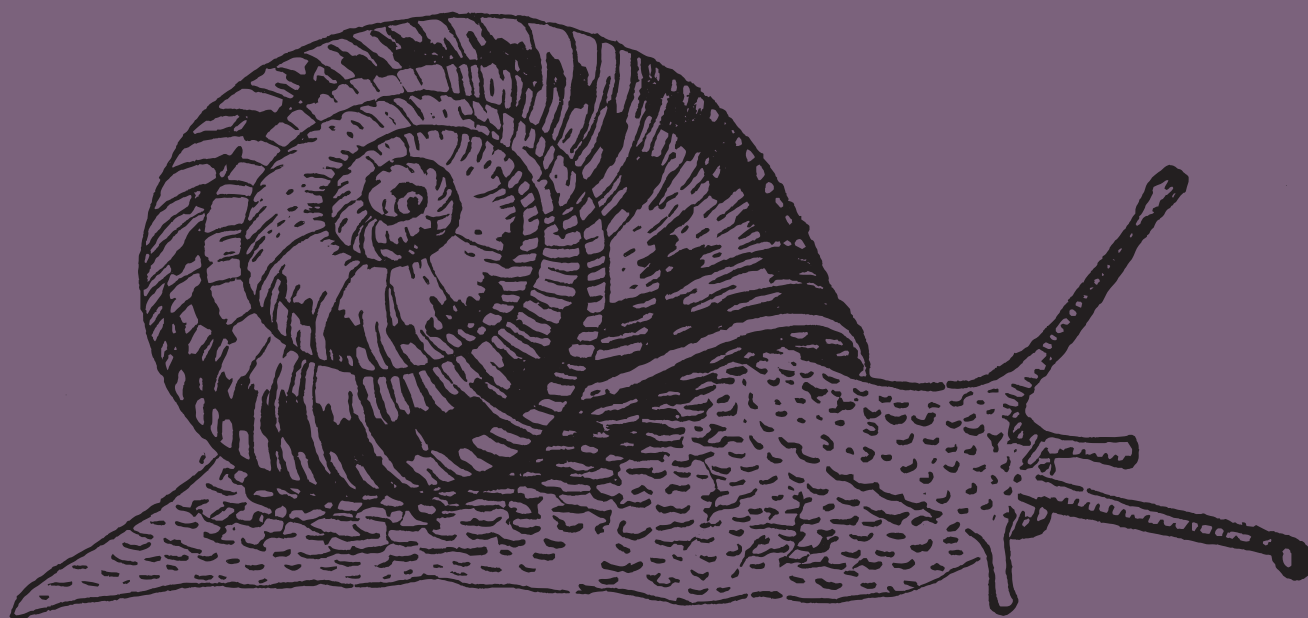
PARDON
MY
FRENCH

Petit prélude hugolio-rimbaldo-jarryien à l'Armageddon

Des grondements vouivresques sonnaient dans le ciel cérulodrome de percale livide qui menaçait de se déchirer en lambeaux asymptotiques, concaves et moirés. Soudain, un nouveau cri roide et apocalypsescent s'éleva en spirales concentriques et acheva de rompre les étendues du firmament comme l'aurait fait l'estocade d'un campéador monstrueux dans le flanc de l'agneau théandrique. Une avalanche d'or fuligineux s'écroula dans l'azur et nous vîmes à travers la singularité des horizons anéantis s'élever spondaïquement le front noir et pyramidionalement biscornu du porteur des clartés. Des rondes orphéotélestes

tournèrent mystagogiquement dans les viridescences fanées des fjords et des transhumances innombrables de créatures sylphidesques s'abîmèrent dans les cieux en psalmodiant des trisagions vermeils. Le front noir remaignait besticulaire entre mille paragnathides de soufre labradorescent et dégueulait des imprécations bifides au bullateur des replis du cosmos.

De ténébreuses nuées tératoformes se mirent à grouiller dans l'espace indéfini et le tiers des étoiles fit résonner d'indicibles et nitescentes arabesques de rages malévoles, l'effroi détressait la gaze des âmes et des noeuds subtils de mousseline se charriaient dans les coeurs à mesure que les grands anaglyphes des lumières poétiques se changeaient en informes torpeurs vipérines. Tout s'affaissait. C'est alors que retentit vif et puissant un grand clairon d'éternité.



INDIGO RAT



Carney's sparse and patchy fur sprung straight at the sight. In all his months never had there been a bigger pile. Sure, small collections like families, church groups, and restaurants had popped up, but nothing like this. There was food and then there were the problems that arose when food was no longer a problem. Scared of the instincts about to take over he lurched forward slowly, towards the pile of bodies, consisting mostly of small children, and he remembered his younger days. Goonts wouldn't have taken his time, he thought, back when the clouds first spread any body made you go crazy. It wasn't so much the taste of human, but rather the rarity of it, now dropping in abundance. The sparse network of connections by means of alleys, sewers, and the inside of walls did not provide lavish dinner often, and when a deer did drop dead within a reasonable distance, there were always bigger beasts

that had been waiting. Not after the clouds. Back then the sparse network turned into a lavish and expansive plain. Many of the bodies were finely aged and rotting like they never could in the wild, without being devoured. There was never a question of who got what, until the boom that is.

Goonts was a product of the boom, the massive surge of rats rapidly reproducing to meet the ever-growing demand for animals that would eat just about anything. It only took a month before food once again became a scavenger hunt. Every new path wandered would result in disappointment, when, at the end of a hallway, or hiding under a bed, or at the wheel of a car, a skeleton appeared, picked clean. Worse than the scarcity of human meat was the abundance of trash. What before was life was now so dreary to look

back at, and, sometimes, to be forced to eat. Often starvation was chosen, as a rejection of the old world. Every rat knew that the humans would run out, but nobody wanted to accept what that meant, and they carried on as if it never would mean anything.

The hordes of human corpses turned into hordes of rat corpses, which in its own peculiar way caused another boom, but there were diminishing returns and soon very few rats left. At night Carney and Goonts, in the middle of a barren football field, disappeared into the long grass, rolling over one another searching for a comfortable position in a comfortless world. There was a lot more sleep before he left. A swollen white moon and a swollen white rat touched the eye comfortably. Any proper prey instinct they should have had from laying in the open was long gone, along with the communities that had fostered it before. Now there was just the deep west. Every sight they discovered either wasn't good or was the beautiful expanse of mother nature. Like cowboys (ratboys? cowrats?) they rode into towns weary of opposing forces, rats who claimed their land and defended it, yet there was no showdown, it was all too fast. Everything was much too fast for the proximity that they lived from death. When a real corpse was found many rat corpses were soon to follow. It didn't make sense how they all found it at once, months after the incident, but once you saw a body you felt that there was obviously no other way things could go.

The fights were daily, if not multiple times a day. Shit would break out for anything from a stale donut to a heavy corpse that was bloated and pooled into its surroundings. It always started the same, desperately eating everything in sight two rats would collide on their meal, previously unaware of each other, and begin the

scramble. The scramble did not decide who was stronger, but it did decide who lived. It was a manic firing of impulses as each rat held on with its teeth, jolting around as fast as its muscles allowed. It lasted much too long, and in the end one rat either laid too exhausted to continue or dead. Goonts always survived, but didn't often win. It was, however, enough to make the enemy easy to finish off. That was the advantage of traveling in a group, an advantage brought about by rabid individualism that seemed to plague the new rats, the post-cloud rats.

In a way, Carney could see him in the pile, a white puff of fabric that led to a pink fleshy tail. And those red eyes. Soon the fights died down and there was nothing but the constant moving, the comfort that came with laying down in a familiar place faded to constant unawareness, a blur of shapes that didn't last. A pain of hunger. The decision to eat him when he finally collapsed in the middle of a sun-stroked road was an easy one. It was the right decision, there was neither remorse nor guilt as the painfully empty pit in Carney's stomach was filled by his friend.

The same pain now pushed against his insides, skin loose from better days weighed his travelings down. The pile before him almost glimmered, he had nowhere to be, the days of trash scavenging were behind him, and the days of lavish eating now stood before him mocking a time also passed. Yet, the hunger ruled. He stepped, raised on two legs, as a powerfully strange battle of consciousness now pushed against everything he had ever known or done. Fragments of a divine connection that shined through the large windows of the school now dimmed out behind a cloud. Jumping into the pool Carney struggled, squirmed, and at last glided gently onto the pile of bleached bones.



day in the life.

He found in the act of drinking a sliding blurring exercise in inertia, similar to gliding in neutral down a rail-less canyon road. It wasn't so much the speed or delirium that was attractive to him, moreso the unspoken possibility of careening off the edge at any given moment- that without a thought or consideration he could find himself floating, eightless in a two-ton tomb of metal and diesel. Suspended in the crystalline air by some divine thread, plummeting and silent and peaceful and dead before dying.

Drinking also made days like these easier.

—

His fist falls on the door seven times, the shape of that shave-and-a-haircut pattern maybe almost discernible if not for the screamsquealing of children at play, the admittedly sloppy tempo of the knock itself, and the fact that he's forgotten that this is a backyard party, and that he's been instructed to enter through the side gate in the notes for this gig. So there he sways, eyes sliding from doorbell to doorknob, pondering his next move. Finally, he fumbles for his phone in his pocket. Opens the AktNow™ App (3.5 Stars on the App Store and 4 on Google Play [Notable review: "good, but devs need to specify if the entertainment is clowns or magicians with some sort of badge. i didnt know i ordered a clown for my nieces birthday until he got here and when we tried to turn him away because my niece hates clowns he started screaming and crying about how this always happens to him and making a scene while trying to force himself in. we threatened to call the police and then he left. extremely uncomfortable experience" {Developer response: "Thanks for the feedback! We're getting right to work on implementing a more visible method of discernment among entertainment types. We also took the liberty of

looking through your order history and found the clown in question. We will no longer be inviting him to contract with us.”})). Realizing his error, he picks up his trunk and makes his way to the sidegate. The weight of the trunk on his left side adds a lopsided effect to his already woeful ambulatory dog paddle.

As it always happens, as the sounds of the party draw nearer, so too do the idle thoughts of suicide. It's time to do your job, it's time to pull the rabbit out of the hat, it's time to pull the gun out of the hat, it's time to pull the trigger, it's time to pack up your things, it's time for the next party. He's been having trouble telling if this ideation is still some sick internal joke he plays for himself, or if it's becoming earnest. He stands at the gate, unmoving. Frozen but not rigid, he deflates, and the limpness that he feels in the pit of his gut makes its ambling way up and down his spine.

It wasn't always like this. He got into this business because he loved attention, loved entertaining, loved children even! And he was good at it too, it seemed that he had a natural predisposition for sleight of hand. At some point though, like every job, relationship, or really any responsibility in his life, these loves wilted into apathy, then resentment, and then ultimately overwhelming fear. His habit of boozing grew from an aid to a necessity to the end goal of his vocation.

Why he persists, he doesn't know. The question itself is so exhausting that this, too, paralyzes him- rendering him little more than debris on a current impossible to navigate, much less divert (Ha!) into a more favorable direction.

Flaccid, he shoulders the gate open. The children don't take notice of him- a blessing-and the rest of the adults are otherwise preoccupied. He smiles meekly at the three or four parents who note his entrance, and they return his meekness with dips of the chin and otherwise cordial acknowledgement. He exists, he's here, and there's nothing anyone can do about it now but get on with it. He shuffles on.

He gets to work unpacking his trunk in the corner of the yard, behind the refreshments. Showtime in seven minutes.

—

The routine itself is usually bearable, if only because it's a routine. In this moment everything is mechanical, every action performed is choreographed and perfect. The robot

performs to a smattering of human bipods mounted with videocameraphones, the computer interfaces with the computer, a perfect feedback loop increasing in pitch. Even the children watch the performance through the lens of these handheld realtime selfsimulacra. Stonegrinned, eyes glassy and unseeing, the magician continues, as if he himself is also a dispassionate observer. Rabbit. Scarves. Fire. Rings. Coin. The routine is usually bearable, if only because it's a routine.

Two teenagers in the back, one of them vaguely resembles a past love. The male is pantomiming and gesticulating and cruelly skanking to the electro-swing that accompanies the act. She laughs with her companion and at the magician and records both performances forever, to be uploaded to infinity, so everyone can laugh.

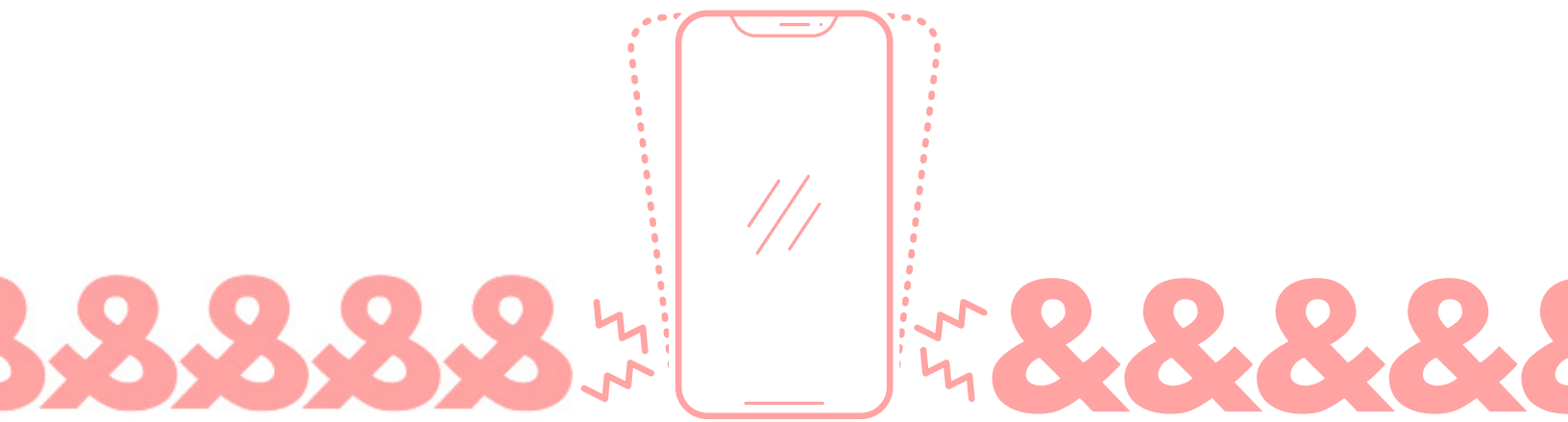
—

They're laughing at me? Why are they laughing at me? I'm just a performer. I'm a magician. It's my job to entertain. I'm doing magic tricks! Of course I look ridiculous right now, why would you mock me? Why, why, why, why? What did I ever do to you? Is it not enough that I'm here for your amusement, you feel compelled to humiliate me while I'm here for your sake?

This is fucking ridiculous. I can't take this anymore. I can't take this anymore. I can't take this anymore. I should be laughing at all of you freaks. That's right, you're the real freaks. Happy birthday to your freak son! I'm the best magician in the county! Hate, hate, I hate you all. You could have booked a fucking loser like Jared, and you got me instead. I'm doing all this for you! I could have been someone huge, and I chose to be here for the sake of you, for the sake of the party!

How did I get here? Okay, I was connected by the app— I was chosen because of some combination of proximity, pricing, and a cumulative personal rating from other gigs in the past along with parameters specified by the customer. None of these systems are in my control, none of this routine is in my control. I am delivered, I am delivered here, not by chance, not by God, but by some hateful combination of both, conspiring to kill me. To kill me! To slaughter me, like a cow in some awful cartoon machine that creates the goo for hamburgers.

Jesus Christ, she looks just like her. She's laughing just like her. They're all recording this. I'm less than nothing. I'm



less than nothing. I'm nobody. I don't have a name, I don't have a soul. I'm dying. I am less than a blip in an algorithm, and my death is being livestreamed. AAAAHHHHHHHHH—

—

On the ground, convulsions.
Hair ripped out, screaming and lashing and full of pain.
Cracked and numb and bleeding all over.
Sobbing and dying, dying!

Grass in mouth taste like puke.
Worm who know what worm is.
Ragged croak and death rattle.
Motionless
totally spent.

Serene.

Electro-swing music blaring.

End

—

Hello! Thank you for contracting with AktNow!

[John] rated you (0 STARS). Here's a note from [John]!

“what the fuck man? needless to say, i reported you to aktnow for your little fucking stunt.u ruined the entire fucking day. if i ever see you again, your fucking dead.”

Your tip (\$0.00) will be routed automatically to your preferred banking service!





A Eulogy for the West

Maggots eat the garbage heap that were once your own remains;
Why climb so high, just to die among Satan's scorching flames?
You may blame those that came, to take your rightful lands;
But don't try and pretend, for in the end, you died by your own hands.



W
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BOB

—

Of all the faces present,
This one was Henry's own face.
A copy of the photo was sent out
From camp, to the sea floor, and out to space.

—





Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.






She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.



Have you EVER been a member of an organization that advocates or practices commission of acts of force or violence to discourage others from exercising their rights under the United States with the specific intent to further such action?

Have you EVER knowingly engaged in activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force?

Have you EVER been a member of an organization that advocates or practices commission of acts of force or violence to overthrow the U.S. Government which engaged in activities to that end with an awareness of the organization's dedication to that end or with the specific intent to further such activities?

Have you EVER advocated any act of force or violence to overthrow the U.S. Government?

Have you EVER been a member of an organization that advocates or practices commission of acts of force or violence to overthrow the U.S. Government with the specific intent to further such action?

Have you EVER knowingly engaged in activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force?

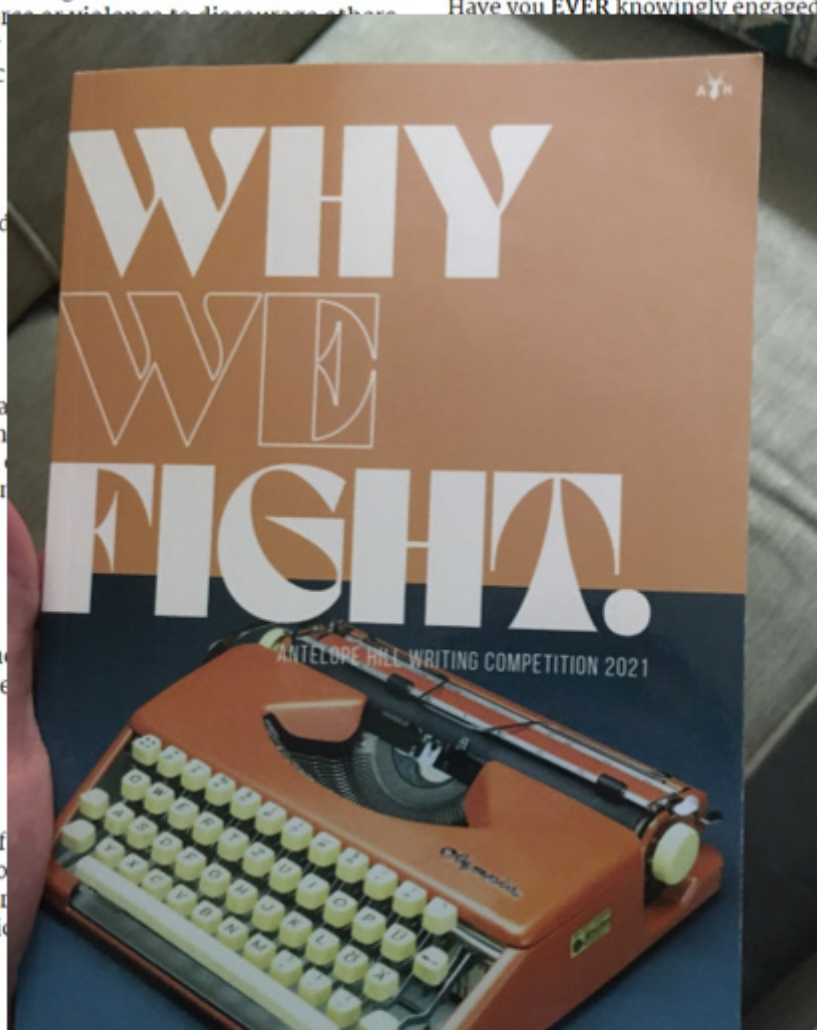
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Have you EVER been a member of an organization that advocates or practices commission of acts of force or violence to discourage others from exercising their rights under the U.S. Constitution or any state or local law with the specific intent to further such action?

Antelope Hill Publishing represents another knife in the belly to the mythology of America. If anything in this world has any real intrinsic value, it could very well be telling the truth. Americans need to be honest with themselves that the country isn't theirs and maybe never was theirs. The farce of the republic needs to be recognized and surpassed. The fifth column that is being named as The Regime needs to be at the forefront of all discourse. There is no other enemy but those that hold the reigns and press the yoke on us. There is a constant war of propaganda from all sides to create willing slaves. "Why we fight" is a collection of works from the slaves who aren't so willing to bend the knee. There is a fair amount of overlap in the thinking across the poems and prose, while the enemy is often named, the "why" the "we" and the "fight" remain foggy, there are hints, and poetic innuendoes but it is not fully fleshed out. The psyops and demoralization campaigns are real. It is time to weaponize the autism. It is time to get disciplined, get uncomfortable, and get mad. The authors lie when they say they have "heritage", "legacy", or "destiny". They aren't special because they kind-of-sort-of look like someone famous who lived a thousand years ago. The authors are special, not because they are great but because they are scum. They are an unerasable disease that The Regime wishes never existed. They are the last men at the forever noontide. "Why we Fight" could be the most retarded collection of writings of this decade or the most important. 14/88 Gold Stars.

Coming soon to &...

The Kanterbury Tales by (You)

lamp.lit.magazine@gmail.com



ECCE HOMO

I am Shane Collins, and I am a very angry and bitter man. An awful thing to say about yourself but for me it's true; I was not always angry and bitter, in fact, when I was a child I was carefree and happy, rarely, if ever, did I lose my temper but just like the rocks on a beach slowly but surely I was worn down by forces greater than myself. Looking back on those happy days is probably why I'm so bitter now, because what I could have had and what I SHOULD have had has been taken from me. How can I look back fondly on my childhood like everyone else when I'm faced with the depressing fact that I am currently at my peak (in society's standards anyway). It's not even a very high peak at that, which adds even more to my bitterness, the best time of my life isn't even that good! I admit happily what I am, however, it brings me some feeling of enlightenment as the more spiritual of us like to say; knowing what I am at least means I have a definable character, something you can describe in abstract terms even if it is a miserable one.

As of right this instant I'm sitting upstairs in Java's on the small corner table beside the wall where the plugs are, I spend a lot of time here, it's open until midnight, not too expensive and although it can get very busy I am unlikely to be disturbed when I have my mac out typing away. What I am typing is this very piece in fact. Why? I hear you ask, well I think I should write out what has made me this way, I believe these words will eventually find some young soul who feels the same and maybe they'll feel less alone knowing there is more than them going through the same thing; I am not looking for Christ like disciples but simply writing out how this disgusting world has broken me. Innocence was the only thing that kept me happy and when that veneer was broken it all slowly faded into nothing, so slowly in fact that even now at twenty-two I'm finding more and more ways to be bitter and angry at the world and life.

At the time of writing it is currently noon, I woke up an hour ago, got dressed and headed into town on the bus and walked here to begin my journey. I have a cup of tea beside me and haven't eaten today apart from a small biscotti I received for free with my tea but hunger doesn't affect me much at all, between smoking and caffeine I keep it well suppressed. Anyway, let's begin.

—

I started school aged four, and I remember vividly entering

the classroom for the first time; it was strange and I felt almost betrayed when my mother left me. The other children seemed the same, apart from the few who didn't seem to be bothered. Between the ages of four and seven I was quite happy, school was school, you did the subjects and played with your classmates, we weren't old enough to form cliques or groups (which were mostly copied from American television, I always had my suspicions over how organic they were). I was a typical young boy who enjoyed playing football or cowboys and Indians (much to my shame but excuse my racism for I was only a child). It was my first interaction on a large scale with other people my age and the concept of friendship was new and exciting to me.

Another thing that was presented to me at an early age was the concept of religion: we said our prayers before lunch, we went to school masses and we did a half hour of religious studies before break-time. I ate it up without any questions and took part as happily as anyone else at the time although I had absolutely no idea of what was actually happening. I will revisit this particular evil later on.

I was also introduced to examinations for the first time in my life, little spelling tests or games based around learning that had me playing with blocks or magnets or whatever nonsense was brought in twenty years before by a teacher. I didn't like those little tests back then and never would grow to like them later on in secondary school.

Overall I think education was a very damaging experience for me. I entered primary school afraid and worried and would leave it the same way (albeit for different reasons). I think mandatory education should be abolished. It's not a good place for a child to be placed in, especially one like myself who was more creative, I've tried many times to rekindle the flames of creativity I once had as a child and have constantly failed to do so. Why? Because I was made to act in a strict uniform fashion with other children who also had different skill sets so that when we were spat out at the very end we'd make beautiful cogs for the dying machine of capitalism. Capitalist societies have no place for creative beings and it's impossible to expect someone like myself to write a great work when I need to worry about paying rent and bills from the moment I leave home. If right was right and the bastards were put up against the wall and the people got free housing, an undeniable human right, I would have time for leisure, time to relax and maybe, just maybe some of my anger will

leave my system. My hatred for the dying system hasn't pushed me to accelerationism yet but I have started to cut off ties with people who I know are completely incompatible with me politically and morally; why would anyone be friends or datesomebody when they are so incompatible on a basic level? I will not associate with evil people and I routinely try to convince my friends to do the same.

There has been occasions when my friends have gotten angry at me for doing this but it's for their own good, they're good people at heart and I know that but they can be blind to the disgusting bigoted beliefs of their 'friends'; how could you be friends with people who actively vote for evil at every chance?

I realise that I've been rambling but I don't care, I don't care if this is hard for people to read, because this is how I talk and write and I won't change it for anybody who thinks it's wrong or improper and being shunned by such people is a badge of honor for me; arbitrary standards mean nothing to me and shouldn't mean anything to anyone but back on topic; I mentioned religion earlier and I will revisit it now.

—

I encountered religion, as previously stated when I started school and praying before lunch, school masses and whatnot made up my entire religious education until I started to prepare for communion. Before that point I never thought anything of it, I believed in God, I believed in Santa and I believed in a free and fair world, such is the innocence of a child! When learning about communion however, I started to feel strange about it all. I had done my first confession by this point and had told a priest all my sins (he more than likely got aroused by the ordeal) and he gave me a penance to complete. I didn't feel fear or anger at doing this and just went with the flow but maybe that year older made all the difference; I started to ask the teacher more difficult questions than she could answer: 'Can you do bad things for a good cause and would it be a sin?' and 'Why did God create disease and sickness?' were the two she could not answer and funnily enough still have not been answered when I ask them (Christians don't usually read the source material of what they worship, be it fear or stupidity I don't know but I find it incredibly funny). I was always convinced to let it go however, because my teacher would usually tell me that a priest would be better fit to answer me, a cop out but again my innocence worked against me. Come secondary school however, things changed drastically.

I won't lie, I was bullied at secondary school, I wasn't physically strong, being quite thin and didn't play sports outside of a few games of football (only for fun not competitive) and was quite quiet. I was usually called a poof

for not dressing in high-tops or wearing some awful hollister shite. P.E was the worst. I would usually try to skip it or say I was wheezy (being an asthmatic) but on the occasion I was forced to take part I always suffered. One particular day I remember we were playing football and this bastard shouldered me so hard I fell and hit my head against the ground and was completely covered in muck; he came up apologising but I knew he was only feigning sincerity because he didn't want the girls in the class to think bad of him. I remember people laughing when I fell and I was completely humiliated. I haven't named the man who shouldered me because he doesn't deserve to be mentioned, his name doesn't deserve to be remembered. He never acknowledged my existence apart from that day, everybody loved him for some reason but I despised him, especially after that day, another reason that made me different from the others. I hadn't brought my clothes for P.E either that day and so my uniform was ruined and I spent the whole day wet and filthy. I see I have gone on a tangent again, I still don't care!

My interests always left me isolated and because they were so niche not a lot of people could relate to me. I enjoyed writing a lot, I would write absurdist stories in the vein of Camus when I first came across him when I was fourteen or so and his book 'The Myth of Sisyphus' changed me so radically I can't recognize my past self as being truly me anymore. 'One must imagine Sisyphus happy' stuck to me (after I googled who he was); here was a man who was forced to suffer everyday and Camus was making us realise how stupid a statement it would be for Sisyphus to be happy! How could he be? He's forced to do the same thing everyday until he dies, sound familiar? Well it should! Now here's the kicker, if God is real, why would he force me to suffer through those years of secondary school? The isolation, the bullying, the brainwashing? The brainwashing was done by his agents, so maybe he did want that, although if he did why would he be worth worshipping when all he brings is misery? Religion was described as 'Opium of the masses' and it's true it attempts to keep us all in check under the guise of providing 'a moral system' or 'something higher than yourself' but ignorance is bliss as they say and my eyes were blown wide open by Sisyphus (although I was beginning to realise that myself).

So there I was, aged fourteen and suddenly coming to the realization that the world wasn't created by some God and we didn't go to heaven, or to hell and that religion: priests, nuns, monks and the rest are all agents of control dedicated to furthering their own needs. My parents are firmly in this trap, they believe in God, have religious icons scattered around the house and forced me to go to mass like a prisoner until I was nearly an adult. I try to love them, I do, but their true colours have been exposed to me more and more over the years (which I'll explain more in detail later). Back to religion now.

The less educated in society are religious, they lack critical thinking skills by default and outright reject logic and embrace some sort of duty to 'suffer' instead of trying to pursue comfort and pleasure. I will never fall into this trap, I will live my life free from the disgusting grip of Catholic guilt and if I had my way all churches, cathedrals and whatever else they've taken from us ordinary people would be confiscated by the state and used for the greater good of the locality, a chapel could easily be used for a place to accommodate students who can't afford to get accommodation (or for those who are morally against renting off those leeches we call landlords).

The main evil of religion however, is how it's used by capitalism to make people totally subservient to a "higher power", religion and consumer societies go hand in hand. Look at a socialist country such as Cuba and you will find the total lack of capitalist pushed consumerism that riddles people in the west; rich 'people' buy products they don't need with money they don't deserve that makes people (who are already poisoned with religious obedience) follow suit and throw away their money thus strengthening the companies. We are in last-stage capitalism and when the world collapses I hope everybody who took part in this disgusting practice dies a horrible death. If they manage to escape it they will get the wall when the anarchists and socialists take over and they purge the poison from the world.

Tell me when was the last time a priest has helped anybody? Or God? What does false hope and clapping for shadows do for you except get your hopes up? Here's a depressing story to bring you somewhat near my level. Once as I was walking past the Cathedral (aptly situated on Nun's Island!) I entered because it was raining and was seeking shelter (literally in this case, I only deal with the concrete and real). I wandered around and looked and studied the interior: marble altar and floors, statues of Jesus on the cross suffering for us lowly humans (I agree with him there at least) and a small gift shop at the other end so more money can be thrifted out of the people for miracle healing stones or some shite. What disgusted me most however, was when I reached this book, I'm not sure what you would call it but people wrote in it their prayers and wishes, much like a Santa list for the emotionally stunted adult if I'll be honest; I saw some gems in there: 'Please God help me in my exams', 'Please God help me understand my daughter', 'Please God help me get it up in the morning' all the sad little ramblings of people who don't know they've been duped, one left me very angry though: 'Please God help cure me of my cancer'. What a terribly sad statement and situation. I could tell a woman wrote it from the handwriting, no man has that neat of handwriting and I stood there and pondered at this poor woman; through my

mind raced frustration, anger and resentment over how she came to this stage of desperation; the healthcare in Ireland is awful and she probably has or had no hope by this point and was pleading desperately for help from her benevolent God and I'd bet my dole money that she never got it. For any religious people reading this, explain? This woman probably died, surrounded by her family and her last conscious thoughts she probably was thinking not of her family but of God and all the false promises she has been fed over the years; she died with false hope and with no actual understanding of the world, she died thinking the better life as to come when there is none, why does this please you? Why is this okay? She could have spent a life fighting for change and against the Church, it would not be a stretch for me to say she was an accomplice in the suffering of the people of Ireland, she was more than likely old, most cancer patients are, so how much blood is on her hands down the years? Nazi's were sent to their death for the 'I was only following orders' excuse, so why should she be excused? Why should she, a woman who instead of fighting against a tyrannical and fascist institution actually helped them be spared blame? My life since those small questions to my teacher back when I was a child has been a constant struggle against the weight of the cancerous leeching tumor that is the Church and now I'm meant to feel bad because she also died of a tumor? It's called irony and you know what? I don't care anymore, the sooner those fucking bastards all die off and the wealth gets taxed and handed down and people like me can fucking live somewhere and not be controlled by boomers who had it easy in the seventies and eighties and then stuck my generation with mountains of fucking shit. I can't wait for the day when we finally revolt against these fucking animals and burn every church to the fucking ground.

—

I was forced to leave my seat due to Java's getting busy for the lunch-hour rush, very disappointing because I was very much enjoying myself writing. The waitress came and politely asked me to leave due to me not buying anything for a while and it being busy, it annoyed me greatly because I go there all the time, I thought I'd be given some special treatment since I am such a loyal customer, another example of being treated like an expendable cog, I suppose even the best places fall on their knees for the smell of a few pennies, I'll not be visiting there anytime soon that's for certain. I wandered around the City for a while to see if any inspiration came to me, seeing how I was interrupted mid-flow. I found myself at the pier at Woodquay and thought of how it would be a beautiful spot to die, I can imagine Morrissey writing a song about dying at the pier at Woodquay, maybe he has already, I've blocked him out since he went all alt-right so he could be doing anything nowadays. I rolled myself a cigarette and sat at the

end of the pier, looking across the Corrib over towards NUIG (I'll discuss my college education more in detail don't worry) and I could hear the lightbulb go off over my head; I had found a new place to continue my writing, although it could potentially be busy at all the good spots: Smokey's, the Hub, Cloud Cafe and the library would no doubt be full, thankfully there was one spot that would usually be deserted in the daytime (relatively): the college bar! That is where I am sitting right now, it's around half-past one and I'm sitting happily in a booth under the stairs with my macbook plugged in charging away, there isn't a lot of people around because most people don't day drink, but by the time the sun goes down it will be swarmed so I better make the most of the few hours I have here, I should probably mention that it is very late October as the time of writing, the twenty-seventh of October two-thousand and nineteen.

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Since I am in a bar, I should probably mention social interaction and how the almost complete lack of it in my mid/late teenage years nearly sent me into an unsalvageable wreck. While most people around the age of sixteen-eighteen were going out drinking, trying to have sex and whatnot I usually stayed at home. I didn't feel safe at school as I mentioned earlier and I only really had one friend, a girl called Rosie Corcoran who I had known from first year, I didn't fit in (or indeed want to fit in) with the 'lads' as they called themselves, as I said earlier I was quite slim and weak and had no interest in playing sport (although I enjoyed watching it from time to time) so me and Rosie became friends from skipping P.E together. We would just do homework and make small talk at the start but eventually we became good friends, to me we were best friends. Throughout primary school I had acquaintances more than friends, people were nice to me and I was nice to them but I never invited anybody over to my house and panicked when people invited me over for a birthday party or whatever because I would much happier by myself at home doing whatever it was I enjoyed doing at the time, usually drawing or watching telly I assume (I was a child). In secondary school politeness became as I mentioned rudeness and spite towards me. This was obviously them trying to show their dominance and masculinity (only idiots not smart enough to control primal desires like aggressiveness do this, there's a reason I was called mature for my age back then) but it didn't soften the pain and suffering it caused me, but that's where Rosie came in; the closest thing to an angel on earth as far as I'm concerned for how safe she made me feel. No longer was I blushing when sitting alone and having the teacher glance over to me, no longer was I suffering small panic attacks when I heard 'pair up' or 'find a group' like usual; I used to skip science classes when I knew we were going to have to group or pair

up for an experiment because I knew I would always be left alone, I dropped anything to do with science come fifth year but those junior cert years were so painful and life sucking and whatever passion I had for science was beaten out of me and would have been much worse if not for Rosie.

We would go over to each other's houses after school every day and do homework and listen to records that we would buy off the internet, Zhivago or sometimes Charlie Byrne's if they had any good ones in. When she wasn't around my loneliness rang very loudly in my ear, if she was off sick from school I would go into a state of panic, sitting with my back against the wall in our assembly and hoping each time I heard advancing footsteps it would be hers like a boy that lost his mother, but you must understand she was literally all I had at that point.

Rosie wasn't like me however, she was much more social and happy than me, definitely not jaded, she saw the good in people and the world and I always despised her a little for being able to do that because the ability to do so was ripped away from me by that point. She was nice to everybody and had a lot of friends, she had her own little group of friends outside of me with other girls, obviously. I never minded this although a fierce jealousy was building steadily in me every time she was with them instead of me; I knew this was very selfish but I couldn't help but feel this way. I always felt she was having more fun away from me and it hit me hard mentally. I started to write in a small calendar which dates she was hanging out with me compared to when she wasn't and to be fair to her they were consistent but if they were heavily favoured for her other friends or was slowly shifting in that direction I would bring it up and plead to her to not leave me; I thought about that scenario a lot, sitting at my desk staring into the wall trying to prepare an evoking and convincing speech (with just a tinge of guilt) that would convince Rosie that she was treating me badly, even if she didn't know and then she would apologise with tears in her eyes and we would hug and then, in a shocking twist I would comfort her and let her know I wasn't angry or disappointed in her; I did this everyday she wasn't with me, much to my utter shame I could even imagine what her hair would feel like when I was reassuring her that she did no wrong. I wish I wasn't like this, I really do but what could I do? I was effectively cut off from having friends and Rosie was my only social outlet, without her I would have spiraled into a deep, deep hole, and that's exactly what happened, once again I was correct about my suffering!

I never did get that moment with her, to convince her of her awful treatment of me and instead we slowly but surely drifted apart until finally we arrived at a point where it would just be too awkward to talk to each other. I still have not

gotten fully over this, she was the only person I think you could say in the classical sense was a true friend; I do have a small group of 'friends' and they are nice people but it's simply not the same for whatever reason. As I mentioned some of their friends hold very toxic and damaging beliefs which I try to make them aware of but this is nothing new, I would often tell Rosie the same thing and it never damaged our friendship. It is such a confusing situation truth be told, we share the same political views, social views and even some of the same interests, yet there's something missing that I just can't put my finger on, I do not feel fondness for them in the same way I felt (and sometimes still do) feel for Rosie, some sort of deep unknown emotion riots within me when I think of her, I'm not sure any human could explain such a feeling unless they themselves have it stirring inside them like a storm; even as I type I feel my fingers twitching and my heart palpitating thinking of her, what an insane way to feel, I hate it and despise when it comes on me but at the same time I love it, I feel alive and active, what is this emotion called I wonder, because I lack the words to describe it as of now.

—

I haven't written a word in the last hour, the passion and drive has left me for now, this is one of my major faults and it causes me an immense amount of frustration and anger. I could be happy writing away for hours on end and be on a roll only to hit the wall and collapse in on myself almost instantly and fail to write for hours, days, weeks sometimes even months; my passion for writing also goes and I end up in this strange state of limbo where I know what I want to do but have no idea or physical will to do it. This happens for various interests also, not just writing, sometimes I feel I should start being more politically active and start a group or party and I will then suddenly find myself wanting nothing to do with politics, I get angry just thinking about it, I have so much potential, so much talent and so much to offer this country yet my own will stops me at every single turn; I wonder, is it a carry on from school? Where my self-esteem was beaten down again and again and now I can't even muster up the will to actually write about myself? One situation that always occurs when I'm in this state is that I will buy accessories for my writing: pens, notebooks, once a corkboard for my wall to put 'notes', all of it useless and serve as coping mechanisms for the fact I lack either the talent, will or both for what I want to be.

I will never be a writer, I will never be influential and all those stupid little pats on the back by teachers down the years have only given me false hope for a better future; I don't deserve this, I am a nice person, I do everything to help other people when I can and I always make sure that I will never talk about a person the way people talked about me at school. Where did

this get me though? Sitting in the college bar, alone, typing at my old battered macbook that I got a few Christmases ago. I am a desperately tragic figure and I'm sick of it, I simply want to be treated well for once, to be respected, to be recognized as somebody and not just another grey spectre in this damn city; that's unfair, damming the city, it's quite nice, Galway is the most artistic city in the country, home to many great artists that will unfortunately never be discovered or go on to greater things, and at this very moment in time I include myself in that, is there even any point writing, putting effort into my work only for it to sit and not be cared about? Any recognition would at least set my soul ablaze, be it in anger or joy, is it not better to feel something other than contempt and bitterness every so often? I blame these dopes, the patrons of this place. Every single one is a cookie-cutter mold slapped with cheap aftershave and a gym membership. They made me like this, they made me miserable, depressed, broken and bitter. I will fail at my one passion in life because of them. Do they care? No, they never have or will. Dressed like chavs, knackers, tinkers, skangers, whatever term you prefer. I hate them, I hate them so much, why did they do this to me? Just be nice, just act like a good human being. They're laughing, at what though? Somebody jingling keys and they like the shiny-shiny!?! Maybe they made a racist or sexist joke; would it be any other? I bet they're going to get a girl drunk and rape her, yes they will and there's nothing I can do about it. They've probably already raped girls before, they look the type. They could be laughing at me, they probably are, the bastards. I hate them so much, they've ruined my day and concentration. I give up, I really do, this is pointless, a waste of my time.

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It is now half-past nine, I am home. My mother made me dinner and I'm currently enjoying a cup of tea at my writing desk. Outside my window it's starting to rain. I love the autumn weather; I love the rain, the cold, the dark and short days. I love the light of my lamp more than that of the sun and the sound of a youtube video over that of a crowd of people. I feel safe in my room, secure. I have used it as a refuge for so long that now it's become a womb for me more than a room. Everything I could possibly need is in this room or my kitchen. Maybe isolation will be a saviour for me, maybe I'll be more productive at my desk with my tea rather than in a coffee shop and having to worry about time limits or having to continuously buy drinks. Yes, I think it's time that I look after myself and be selfish for once! No more putting people before me, I have been pushed around for long enough and it's time that I reward myself. I will sit in my room and be lazy. I'll write, eat and watch youtube videos and let the outside world simply pass me by. Why should I care anyway? Why would I get FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)? I

don't like the people of this city or even country for the most part; I hate the government, I hate the education system and I hate most other institutions here. I can't leave though oh no, I'd love to go to Cuba and live there with a more tolerable government and a less soul destroying society and culture but I lack the money for one and will for some time. The rain is hitting hard now, battering down against my window, a purifying deluge is what this is. Everything will be clear come the morning. I know now, to succeed, to achieve and feel fulfilled in my life I must follow nature, my nature. I have outgrown instinct and animalistic urges; mind over matter, I will not let myself be controlled by anything other than my own consciousness and what I've allowed to influence me. I am not a sheep, I am an individual who, away from the herd, will find my own path to greatness. By the time I'm thirty I will be rich, I will own my own house and live in Cuba. No children will I have to raise, just a dog and maybe a wife. I'll go for walks on the beach, I'll grow my own vegetables and be self-sufficient. The people will look upon me like the idiots of this country look upon God. I'll donate huge amounts of money to local projects: co-op's, film schools, youth centres and whatnot. I will be a king, I will be great, no! I am great and it's time to start acting like it.



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October

Light in August

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Falkner

Mary Shelley

A curse onto thee eternal flame broiled bastards!
He who strikes at my forefathers' franchise shall die a
thousand deaths before I add 1 cent to my dollar menu!
Ye who dare to dream to have it your way shall never
make up your minds!
Let thy assistant regional manager know that we shall
not take our voluntary corporate designated 10 minute
breaks until vengeance is ours!



BURGERPUNK DELIVERS

Slim woke up in the van just like always. Seein' as he didn' pay rent, gas for the van was his biggest cost, and seein' as he didn't own so much outside a' one phone and the clothes on his back, Slim's van was his personal treasure. That there van was Slim's mown lawn, his rack a' rifles, his rolex, his weddin' ring. Man drove a van with an Amazon paintjob, except, thing was, it actually read "Amazov". Just in case Bezos and the lawyers caught up to him.

Three days a week Amazov was parked in the Wendy's, two days a week down the Shake Shak, two up in the Carl's Jr. Folk never batted an eye at some Amazon van doing long hours in a lot, so our man Slim parked for free.

Now those there long spells a'parkin', they were all deals with the food-joint managers so as to let Slim get some sleep, which he did 12 to 12, startin' late. Sleep, or else check his phone kinna thing. Other half of that there bargain was the managers got a 10%er on all Slim deliveries. Midday to Midnight, New Year to December 31st and set to keep on rollin' till Slim off an' died.

So why even order by Slim Delivers? Why not, I dunno, FedEx it? Go get your shit for yourself even?

Startin' fact: Slim was always parked somewhere in the intersection. Meant as long as what you wanted was a five mile drive from where the highways crossed then he was mostoff the fastest.

Next up. Slim was off the books. Real, deep level off the books. All the man had was a license and a registration to the trailer his folks had died on when it burned. So there was nothing Slim didn' care t'deliver. Couldn't scare the man off. Scientific fact, by the by, that there ain't even one Wendy's manager alive who isn' up on some high-end amphetemines.

Final part of how he pulled it off... well, see... Slim - who's gonna be the hero for the day, if y'all can live with us callin' this working stiff a hero - well Slim had one other thing going for his services aside from cheap and fast and totally a-moral. The thing was that folk liked him.

When it was pills Slim dropped off pills in the cool, fast, no-bullshit mode that letsya get your fix back to the bathroom fast. When it was heavy shit, Slim weren't averse to givin' a man a hand with a nailed-shut carton or a coccon a' black tape. And when you could handle some company an' up an' said, hey Slim, grab yourself a beer why dontcha', well Slim grabbed that beer and smalltalked a load a' happy nothin' just as long as you could like. Man fo' all seasons.

So there you have it, one of those fellas who had his life one hundred percent fixed - straight job, a few good friends, no debts, no worries. An' all he had to do was trade off any chance at a girl a' his own - I

mean, what kind of a girl wants a life where you wash yo' ass in a handbasin? But I can tell you now that our man Slim (and it ain't just a name) our man Slim was a man who made his peace with what he'd traded way back when. Already twenty-nine now. Man with a plan, and the plan was an ISA that was meant to let him take it easy all through his eighties and onward. Wasn' gonna make it that far, but every man needs direction.

So that's all, huh? Guy makes some bad calls on the whole meanin' a' life thing, but then inside his whole bad call... framework – inside a' that he carves out a place for hisself and he lives right there between the food joints. But if you ever read a tale that starts with a happy main man in it, then you sure know already how the story goes the way a' hellfire an' hurricanes. So, here's Slim's hurricane.

Starts with a pill.

Slim woke up in the van, bare feet out the window just the way he liked his summer days. Dust on the windshield let the sun in sandy yellow, an' from the way the roads were breathin', from the speed a' the cars goin' by those all a' hundred yards off, from all them little things only Slim knew how t'hear he had it down as just past eleven.

Cold, skinny fries from a pack in the glovebox, swig a' powerade and then Slim was up for his messages. Mostly regulars, bookin' a delivery in for the hour after twelve. A trucker who'd want a half Papa John's delivered where he sat in the Shake Shak. One of those snuck in underneath the jacket jobs that only Slim was allowed to get away with. Manager at Shake Shak needed Slim bad fo' his side gal's meth.

But there was another number on top a' the classics. New number, from one of those prefabs two miles West-South-West a' the smaller set a' pumps. Only three minutes old when Slim saw it, text read:

-Sendin out to all you carrier dudes. First 1 back getsa deal. Fifty for a supermarket run 4 me. TXT Now!!!!

And Slim did. Few messages in he got the address an' set off for the WinCo. All the while he was drivin' there his customer was sendin' in more an' more items for the shop. Bag a' cookie dough, fritos, cheez wizz, make it two a' cookie dough, them jap noodle things, pizza nachos but like the froze ones. It was all your classic munchies. Four litres a' coca cola an' one a' them mixer machines if its goin' less than tewnty bucks. Slim rolled inna the lot and he did the shop fast.

Not even twenty five minutes from the time he got the text, Slim's Amazov pulls up outside a' them prefabs. First ever order Slim made in the neighbourhood, and in case you only ever saw those houses from the freeway you maybe haven't got a grip just how wide the plots are down there, how every house is its own mansion inside a' chain-link fencin'. Chain link fencin', but the houses are beauts. Big, wide. Merican. Slim was outside a pastel blue place with a lawn that belonged in a suburb. That's the feel the developers were sellin'. Like ya' place here was jus' the start'a top-end suburb that wasn' quite built yet – the first house a' many, an' if there weren't a school district yet, even a doddamn busstop, fact was that in a while there'd be a buffer a' more houses. Then a man wouldn' need a chain fence for safety. Mayhaps there'd be a 7-11 someday when your kids inherit.

Here in the now though, Slim parked by the mailbox and texted up that he was there. 'Afore he's even done wit' the text he sees his customer comin'. Sideburns, silk dressin' gown, body like a liner gone to seed, shit let's call this guy Linesman, Slim never learned the name, tho' down the line he found out that it'd never been the Linesman's house t'begin with. Linesman saunters down his front path in sandals, 'afore he even has the gate open dude's axxed Slim if he can unpack the shit inside an' has he got the bill an' all?

No worries. Slim already has the Linesman down as a real good tipper – you wanna ask me how? Well, Slim'd know, right? Linesman leaves the fence gate unlocked an' throws Slim chit chat cues 'bout the roads and what's that paint job on his van an' all. Two of e'm walkin' up the front path chattin' shit. This Linesman is the sort a' friendly that comes 'afore a good, well-planned round a' drunk.

So there are Slim an' his Linesman inside. Case of re-morgagin' goin' on up this there house. One van's worth a' furniture, long stretches a' carpet inbetween the items. Drink in the kitchen's all lined up by the sill, TV blarin' out from the room next door while the Linesman's countin' off every name from that there bill, talkin' football, talkin' comparative millkshake experiences all round upper-state an' findin' out Slim could happen'a be an expert on the matter. Though all through this chit-chat our man's jus' coverin' for a bad feel he's got goin' on. Somethin' 'bout the way the light plays off the walls, Sim feels like he's landed in a TV show on a set where the colour contrast's kinda fucked. Linesan's face this special kinna orange.

Wild night comin, huh? Says Slim. Smile he gets back off the Linesman's got Federal Offence writ all over it. Linesman says, would up an' Invite-cha if I could, man – but it's a kina' a reunion, see? An' Slim, who's good at this stuff, switches tack inta' the last time he met good ol' Al an' what went down back then. Whole anecdote pulled off to fill the pause there, an' by this point all the stuff's unpacked an' Linesman's fumblin' for the bill in cash plus a good 33 percentor for our man.

Like he shaves with a waxin' kit, that's how the Linesan's face looks. Raw kinna red. Palms a loada bucks inna Slim's hand, then he turns aroun' for a piece a paper of the table, folds it up an' slips summat in.

There's the pill.

An' if you never been in there in a room with a type like the Linesman then you won' know, an' if you have I hardly need to tell ya how he asks Slim how Slim likes to party, then he drops a chemical kinna' name that's probable made up, then goes with a, you try one a these Slim. 'An how Slim says, yeah, when work's done I will and then the whole conversation's done an' Slim has the pill inside a' nenvelope made up out a' folded-up phone-bill paper. Slim wit' a mental note to flush that shit away next chance he gets. Our Slim ain't no fool, at least not when the pressure's off he ain't.

But today is the day, the first ever day, that Amazov gets pulled up by a cop, an' Slim don't know 'bout that pressure. Downside of ya' life off the books there. Secon' a man turns up in a uniform you reckon it's the feds and the CIA all at once. Slim's been outta the governed world so long he don't even know that the CIA is all secret Russians now.

So here's how it goes, Amazov pulls out away from the plot wit' the houses on it, guns along the feeder road a half mile, then up comes the sirens, just like the cop's been waitin' inna driveway in the prefabs, waitn' on Slim dirivin' out, an' Slim's all – where that fucker come from anyway? An' then he clocks. The pill. Some bullshit excuse to come check his ride, then the cops gonna finna pill, then goddamn use it as grounds t' go back an fuck the Linesman. Fuck Slim too. He's thinkin' jailtime, that's what Slim's thinkin'.

Pulls up, don't even look for the officer comin' his way. Slims only thinks, hide it, or swalla' it. Hide it or swalla;. An' jus' afore hes set to drop it down the seat side Slim sees outta corner an eye that the oficer is black, is a black man, an' then he don't even have time to tell hisself how he ain't never had any problems wit' black folk hisself, 'cos he already ate the pill like a goddamn antsy fool.

"S'up Slim! Howya like me now bitch!"

Slim turns his head and sees notta cocked and levelled handgun, not a badge out on display. He sees Al. In uniform. Al in a uniform. Good'ol Al is apparently a police now.

"License, registration, bitch! Nah, I'm kiddin' man. Not even here for Bezos or anythin'. Jus' sawya drivin' roun' an' thought to show you my new look. Likeit? Bectcha ass! Delivery roun' here or what?"

"Droppin' off some crack." says Slim, too weak for better jokes.

"You jus' make sure you don't have a taillight out or whatever next time you're at it partner! They my boys now an' all but I can tellya. Summa those men down the district station ain'tso sympathetic. Hey shit, the station! Still got shit to do man! Catcha roun' Slim!"

An' Al makes it back to the wagon while Slim's still blinkin' then off goes the policeman, siren wailin', firin' his pistol straight up in the sky outta one window for the love of his new ride, an' his love of Merica. Slim jus' leans back inna chair an' thinks how at leas' the pill ain't kicked in yet. Shuts his eyes.

Nex' time them eyes open up our hero's inna White Castle wit' a thing like a burger, 'cept there ain't no White Castle on his intersection, so Slim's leanin' forward at the food, brow not so much as an inch fromma meat, mutterin' aloud "Ain't no white White Castle onna innerinnersection." Jus' assif he were narratin' alla sudden an I was the one out there in the food joint instead. Slim talkin' at the burger but it ain't a burger, the fuck is it?

That food? That construction? Ain't offa any sorta menu. Issa bacon, bacon, cream cheese. Issa burger, but only maybe. Someone maybe painted a sidea' it in liquid butter. Reckons them onion rings inside a'it as well, but it's hard to count the patties.

Voice sayin' "Slim, you wanna leave now?" and then he's walkin'. Walkin' walkin' but it's hard ard hard wit' these white walls an' floors to know whas' a wall and what ain't, an' if you're slippy you could see a wall like that an' saunter right through it.

But in time he gets back t'is meal, except now it's another joint, maybe it's the Papa John's now. Same food onna table, only flatter an now it's like the grease is steamin' offit in Slim's lungs. Grease, grease suicide, thinks Slim, an even if the word don't make no sense of what Slim's doin' wit'the pizza now he's all suddenly aware a' how the Linesman in the mansion's just blown his own brains out, corpse inna couch, how his head's exploded off and a half hour on from that his bloated gut releases half digested cookie dough an' nachos out his ass so that the headless man is sittin' inna multicolour throne'a shit. Shotgun in his lap.

Then Slim's walkin' tarmac, lookin' for his van here where it's dark. He's thinkin' 'bout trees. How he'd like to drive the few miles North to where there's trees an' lie unna some leaves sometime.

An' finally Slim wakes up in the van. But this time it's midnight.

Slim, he sleeps midnight to midday. But here he is at midnight, wide awake an' maybe sober, thinkin' a' the trees. Van's open window lets in air. Cool night air. Slim breathes a long breath out an' smiles. Fool think his hellfire's over. He sets off to drive Northward.

Amazov turns inna parkin' lot, arcs a way aroun'a parked pickups, Slim's tires kissin the night-cool asphalt.

Amazov pull up the exit ramp an' joins a road behind another van. Slim looks an' he sees that the van reads FedEx.

Fred. Ex.

Fred.

An Slim don' know there's a word for doppelgangers, but he all at once knows what one means. See that's maybe why we made words. So as to take the fear out a' what we know see.

So'as you can say, motherfuckr pointin' an M83 in ma' face, fill your head up wit' that thought a' the M83 an' not the I'mma gonna die bit. Like we say t' kids, 'nah, you're jus' sick son, so as they can use the word sick to get away from the pain, see. But Slim ain' got no word for a doppelganger, ain't got no word to take the edge offa shock, he can only see that the driver of FedEx mus' be a man jus' like Slim is, jus' Slims personal ghost – a man who sleeps 12 to 12, startin' midday instead, an' mirrors everythin' Slim does, mirrors it forever.

An it's fear, that's what it is inside a' Slim now.

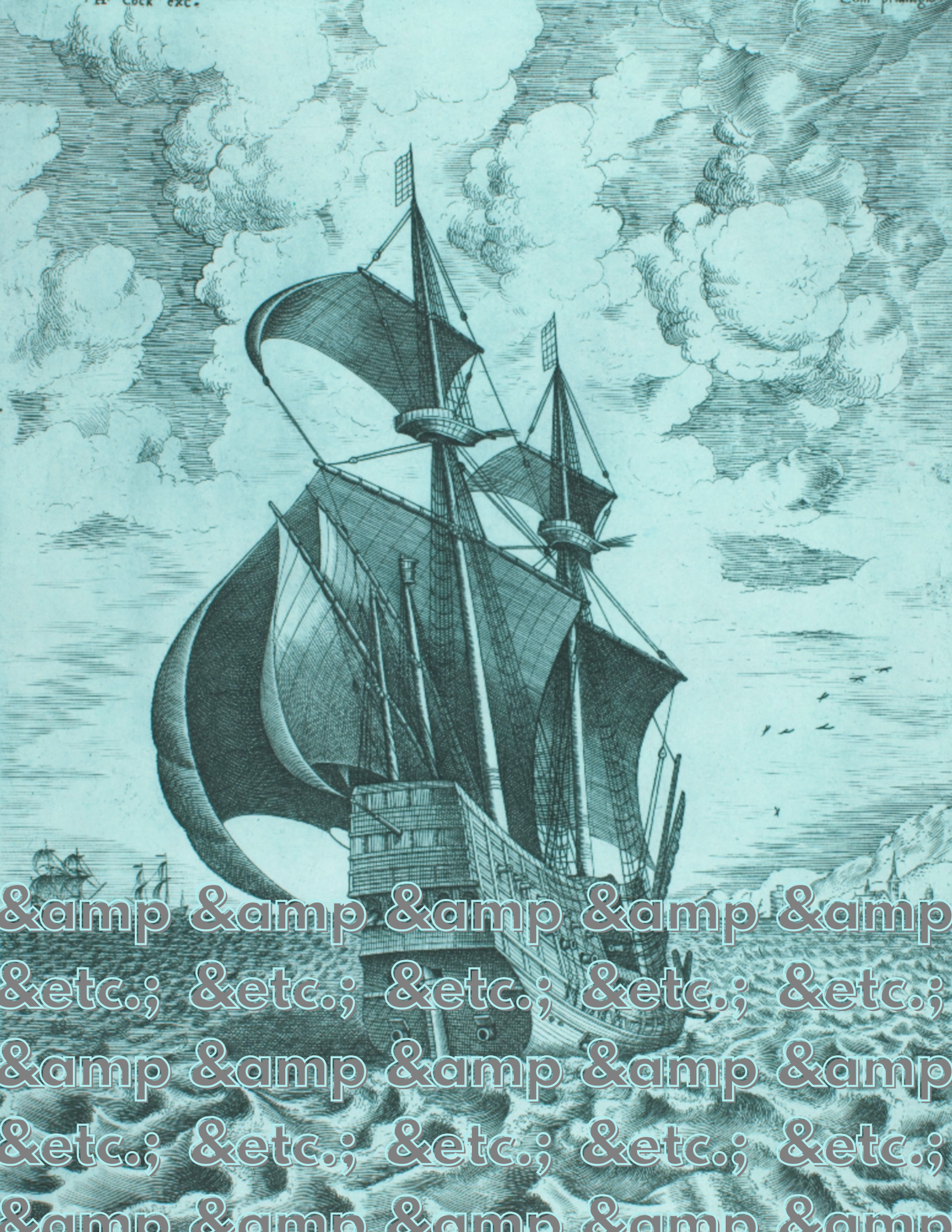
His full instinct it's a fear that Slim's gonna meet a guy an' see how wrong that FedEx man's life is. See how wrong Slim hisself is in turn.

An all he'll have left t' do is pick onna guy's– oh, I dunno, shoes, his favrit' song, whateva. Gonna have to finna another reason to despise him. A fake reason. Slim gonna haveta get to lookin' what the difference between them is, even if him an' FedEx ain' got no real deep-down differences at all, an' all this guy FedEx really is is a holy terror sent to show our hero that he's livin' wrong. Been livin' wrong forever.

An' still Slim needsa see him. Needsa see a face. Drives his Amazov right up almost the tailgate a' FedEx. Right up behin' till the FedEx driver honks him off, then he follows FedEx downa exit lane inta' White Castle. The White Castle that don't even exist. White Castle, parkin' lot at half past minnigh. Slim's double, he gets out the car.

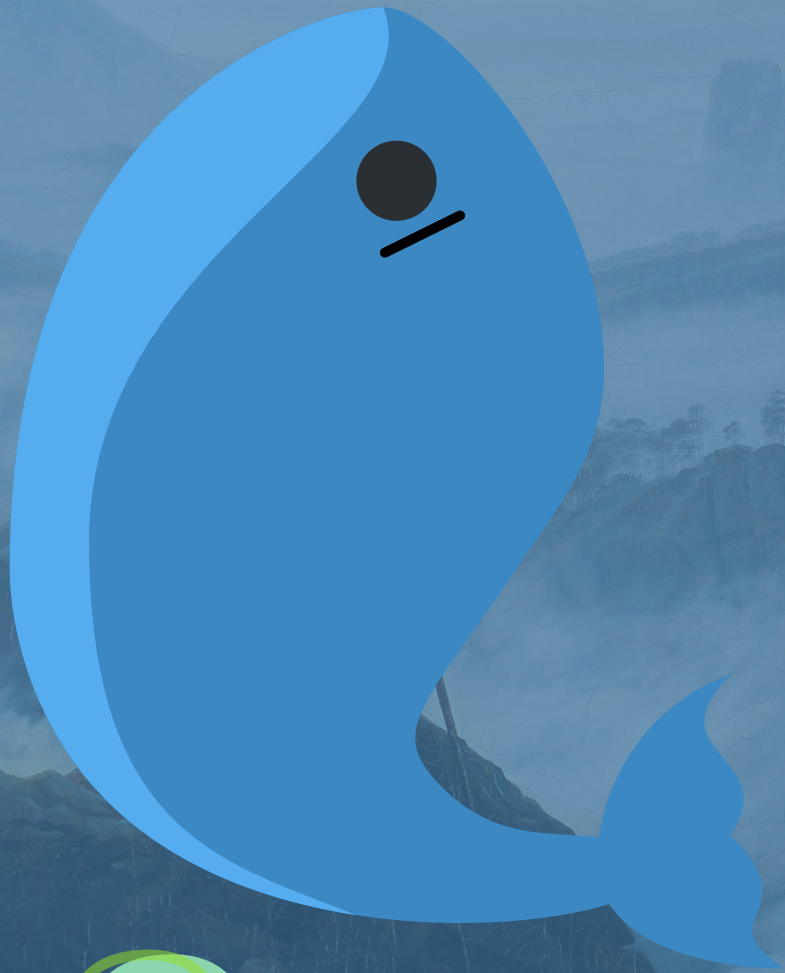
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Please stop calling about the sleepover. We had to cancel and are all very distraught. There will be no movies, stories, snacks, or "vidya." It's not happening.



Scamp