
THE 2025 O:JA&L CHAPBOOK SERIES
A Writer's Portfolio of Experimental Fiction (XP)

[name:source] Choking on Equanimity Lactating from the Tlts of Doubt



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[name:source] Choking on Equanimity Lactating from the TTits of Doubt

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...to raise questions about everything except the work itself

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THEM AND RETURN TO MYSELF, EVEN MODERATION HAS BECOME UNDONE, I HAVE BALANCED ALL OF LIFE ON A TIGHTROPE AND NOW FEEL LIKE JUMPING TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING AGAIN, I CUT AND BURNED AND HUNG MYSELF WHILE MASTURBATING, NOW MY ALL OF MY NERVES ARE NUMB, I HAVE FULFILLED ALL OF MY DESIRES UNTIL I DESIRE ONLY MORE DESIRE AND THEN I GROW HUNGRY FOR SUFFERING, I HAVE BECOME MAITREYA AND EVEN SUCCEEDED MUHAMMED, I'VE TRANSCENDED ALL CONCEPTIONS OF HEAVEN AND ALL OF THEIR LEVELS AND STEPPED ON EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF THEM UNTIL I FELT LIKE JUMPING TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING AGAIN, I HAVE BECOME ALL GODS AND GODS AT THE SAME TIME, I HAVE CREATED MYSELF AGAIN SO THAT I CAN START OVER AND REIMAGINE THE WHOLE ADVENTURE, I HAVE REIMAGINED THE WHOLE ADVENTURE INFINITE TIMES UNTIL I HAVE REACHED THE END OF INFINITY UNTIL I HAVE BECOME INFINITY, I HAVE REPEATED MYSELF BY REPLACING "GOD" WITH "INFINITY," I HAVE SAT HERE TYPING THIS VERY SENTENCE AND THE NEXT NOW REFERRING TO THIS VERY SENTENCE AND THE NEXT. THROUGH ALL OF THIS I HAVE LEARNED ONE THING:

HURDLES AND BATONS

I find myself lodged in between a morose serenade of aimless laceration to the psyche. It's a primitive sensation nonetheless. The current of awareness swims through me, the metronome a discordant linguist with nothing to say. I am but the victim of the judgment I will relentlessly hurl at my eternal siblings. Despite this, I continue ruthlessly, hunting, haunting for redemption of the sort I may never find. I am the erosion of spirit, flesh clean and unworthy of posture. I am brutally human and I hate myself for it. All I want is to bear witness to my nature, yet loath its inherent contradiction. It sends me a reckless intuition. I figure the time is near for yet another change, a desperate attempt at the privacy of jest, the immoral liberation.

My cock doesn't get hard the way it used to. I'm still young. I believe it was a trace memory of lesser discontent that inspires inspires suicide. What am I talking about? I think about it all the time. Not always a fantasy, seldom a mere muse, but a coach. Push me, push me, push me. Never enough. The coach goes home. I eat grass on the field. Long, thin neurons an appetizer shatter like overbaking tact. It's a rather jaded game: life and/or suicide, whichever you want to believe I'm talking about, whichever you want to believe is a choice. I bet you've thought that before. Sicko. Let's go to the Theater.

Nectar bled the streets, blurred on a hot day no clouds. I fucking loath the middle. I prefer change but I would absolutely rape the seedlings of authoritarian role-play. People walk and play we are unlikely to shake hands I'd prefer if you didn't see me at all I'm lying, I need a hug. What do you care, faggot. Go on... I listen to your conversations. I listen more carefully than the person or people you're with. I'm waiting for my moment to strike, not in your retarded material prison but in my carousel of urban mysticism.

You stop at the flowers of course you do you say "gotta stop and smell the

roses amiright?” I almost cum my cock never even twitched. It’s better if you’re beautiful, my retina can taste your ignorance you absolutely futile attempt at understanding yourself you coward. Do you watch the sports do you hate turmpbiden do you listen to the fucking radio. Leave the flowers alone, leave the instruments be. But keep going, please.

The two of you are *together*, I’m learning. We cross a bridge, I don’t even like Impressionism it’s far from the theoretical intrigue I could conjure (if anyone were to listen). The lesser conscious between the pores from hand to hand, do they fit among your empath friends? The pics from last year they still get likes, I’m telling you: you’re a terrorist. A deep talk about the meaning of life must follow mustn’t it, let’s have a bonfire but I’ve always wanted to. Classic I-wouldn’t-have-gone-but-why-the-fuck-didn’t-you-invite-me-I-was-feeling-the-same-as-always-and-I-need-someone-to-remind-me-that-I’m-still-here.

A homeless woman stumbles out of the bushes and frightens the two of you. She doesn’t ask fo— “I’M STARVING I’M STARVING JUST A DOLLAR JUST SOMETHING I’M DYING!” but she’s dangerous so you pick up the pace and stare as you do there’s something within you that knows she’s beautiful, fat and hungry and dirty tits falling out of what was never a shirt and shoeless, an infected wound rotting her thigh from the inside out... it’s the best thing you’ve seen all day. You forget the flowers. She was a difficult object for me to step over. I am average height. As I did, her final breath told me I understand more than anyone. It was a beautiful day.

TITLE TRACK

Fuck the delete key. I mean I'm going to put my dick in the creases around it don't touch my keyboard. The image of a streamer blowing his brains out Cobain style after receiving a text with slightly—I don't know, whatever upset him who cares—but the thing about flesh that is not correctly depicted in mock wounds is that it doesn't disappear. For some reason, filmmakers and animators and videogame incels want to pretend that a gunshot or a stabbing or a whatever makes that part of the body just be *less*. I've learned that this is a lie. Instead, it's just reshaped/ So when my new (and now old) favorite streamer “blew his brains out,” it was more like they just reshaped or opened up and hung there from his neck. They didn't go anywhere, they just looked different. And for some reason I can't get this out of my head.

Sleeping is difficult after making beyond desperate attempts to find a companion. I don't know why lust masks my natural desire for romantic connection. Perhaps it's my desire to make it less serious, less emotional, less painful (emotionally). So I sit on my computer and I look for any trace of an opportunity which is absolutely absurd because there are no more opportunities on my computer than there are in the real world and it's 10:34 on a Sunday in raining Los Angeles, I'm sober, my face covered in scabs from a retarded tick, overweight, and I care less about “self-esteem” every day (I'm not sure why I put that in quotes maybe I'm hoping it's an empty label). My hands are still shaking from reaching out to not one, not two, but three exes (if you're reading this, none of you are special, I'm just really that desperate and oh yeah fuck you and fuck me I hate myself fuck goodbye you're not going to respond anyways so I'll say it! I'll say it: whispers: *bitch*...!) and I'm here to talk about titles! yay!

Like flesh, titles assume a different linguistic balance than the body. You're mistaken if you think used “body” like that on purpose. I'm horny, but I just came... cummed, kim... so I'm not that horny not using the body like that for a bit. But anyways, the title serves as an opportunity to label a clusterfuck of labels. “Look at these words! I call them “These words “ calligraphy O adore

I no longer understand what I'm trying to say! When Did I/ I'm not sure when did you I'm not sure. Fuck it's falling apart it's falling apart. There's a segway on the flat rimmed hat what are you going to do! We're talking about titles! DEPSEWRTION! Name of the game name of the label game. We gave up on meaning years ago, we gave up on progression we gave up on growth, we gave up on help and I jizzed on every single page of every single self-help book at my local barnes and noble that they moved down the street so people might forget but they havenot forgot I hear about helplessness from everyone I know ! [wehn you get vulnerably, people tend to join you] and the rece3ss came! Time to be at peace

Let's see, wheat to write bout the serendipity of forcing things to happen of planned narratives and bee stings in the harmless spot the skin! Lacerate me please I met a ____I don't know I met nothing I'm scared. *You're being avoidant say something meaningful* by the way that isn't my head that's yours. Let's see let's look through some notes "I'm sitting on my hands trying not to leave" sounds like I wasn't sitting at all sounds like I was trying not to join my favorite streamer "some people are spectacles, others prefer to watch" boy do I hat e all of you "the homeles should not be punished for trying to survive" common sense I say! common sense! "Big words are like dull^ colored pencils: they create the opportunity for an even uglier picture" where my crayola crayons at biotch !! adopt a highway! All road s are connected think about those corny classroom inspirational posters those are fun right? How free is the fre market? How social is socialism? How fashionable is fascism ? are our labels proper? Are our labels property?> adopt a high way today!" Does that count as a relapse? Something about "linguistic patterns" "asymmetric language" fuck... next! I'm going backwards by the way trhe book is almost full i feel so accomplished 9ink on my paper to shove up an ass by but i cry i have noo one.

Oh, this one is good: something about neo-conceptualism like **** *
fuck I don't want you you steal my ideas . When reason is not the motive! "It is our indistinction between knowledge and understanding that feeds the struggle with God" *say something meaningful about titles about the title track title it tits tittites tatas...* the title hmmm "[name.source] Choking on Equanimity Lactating from the Tits of Doubt" sort of fuckin explains itself why doesn't it?

GOD IS A SINNING CHILD AND WE FORGIVE HIM

Condemning evil and ignoring it equally perpetuate the evil at hand. It may sometimes be the case that the two of these are worse than the evil itself, for they launch judgment in all directions of the affected circumstance, which happens to be the infinite circumstance of all that is real. Evil will always exist in the form of an exclusively conceptual collective self within a God experienced entirely in reality.

OATH OF THE URBAN ASCETIC

I have jumped from corporate towers and survived. I have become an officer of injustice and resigned my empty wallet. I have rendered riots a cliché and vice versa. I may die the inverse of a martyr having sacrificed in life only to serve the dead. Digital camouflage has never been quite convincing, has it. I have hidden behind an aesthetic popularized by youthful rebellion. I may seem undisciplined, drawn to negativity, mentally ill, lazy, indifferent, attention seeking, or just a pity. To me, the easiest ways of life may be to renounce all and join the marathon monks of Mount Hiei or rejoice in the hedonic retina of instinctual desire. The deepest experience of humility lands anywhere in between.

The paradox of my societal dysfunction can be found in the incredible sacrifices I've made towards the mediocrity of a life I've always resented. Usually the case, I find myself torn between the duality of a spectrum's furthest ends. For all intensive purposes, the gray area remains inaccessible as my retarded intuition takes the reigns. This cognitive dissonance (one of the few productive contributions of psychology other than a market of semi-active listeners for hire) is immediately recognized as irrational. However, it becomes perfectly rational when you understand the reality that all experiential spectrums are actually circular, too far in either direction and you see the ripest fruits of the other end leaving someone in the crossfire of an extreme satisfaction with both desires. This is my understanding of the seemingly "irrational" experience of extreme contradiction.

The seduction of this singularity has driven me to many absurd behaviors not understood by those around me: frequently deleting and creating new emails, acquiring new phone numbers, standardizing my wardrobe, rapidly changing the entire aim of my life, obsessively picking at my skin, renouncing social media, renouncing dating apps, purchasing perks on dating apps after renouncing dating apps, renouncing smartphones, disappearing from commitments, quitting countless activities in many areas of my life without

reason, doing things against what I believe out of curiosity for the consequence. *Counter-intuition is the only way to embrace spirituality in the sinking world and its multiplication of ego.* es, reaching out to prostitutes without intent of meeting with them (without any money in the first place), spending on nonsensical, fleeting obsessions (fish tanks, children's art supplies, picture frame stock photos, legal documents, various pets, unnecessary technology directly after renouncing most technology, unused memberships, dietary supplements for problems I don't have, etc.), obsessing over just as many unaffordable materials (I would just stare at the "cart" on a website, sometimes even go to a store just to look at it there), bi. *Counter-intuition is the ultimate embrace of the mundane, the suspenseless sense of God and infinite balance.* nging on food, binging on porn, binging on extreme emotions, rapidly acting on impulsive decisions (if that wasn't already implied), starting websites, starting businesses, purging much of my material possessions, and, most recently, watching snuff films. This has all occurred over the past few years after the more socially acceptable, yet extreme changes of sobering up from a tortuous alcohol and drug addiction, a deep paradigm shift of dropping the "a" in atheism, and hopelessly attempting to treat bipolar disorder. I bring up none of this to assert that these are even relatively unique experiences, but rather to argue that their stigmatic nature, combined with the increasing inauthenticity of our culture, makes it near impossible to connect, through honesty and vulnerability, with anyone who might understand.

The futility of my attempts to cope have multiplied exponentially. The layers of frustration build as I fail to live up to the expectations of my society to coexist and especially to function among my fellow people. I am sanctified not by the grotesque consequences of my decisions, but the epiphany that I have chosen the lesser of two evils. I feel as if nothing is worth living for if not worth dying for.

“CAPITOL \$ IN ‘SURVIVAL’ + CAPITOL ¢ FOR ‘CORDUROY’”

Once upon a time I went to the grocery store to get quarters for my fuckin laundry. I bought a thing of lotion for my self-referential handjobs and I checked out to get cash back. The lady gave me two rolls of \$10 in quarters each. As I was walking out, I noticed the machine that gives you cash for coins and what practical opportunity it might bring. I tore open the rolls of quarters and poured them into the machine. It gave me some cash and I felt quite satisfied with my earnings, so much so that I decided that I would next invest \$50 in my operation. I paced with excitement back to the toiletry aisle and grabbed another thing of lotion; I had to keep it discreet, didn’t want anyone to know about my idea. The same cashier lady, with a great deal of skepticism, gave me six rolls of nickels, three rolls of dimes, and one roll of quarters (gotta have some variety). In exchange, I gave her the cash I received from the coin machine, the thing of lotion to purchase, and the rest of the charge went on my card. I put the quarters in the machine, it shot out my cash, and I felt quite satisfied.

Now look, I know what you’re thinking: this guy is retarded, he’s losing money with all of the cash back and coin machine fees. With great assurance, I assure you that I assuredly know what I’m doing. Third times a charm. I went for the big hundo. Another thing of lotion, even tried a different aisle, this time a slender boy of a cashier, quite autistic (this could’ve worked to my advantage or my demise). Unfortunately, this once landed in the “random superpower” area of the spectrum and had some sort of surveillance camera built into his vision constantly monitoring the store’s coins. “HE WANTS THE COINS! HE WANTS THE COINS! THE COINS ARE NOT FOR YOU! HE WANTS THE COINS!” Really helping the whole mental health stigma thing, decent job. The security guard, who was—I kid you not—physically disabled (this grocery store kicks ass with diversity ratings), escorted me out of the grocery store.

It didn’t matter. I didn’t need them. I had a whole country of businesses

offering cash back and a whole country of coin machines. The long walk from the grocery store inspired thoughts about my values, my investments. After balancing the many factors that play into my quality of life (physical/mental/spiritual health, morality, connection to others, having a sense of purpose and meaning, survival, material comfort, etc.), I decided that this may be the most important thing that I can invest in. Time, energy, money, priorities, everything, I was willing to sacrifice. I had been searching for a mission my entire life and I finally felt inspired, passionate even. I became incredibly emotional passing by the line of shopping carts inserting themselves in one another. I never wanted that moment to end. It felt *divine*.

I spent the next **** days continuing this coin exchange technique I began to perfect. I don't mean **** days of casual work, I mean **** days of the fucking grind. I did not sleep, I did not eat, I quit my job, I did not hesitate. I had to learn the nuances of the game. There were a few things to consider that I just wouldn't have known had I not had the courage to go through such trials and tribulations. The main difficulty was the guessing game of how many coins a cashier might let me take and when they might turn me down or kick me out. Nights were hard due to store closures and the distance between 7-Elevens and gas stations run by a particular *type* of people. I learned how to conduct myself and get along in exchange for an exchange. I occasionally had to add an "extra service" through the bartering method. I even got jumped one night and lost an entire sack of coins as I was searching for the next machine. "Them gangbangers," what they repeatedly referred to themselves as, were disappointed in how few coins I had, ridiculing my efforts. They said it was impossible, they said I would never make it. Although none of this would end up on my resume, I knew the experience would someday be useful.

Nothing stood up to the tower of discipline, self-esteem, and perseverance I had been building. Nothing made me even consider stopping. Then came the day... The Day of Declined. I had never been so proud, so content, so fulfilled, so happy in my entire life. I had truly done something, I had truly accomplished and completed a vision. It felt, once again, *divine*. I had a few dollars in cash left so I thought I'd give back a bit. I began giving the rest of the money, dollar by dollar, to the homeless. And then I felt even better! And for good reason, I was in the home-stretch alright. It was nice to give to the homeless. Of course, I demanded that they give me their coins, but they would still receive a profit of a few cents. While I was at it, I thought it wise to tell

them how to better their lives like I had mine.

After a few hours, I had only a small sack of coins and, although the cash had run up completely, I had begun to feel a bit melancholy. I didn't understand. I really didn't. Why wouldn't such great feelings persist when the goal was all said and done? I sat on the edge of the Electric Fountain and contemplated what might be happening inside me. I felt miserable, I felt the miserable was declining. Declining in its worsening, not its lightening. Directions and measurements become confusing. I always wondered why people thought the paper dollar worth more than the coin! I looked at my coins: their heads, their "tails," all different states and the pride for their borders and separation from other land, all the years, all the hands they might've touched. So pure. What about the unplanned, the spontaneous, the rust and discoloration? But I knew not what to do next. I wondered if I'd ever be inspired in such a way again, or if so, for what! For a moment, I considered whether it would be worth it to suffer through the tragedies of life without even the foresight of an occupation. Once again, I made a decision. I threw the rest of the coins in the fountain and got to work.

METAL DETECTOR DIALECTIC

Indefinite is the motive without question. The metal detector is tasked with a search unending. Trickle down matter, between the rocks not on them. Matter material matter. Distance yourself from me I want nothing to do this! Groped by an outcast, a neo-hermit. I'm hesitant to call this the hand of God make with it what you want it isn't/doesn't matter. I'm tired of searching I'm tired of being told to search and then punished for it. I'm tired of making sense I'm tired of sensing it. "I think" then why am I not able! Where is the will that doesn't follow? Stop questions stop yourself please. *Let go*. Don't tell me what to do damn it! The buttons are stuck and I can't detect it. What if I miss it! What if I hover just above and I miss it! What if I'm so close and I miss it! I always realize I'm inside of the treasure's chest, yet my machine is broken. How will I ever know!

Move the beach move it! I want to move it! We'll find it then I'm sure we will. It happens not to be there, I'm told. Well why is it right in front of me? None of our detection is detecting. Back to why I'm out here: I've forgotten. The recess was too long and the dirt is applying itself to me more than I'd like. I was in the way of the game. The teacher called me aside and taught me something. If it was there someone would've found it by now. Objection. The shame I felt for killing the caterpillar, I'm back to the swingset. They can't talk to me here well maybe but I can't hear them. Why am I always on the beach when it's broken! Maybe I can mold the sand/dirt maybe I can throw it in the ocean or at someone or at someone in the ocean. Prithi/pray thee injured by my imagination.

There it was on the playground: *the infinity climber*. Drunken, too big to climb it now. There is no longer a risk of injury there is no longer a thrill. Just a place to smoke a swore I'd never do. If they gave us extra time to play, we all became bored and fell asleep. But I can't bury both my hands at the same time! I cannot capture myself! I've found a way instead if I tell you to bury me (I'll pay you of course) but you let me know that there is treasure elsewhere as well. And

a new app for detective! Surely, I've pawned my professional detector for a phone.

Practical. SO bury me? He began to do so, reluctantly, except for the phone. Stay safe, phone. I discovered that day that it was easier to stare at everything (nothing) than to play with the others. The teachers noticed, I wondered what they thought too. Maybe they cared maybe they wondered too. Maybe they were wondered enough until my face was finally covered and pixels binary from any other to black.

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

It was May 3, 2011, and the Delaware weather was heavenly, the type of day where the air embraced us with a flavor of innocence. I was ten years old and the wonder of youth invigorated me more than ever. Curiosity for what's to come drifted through my mind with little attachment but the utmost joy of uncertainty. The walls of my weekday sanctuary, elementary school, separated only the magnetic and natural color of outside from the safety and privilege of educational incubation. The posters and carpets and toys and books and most of all, the clothes our parents dressed us in, were just as vibrant, I assumed they too were grown outside. During recess, I would run for the sake of running, laugh for the sake of laughing, and every once in a while, I would stop everything I was doing only to explore what that might bring as well. Fields of grass did not need snow for angelic aerobics and long lines of hung swings were meant for running in between, dodging friends happily surrendered to the will of gravity. We formed lines to walk just from indoor to out, outdoor to in, classroom to cafeteria to library to gym. I didn't even mind the order. As I politely raised my hand to ask for the bathroom pass, I tried to hold it in, a challenge that excited me. I had no experience with circumstantial threats or any more than the biological need to survive through an empty stomach or a very necessary nap time. When the girl I thought was pretty but didn't yet know why returned with the bathroom pass, I walked out into an exhilarating hallway, no adult supervision. This is the only time I was ever alone. How I felt then, I will never be able to recall.

Everyday I stayed after school for Bear Care, a program run by the Boys and Girls club for students who had to stay late. My parents worked late, and I missed them, but I enjoyed my friends from other classes that I only played with at Bear Care. However, that day I had special instructions. I was to walk down the hall to the second grade part of the school where a teacher would take me to my sister's lacrosse game (the teacher's daughter was on the same team). I had a not-so-secret scheme of saying that my tummy hurt, going to the nurse, who told me I wasn't sick, and then trying to convince her to convince

my parents to pick me up and buy pizza, maybe even rent a RedBox movie. I didn't know why that was any better than being at school, but the mystery of what might happen excited me. I didn't know why I did many things then and I felt very comfortable not questioning them. But that day, I decided not to play that game. This new adventure sounded much more enticing.

We—for now I'll just call her Ms. Hunt—got in her car. At this point in my life, a great accomplishment of mine was identifying different car smells. Her car was fresh but not in the same way my Mom's was. Dad's was not fresh, but because it was familiar it got a pass. This car was also a different brand, while my parents had different cars from the same brand. I was quiet, this is what I thought about. I was never very good at talking to adults, especially if they had some sort of social tie to my parents. Psychoanalyze that or whatever. She noticed my I wasn't much of a talker so she put on the radio. I don't remember what music was playing but it was not Disney Channel so I felt disinclined to pay attention. Car windows were comforting. Although I couldn't articulate this then, I felt the juxtaposition between the fortified interior and the inconceivable consequences of not being there produced a sense of gratitude. The prospect of danger created the awareness of my own safety. The lack of a threat created a nor—

Radio: “At 11:35 PM last night, Osama Bin Laden, the terrorist leader of al-Qaeda, the man responsible for the terrorist attacks on 9/11, was assassinated by Navy SEAL Team Six...” She turns down the volume, it becomes the type of ambient shadow sound I would fall asleep to on my Mom's lap at a busy restaurant.

Ms. Hunt: “Can you believe that?” Me: “What happened?”

Ms. Hunt: “Osama Bin Laden was killed yesterday. Ugh, so grateful. You know, we are very lucky to live in this country.”

Me: “Yeah.” The radio projected a crowd chanting “U-S-A! U-S-A!”

Ms. Hunt: “They were chanting ‘U-S-A! U-S-A!’ at the Phillies game last night,” as if I didn't just hear that, “Do you like baseball?”

Me: “Not really.” There was a moment of silence after I said that. She slowly

turned up the volume. “Boom Boom Pow” by Black Eyed Peas. I didn’t really consider where the game was so it was slowly unveiled as we got closer. This felt like a puzzle. I wondered if I’d be familiar with the territory or not. I wondered how far my parents would let me go and if I could bring stuff home that I found. Most of all, I wondered if there would be a way to get under the bleachers.

When we arrived

Due to the unpredictable nature of creativity, this section, along with one other, will receive an abbreviated narrative. This section in particular has no ending as it is still carrying on through my present life. Morality is the dominant force of my self-judgment, judgment of others, and the perception of judgment itself. While I understand deeply the evil within us all, I cannot accept that I will remain a critic, always criticizing my own criticism. I believe that morality has a stain of human bias, as it is inherently personal and social, but also lacks the divinity from which it comes. Here, now, retroactively, I use rationality against itself and continue the cycle. This is the endless grip of paradox that I can never unsee. I am a hypocrite.

FOOT-SEE-NOTE

AI will never replace the artist because the artist never existed in the first place. The artist was only ever a medium for the undefined nature of creativity. Thus, AI art will only ever be a modality of Pop Art, especially the repetitive nature of Warhol's silkscreens. AI only has the capacity to replace Warhol's assistants as the machine carrying out the concept in The Factory, but will never transcend this role so long as the programmer remains the ontological force behind the curtain. This seems to me a gimmick, a measly attempt at the Postmodern removal of the artist and an excuse to avoid theoretical innovation. The truth is, such innovation is nearly extinct due to the superficiality of media and identities present on the internet (not only in social media but all creations of what Marshall McLuhan would call the "Global Village," a term encapsulating the nature of society existing primarily online through the freedom of mass publication, emerging from that of the printing press, then written to create and control a minute fraction of the very real extension of society. I used to believe that this extension was an illusive alternate society, running parallel to what I then considered the "real" society, occurring in person or through a much less universal electronic communication (precisely why the last media paradigm shift into McLuhan's "Electronic Age" includes the internet defined by mass accessibility through technology rather than the previous innovation of print). As I experience this great tragedy in authenticity, I realize that this is not a mere illusion. In fact, it is far from it. Most sensible people with a hint of self-awareness and emotional intelligence see it as an illu

sion, yet still seem deeply engaged in it (its effects go without saying and can be assessed through an honest self-appraisal). Because we recognize it as “just some stuff on a screen,” we don’t acknowledge that it can and does affect us very deeply. For that reason it is only an extension of society rather than a distorted reflection of it, an unexpectedly grim conclusion. The two depictions of society, interpersonal and digital, intersect, creating a deeply perverse and incestual relationship between humans and socially utilitarian technology. Such a perpendicularity is revising the relationships between humans much faster than it is between humans and technology itself. Per usual, we see a reflection between life and art, here showcasing humans evading the responsibility of artistic innovation (not through creating the AI art but using it as an excuse to remove the concept in an already concept-less era of Postmodernism) while evading the responsibility of personal and interpersonal authenticity. This is yet another stain of human expression. We will likely see a full sail return to Modernism, similar to that of the retroactive Neo-Expressionism, only at a much greater economic value due to its “authenticity” in physical material rather than digital format. Fine art will soon become a rarity, raising prices and submitting to the demand of non-digital art that will soon be deemed “primitive” (sound familiar?). This is a perpetual excuse to avoid the creation of experiential art by deepening the spiritual corruption and counterfeit intuition of humanity. Our only hope is to illuminate the boundaries of Postmodernism in order to see what lies outside of them.

MARVELOUSLY STIGMATIC VILLAIN

Hyperbolic depictions of evil in pop culture and media of the youth mystify the reality of what might be deemed immoral. I have constructed a rational argument to back my entirely irrational opinion. Some call this pseudophilosophy. I call this being right. I have one example to discuss: Thanos, the big purple bad guy, snaps his fingers and all of the heroes turn to dust and disappear. Supposedly, everyone else on Earth (maybe even the whole universe but who cares, Earth is the superior planet and dwellers from other solar systems aren't allowed to use our water fountains) either became slaves or turned to dust as well. Now, as far as I know, this PG-13 movie produced by Disney did not depict anything realistic about the tragedies of genocide and slavery and rape and so on. I'd love to know the broader context of the story so I can make sure there are no overt blunders in my argument, but I would much rather shoot frog piss into the vein of my erect penis during a sexual act involving the medical products (and patients) of a nursing home than sit through one of these blockbuster hits. I'm way too pretentious for Oppenheimer (the movie, not the person) AND Barbie (the movie, not the person) but I think

KICKIN IT IN THE JAWS OF THE MOUTHLESS GOD

I feel the plastic speech retract in silence. The heroin fecal dispenser is among all of our ear expenses and I feel I am listening to the cage closely. I hear his words among the pages empty, used as joint paper by a younger self. I don't know what to believe so I believe nothing. I was told to believe that so I believe that. I was told not to believe this so I do not believe this. None is confirmed and none is solidified. Instead it is livid with stark confusion characteristic of the lost rabbit, the innocence seen twice by the barbarian. Tradition is sport, sport is tradition, the assets liquefied and crumbs galle. I found a timid acre of self-proclaimed truth. I live on it and I die on this hill as the kids say. The solipsist is a dreamer and the dream is only real because it's God's cum and they suspect they're adopted. Grotesque? This word is not in my lexicon. I know "trend" only I know confirmed and agreed upon I know what the Smarties© say I am a fool for Existentialist lure. I evolve one time I stop right there enough with that change is difficult. I feel ironic right now but to be straightforward I just want you to know I understand I care I hear you but I am also not a pussy.

The mouthless God cannot contend with the superiority of our linguistic prowess. The mouthless God does not care to argue with your ideas, the mouthless God knows nothing, the mouthless God is you. So why try. I've considered cutting off my tongue as a method of liberation. The mouthless God instilled me in himself and taught me how to hate so I could learn how to love. I'm nowhere close. I may never be. I've given up on aim as well, and discipline. If I am the mouthless God the I am also the mouth of God. I've instructed myself to only pray in front of mirrors. I jerk off in the mirror too. It helps that my ass is phatter than most of the girls' I've fucked. Paradoxically unfortunate. Anyways, I am only a narcissist on the front that I'm better than everyone in a few ways (not all), but NOT on the face of fact that I am God. In that, I find eternal humility, true selflessness, and unconditional love. So go fuck yourself.

“He’s gonna need facial reconstruction, I don’t think he wants to talk.” Why are we reliant on speech. Why are we reliant on proofs, stories, and silly little synchronicities. If you want to hear the speech, listen to the suffering, listen to the mindless bliss of youth and its decay of fleeting fun, listen to the silence after a final breath, listen to your own arguments, listen to yourself, listen to the four agreements even though they’re complete bullshit, listen to the marketing and the market and the marks of your most hideous moments, listen to the copper seconds, listen to the formal jousts between retarded academics, listen to the questions of innocent children (don’t answer them, you know no more than they do), listen to your footsteps damnit, listen to the music in the grocery store, let it guide you to your cheat meal, listen to the microwave and secretly hope it explodes, listen to the warnings of people you trust, they know nothing more than you but fuck it, listen to advice and please, in all seriousness, do the opposite, listen to the borrowed bicycle and notice its lack of gears, and listen to a pin drop during the loudest concert you’ve ever been to. Fuck, I just accidentally rewrote something from years ago. I suppose I’m listening to him:

“listen to the sounds, / the song of streets, / the mouths of feet. / listen for silence. / find it, / then accept / that you will never see / it: that tongue tipped / blade of lightning, / those faces of frustration // listen. / listen to bullshit, / to breath, / to beasts / of lips cleft, / listen to pretty palate / color ways on foot steps, / listen to shadows. // listen to the homeless, / they are your savior, / they are the lord. / listen to the madness. / listen to the flame, / feel the warmth, / listen to the planes.”

2020. That reminds me of another poem, The Alley Prophet: “I just went for a walk / and a prophet yelled / at me to ‘not step there’ // he had his shoes / and socks off / and something / was clearly on the ground / chasing him // but I couldn’t see it / so I asked him / where I could step / because he could see it / and I could not // then he gave dry handy / it was only ten dollars // he used the rest / of his fanta / as lubricant” (originally titled “Freedom”).

My greatest accomplishment is not writing. I had empty notebooks when a homeless person I met said that was all he needed. My greatest accomplishment is not writing. Absence is the ontological stain and rust has been a comfort food. Silence is my enemy and the spaces between letters of the same word, the word is of your choosing so long as it lacks depth. Depth is shallow and shallow keeps from drowning. If I were the rest of us I’d ask for a

floaty before exploring the unknown. It will cost us all a moment of untraceable mundane violence. We will feel jagged points of logic, unknowingly. And the bell is left. My god have we come to a new era in massacre, a new choir chatters gossip about the brigade, the flock pushes itself as a body growing limbs uncontrollably. We surrender to science, only the part we will never know. As if to say a shadow spark. The day is a clock's circumference, like a square that isn't also a rectangle. I wish I hadn't said it. And now I chase my madness where it never was and never will be.

INSPIRED BY THE PASSION OF HITLER'S SPEECHES BUT DEFINITELY A "HEBREW BIBLE TYPE OF GUY"

God (personified) is the only being past the age of twenty (if so_ to conjure a spontaneous erection without the necessity of human reason. Thus, God's sex drive is perfectly analogous to the ontology of the active universe. His age requires no obligatory arousal. His infinite nature dictates a void of sexual stimulation than himself. Being everything, God finds himself pointing his ass at the mirror in order to see something whilst jerking off. Unnecessarily, God finds himself sexually frustrated, much like you. As I have said, he has no commitments to the urgency of "busting a nut," as the kids say nowadays. Likewise, the universe itself has no obligation to be active whatsoever.

I say this merely as a warm up to introduce the implied obligation of any person to the language they speak. There is a sociolinguistic phenomenon of chaining language to master of morality and its dear friend consequence. This is not some measly argument for free speech. I assure you, it is much more aggressive. My focus is not speaking but listening. It seems humans have bound themselves to the certainty that what is said carries weight and may at once be hurled at a listener without their consent. The only reason we assume the consequential nature of communication is that we have been trained only to use it as such, communication. By communication, I mean very strictly what constitutes the responsibility of semantics. Not only must something have meaning, it must make sense. Therefor, it is ruled by logic.

Being the God of the western world, logic and rationality guide semantics into a position of necessity. One must make "sense" in order to be heard. This notion of "sense," a term becoming progressively postmodern, only contradicts the boundaries of its distinction (any linguist claiming that semantics is the responsibility of the writer will-). Thus, any dickbag that passed fifth grade can simply combat an argument by claiming it doesn't make sense. I could sit down with a scholar and a student and both might argue that the other doesn't make sense, one out of misunderstanding, the other out of intellectual pride. However, I could sit down with a scholar and someone in psychosis and they

may actually get along.

Logic is the first implied condition of language for a social purpose but meaning may be a much more complex pillar in the tradition of connection. It's no secret that human nature is characterized often by the search for meaning. Constantly asking if or why or what something means, people want to understand. Through the sometimes tolerated use of abstract language, we see an acceptance of meaning without logic. Terms like "God" and "love" are said all the time, mostly used without a direct logical ~~connection between the speaker and~~ listener. The interpretive God is becoming more prevalent as the formalities and traditions of religion fall to the wayside. Even those identifying as churchgoers or committed to a specific ideology don't fully understand the ideas of the God their ideology proposes (furthermore, they're still only attempting to understand someone else's experience with God, but that's a different discussion). I say this to convey the idea that logic may not always be necessary, but meaning most certainly is. Meaning itself may even be something ~~unavoidable~~, inherent within language itself. The greatest linguistic exercise may be those carried out by the principles of Dada. The movement sought various ways of using language without really saying anything at all. Unfortunately, Dada was ~~bound by the paradox~~ of meaninglessness, itself having the meaning of no meaning. I suggest that there may be a loophole in the experience of language rather than its meaning. The possibility that one can experience language without interpretive or implied meaning may be the product of God's erect penis. I now stand with God.

The concept, admittedly far from the execution itself, is that one can create a linguistic ~~experience while evading semantics~~. This can be done through a style of linguistic disarray, creating incredibly loose and abstract *potential* word association through a priori. Thus, the language must be equally abstract and human, divine ~~and attainable~~. It must be absolutely nonsensical yet expressive of authentic and deeply personal experience. Many think that the more vague, general, popular the work, the broader the audience is. I believe it's the opposite: ~~the more nuanced and specific, the more people understand the work's realism and awareness~~. Despite where you land on the spectrum of believing humans are "all the same" or "all unique," most everyone believes that they are the only person who has sensed what they have sensed.

I believe ~~I said something about this being more about listening than~~

~~talking. Ironically, I must now address the more important subject of implied interpretation. Intention is only an expectation set forth by the speaker for the listener's reaction. If intent only applied to the speaker, nothing would need to be said at all. Thus, intent implies a predictable consequence. [notice how focused I am on the topic of listening] We can see an obvious example with anger,~~ people saying things they don't mean to elicit a certain response. Sometimes these things are true to an extent, consciously or unconsciously, but they weren't meant to be said. But since he told her she's a cunt and she told him he's a cuck, information beyond intent has been revealed and the nature of the conversation has changed. What was a casual Tuesday night dinner convo is now either the end of a relationship or the beginning of a strange sexual adventure. What am I ~~even talking about anymore.~~

Interpretation! ~~Intent is fluid and so is interpretation. Sometimes, when I'm mindlessly (passionately) ranting about things like the death of authenticity or the fascinating linguistics of George W. Bush, I let my mouth continue while I detach and contemplate what the other person may be thinking. After guessing for a bit (my ranting buys me quite a bit of time), I realize that there's no way I'll ever know, so I switch to visualizing what I would think if I were watching myself. I'm convinced we would know ourselves if we truly saw things from someone else's perspective. In this case, I just sound retarded. So, as we see,~~ only considering a few factors of ~~communication, we know that no~~ one really has any idea what the fuck is going on. However, this doesn't stop us from making assumptions. ~~In a way, we end up having more of a~~ conversation with ourselves and so does our friend. The unspoken emotional connection between the two parties, whether it be through love, hatred, lust, entertainment, whatever, is the only real communication taking place. Verbal or symbolic interpretations are too subject to one's own ~~manipulation that no one leaves a conversation having learned~~ anything at all about the other but is left only with the experience of the communication itself and a handful of opinions that have nothing to do with ~~the truth~~ of what was said.

These claims are all bullshit but fuck it. ~~Maybe I believe all of this because I feel~~ like I have to uphold some type of standard communication with others. The disdain for "how are you" and talking about the weather and sports and fuckin how is work and the fuckin dumbass kids is not a very unique take. We all do it knowingly. If you don't—well, you probably didn't make it past the first page of this shit, you probably didn't even pick it up in the first place. I constantly find

myself extending the excuse of politeness or a sad attempt to connect with others to more and more of what I say. I naturally crave meaningful conversation and know that others do as well, but why do we end up, together, progressing towards superficiality?

~~My writing has become a rebellion against this vernacular. I've been parroting its absurdity and claiming it as some intellectually transcendent writing technique.~~ Really, this is just the final cry for help and the final cry for help is always silent

IMPROVE YOUR IMPULSE/INSTINCT/INTUITION TODAY!

And then the Cavalier's Dance began! The icicle swords soft the menace is silent! We find ourselves a chandelier hung harmlessly, it acts as our chalice! Dystopian symmetry is the song! You join me in the laughter, the color games! You are the Kandinsky disc and we together revolt against revolt and laugh about it whilst doing so I am a maniac made of smiles they'll never believe it! Close your ears it won't stop the orchestra unscripted! Games with no competition only to watch no players on the field we are the symphonic telephone! "In progress" I say "in progress!" Express towards the brain roads, we roll within the glass dilation but I assure you there is another! side! Colors opposite each other give compliments freely and we are each satisfied being nothing! The dust we bring comes alive as a seed we plant a garden of hooves! The problems go away we knew they were never there! And misunderstanding overwhelms us like the time before it kicks in! Ignorant of nothing I embrace all the evil I know and thus there is no more! Contradiction is my fuck buddy it's casual! The executioner mystically executes immortality! With grace, we fall back to Earth, the Original Gift! We never blink anymore we are mesmerized by the mundane! All efforts to change leave us all desire leaves us all of our fright at the tentative involuntary! "Have No Choice In This!" Doesn't sound like we have much of a choice in this, thank God! We are only witnesses to flame we'll never see the same thing twice as long as we don't set the stones ourselves! "I want a wheel to spin!" Fortuna has already spun, choose to spin, with spin, the odds are still the same! If there's no more power than what does it matter what I want! I've been a child strapped into a rollercoaster I'm afraid and the evil man with the buttons won't let me off!

@LMUENGLISHDEPT

Dear. Dr. *****

I'm not sure if you saw Dr. *****'s response to my proposed Instagram post, but it only proves my frustration with the writing community and their fear of authenticity. I've noticed that I may be a bit "triggered." Knowing that we share similar principles, and that you understand the context, I feel comfortable sharing with you an email I drafted in response to my rejection:

"I don't have any pictures of myself, so I found Emperor Norton a sufficient stand-in, especially as he perfectly represents the absurd demands of the identity market that is social media. The title of the project and its creators are the first thing on the document. Since the project doesn't fit the mold of academic forms and genres, that is to say I can't sum it up with "an unoriginal screenplay destined for the dumpster fire of a commodified medium," "an essay arguing a rationality ridden with unembraced hypocrisy," or "a collection of poems so boring I pledge to Satan him/herself never to read poetry again," I decided to describe the project with another's words. Summarizing my own work would only be redundant and just as insufferably abstract as the work itself (you wouldn't like it). As for answering the question, my only response is in the form of another question: what about these words does not serve as a proper articulation of my creative experience? Thus, I have decided to revise my lil cute lil tag me in that post: I request that this email in its entirety serve as a representation of my work! It would display a significant amount of self-awareness, courage, and originality on your part. But it seems you're aiming for something much less daring, something not worth posting. Stick to the whims of others, it fits you."

Pausing when agitated, I stopped myself from sending it. Better yet, I put it in my project, a section titled "@LMUENGLISHDEPT." This is harmless since it's likely that no one will read my project anyways, another point of frustration I cannot seem to let go of. What angers me most is that at the slightest hint of

my willingness to participate in the writing community, those who supposedly share the same passion of creativity, I am immediately ostracized for approaching such a mundane formality in an unconventional way. Anyways, I'd like to be finished thinking about this so I'm going to pray. Any sort of perspective you can offer would be very helpful. As always, thank you for your understanding.

Thank you, [name:source]

EMPHASIS ON MAXIM PRETENTIOUS-CITY

Everything is art except that which is trying to be. Still, we all shit behind closed doors and I respect everyone equally none at all. Two were the first to fuck facing each other. What is life but a series of intangible misunderstandings? Participating in capitalism may as well be trading your soul to keep your life. Learning what's taught in a school results in forgetting what's learned outside of it (Educational Absurdity). In addition, training for a job results in perpetuating the decay of creativity (Market Freedom Absurdity). We are destined to become the things we hate the most (a fundamental maxim); that is, we will inevitably experience love without the consent of our own will. You find out you can say "no" long before you find out you can say "yes." Broken scales are actually the most accurate at measuring infinite balance. Identity presents itself socially but also breeds in isolation as one watches themselves become. If all identities are illusive, then lying about who I am is no different than telling you who I think I am. Being convinced that the present feeling will last forever could be referred to as the delusion of sensational permanence. Names are the linguistic source of identity. Your contradictions make you a genius in the most helpless way.

3:16 CONTEMPLATIVE EXCREMENTS (times indicated like bible verses no 0's before ie. 5:7 instead of 5:07)

My eyes are open and my self is decided. I am a man. No! A woman. I have genitals I may or may not have put on the internet. Should I have a job? A *passion*? I feel acutely retired from from kindness. The mirror above my bed was stepped on I may be fatter than I was yesterday in different places definitively not definitely. Skin is a color certainly. I'm white but not sure why they say "white" I'm not albino to them I may be brown. I wish I were black. I'm black now. Culturally I don't remember, genetically I just woke up. Unfortunately I notice the patterns in my unused hands, they're looking for stasis they're determined by my brain determined by a power I'm certain I understand. I'm a passionate HR person or something I wish. Let me just be that let me just be that. I have a look on my face it's wet I try not to stare for too long but I have an affinity for disturbing myself, I like it when I can't find any hiding places. My wife gets out of bed, ass majestic, goes to put waffles in the toaster. That's a joke. I could be gay if I want to. Or Jewish. But am I the one who decides. I can do anything today. But am I the one who decides.

I'm on a journey to find my self my hot yoga instructor once told me. I questioned it and determined I must be one over infinity (she says that word a lot so it sounds right). I believe I was born physically to become two over infinity. I shall certainly grow to understand who I am today I am certainly driven by the mystery of my own nature. I questioned it again. Determined I am what I see in the mirror. The pimple cum shoots to the ceiling and lands where my cock is although I can move. Makes sense. I suppose that's apart of what I am now too. I'm not retarded at least not the type that doesn't understand it's well I guess I don't know if it's inversed or mirrored or mirrored inverse or fuckin reflected. The version of me that I see contradicts the version of me that I am unless I am the version of me that I see then the version of me that I am contradicts the version of me that I am. Semantics.

The piss shit blood cum stained sheets I infer that my bed was once made quite neatly before I slept. Days before this one inform me that I was a criminal

uncaught a friend unfound a scar left in a tanning bed a song on repeat the type you probably listen to an idea never executed a poem never read a game left unfinished (the opponent was murdered by a hole in the wall or raped by an eclipse) a bomb built never to explode a razor no hair sociopath in a desert a ferris wheel chopped and screwed a stool shaped stool sculpted masterfully I was the arrogance to play the fool.

I am now the bed the sheets mirror walls everything I can and cannot see. I may be everything except for [name:source]. If I'm that then I don't know who is [just avoiding rhyming I fucking hate rhyming]. There's a framed picture on the bedside table. I know it's me but I don't look at all familiar. I remember that day. I was driving down a one way street and came to a fork in the road. There were signs listing the pros and cons for going either way. However, it was instantly clear that the pros for 1 were the inverse of the cons of 1 and the pros of 2 were the inverse for the cons of 2 but the pros of 1 were also the inverse of the pros of 2 and the cons of 1 were the inverse of the cons of 2. I crashed. The paramedics held me up in front of the sign and took the picture. I was deeply disgusted that there was a pimple on my forehead in such a joyous moment. I pinched it and its excrement hit the mirror.

I only feel my far reaching unimportance and care not for humility. Endless possibilities start at the end of what's possible. I M the non sequitur I am what the cat sees. I don't fuck up,, fail, or file complaints because my intentions contradict yours. I am a fraud. I don't know if any single part of me is genuine or authentic. I may have no innate sense of self-awareness I may instead have a deep self-delusion masquerading the world from my view. I feel the nightmarish surreality of Rimbaud the identical certainty of R. Mutt. There is no one left to judge or criticize but the illusion I'm convinced I am. My unimportance does not fall under the scope of humility. My self awareness does not excuse my hypocrisy. I am new pores peeled open something or all of me is taken under a chewed nail. Rigor mortis imprisons the final crumb of faith that I am wrong and that I am indeed an independent entity however small an independent enemy nonetheless my self-knowledge contradicts my knowledge of "self" I am in the crossfire of a paradox never unseen the martyrdom of transcendent awareness gone awry.

“BEYOND EVEN CONCEIVING OF A PLACE BEYOND WHICH YOU CAN GO BEYOND... DO YOU REALIZE WHEN YOU GO ON

THAT JOURNEY IN ORDER TO GET TO THE DESTINATION YOU CAN NEVER GET TO THE DESTINATION?" another R.. Thus, I turn to the only thing there ever was: everything and I say divided between the contents of two spaces (where one might put a "doorway") one foot in one foot out and my eye can only see the half of me in the room opposite the one it's in and i say divided "I am the doorway I am both spaces I am the space holding both spaces and as mmmuch as I want to say that I am not the division the duality the sight of either side or the belief that I am not the division the duality the sight of either side?!\$@*&} I am all of it and this is all too apparent to me. I am engulfed in flames forever that burn a body that was never mine to be engulfed in flames forever that burn a body that was never mine to be()&^%\$## I get no closer to ash.

And none of this changes anything. I will feel okay someday. After that, I will not feel okay for a time. It will repeat. And that's an extreme oversimplification. There will be a flux of uncertainty. I will continue to step further into isolation as my understanding and actions become more unpredictable to you and I alike. I will grow resentful. Cynicism will flourish more than it already has. I will be—why am I writing like this isn't already how it is? I am ridden with a jealousy beyond what you can even understand as a "trust" problem. I see a great discrepancy between the knowledge of divine love and the unreachable experience of it, forever dangled in front of me by delusions I only call "delusions" so people (me included) don't think I'm actually delusional. If I can cloak my thinking with self-awareness I can convince us that at least I know it's not right when in my head it is most definitely right and I most definitely hate you. I hate you because I see what I am not. I want your simplicity and the ease at which you choose. To you, I've just convinced myself that I'm not happy or maybe that I want to be crazy need attention or fuck this. The contradictions I see in myself I see in you too but I don't say anything this isn't about you well maybe I should be less selfish maybe let's talk about you. There is no towel sufficient for the blood leaking from my temple. My paralysis craves a moving victim we will walk together lets have a job lets make a family factory built lets watch the sports game lets keep it simple lets staple our eyelids up and watch snuff lets watch snuff my favorite is the self immolation I saw a man crawling his way out of the flames just missed it just short of getting to the red solo cup of safety and oh wait that wasn't self immolation he was burned alive for some crime maybe rape or terror or copyright in the third world hieroglyphics competition lets see who gets published but wait I thought about the empath

thing I thought about that part of you on your profile you forgive right you love unconditionally right what about what you deem evil what about what you deem wrong what about the rude persaon at the gas station what about the person who broke your heart or stole your favorite faberge egg what about your rapist do you forgive HITler do you forgive God for the plague do you forgive yourself for the things you'll never tell anyone do you love yourself the way it's written on the background of your phone are you content with your followers is it okay to feel bad is it okay to think about killing yourself are you going to choose not to do that today? I've thought about it quite a bit. I've fantasized about it.

I've dreaded its seemingly inevitable forthcoming I listen to the hottest hits radio as I hop on the conveyor belt propelling me to the regret I'll feel as soon as my big toe senses the first pinch of the mulch grinder.

A BABY BORN TO DEATH

A river has two sides. An ocean is congruent. Land is abominable. Air has the temperament of a fifth grade bullet. Insects wage gruesome wars far below our nostrils. Flowers are God's favorite cliché but trees are baby paper. The idea of a rock's consciousness can only be developed fully by a rock. I believe rocks are racially charged as well. Fish are friends, not food. I learned this when I was very young. I then found Nero and identified my early aspirations. Fish also believe we are aliens when we swim. We have aliens too. They're called strangers. The only thing strange about them is that they tell the truth. There are many different types of people and types of typing people and certainly you have a choice to type or write by hand or if you're blind or retarded, I'm sure there's hope for you too. There are ideas and there are actions. Be careful to do neither. Things are big and things are also small. The universe may be endless but we pay people to actively prove it isn't so we can write an academic journal receiving six star stickers from their colleagues. Things are smaller than we can see but we say that the smallest degree of a thing is the limit of our knowledge because we are the most intelligent creatures. Creatures of one species may procreate with creatures of another. There are invisible lines on the Earth that constitute the home of a human body, itself not home to the human themselves. Most humans do not ask questions. Socio-economically, this is good. Psychologically, this is good. Drugs are good. When you grow up, you will want to be something you hate. Sorry. Curiosity will wane as people stop wrapping your gifts. There are many masks available at a Halloween store. They are all equally ugly. I never had the talk about "the birds and the bees," but you will someday fuck. People are generally bad at this. Things will start to grow in and on your body, like bugs. There are pieces of paper that will become increasingly important. There are very expensive masks that you can trade with them. The masks may become sweaty, odorous, cause blisters on the face, and make smiling especially difficult. You will practice your smile. You will perform your smile when paintings are captured by magical pocket toy. Just wait until you get one of these, you may never put it down. There are masks that tell others that you aren't like other people, especially that you aren't as attached to your new

pocket toy as they are, although it's difficult to show this mask when you are looking at your pocket toy. Other people are generally nice. The previous sentence was a paid promotion by Happiness Is Real LLC. There will be times you are indeed sad and find life difficult. I assure you, "it's not a big deal" "stop worrying so much" "everything will be okay" and "that's life." Repeating these statements aloud in the mirror on a daily basis will make you feel better. You will lose sight of your authenticity and begin to contradict yourself. You may get married to someone who might look good in wedding photos. You may have kids that resemble you and you will hate them for it. Frogs are amphibians. "Amphibians" is a funny word. Someone will tell you that eating fruit was the original sin. You might then become a fruitarian. Your ideologies might solidify as you grow. You may have a dog for a long time that becomes unable to learn new tricks. Some of us are glad that dogs do not live long. You will discover that you are almost always right and those who oppose you are most assuredly wrong. Right and wrong comprise a silly little thing called "morality." There are books full of words like the one you're reading right now. Some may provide the sexual fantasy you know you'll never have. You'll realize this when you cum while your sexual partner is in another room.

Or, you may read books in order to make your life better. They work. They say things like "be impeccable with your word!" You will learn many things in this life. Knowledge will make you a good person. And the only thing standing between the indefinite quantity of distinct entities are the monotonous symbols we've attached to them.

LISTENING TO YOUR CONVERSATIONS

“I almost had my way with one of those food delivery robots because it gifted me such an insight for days reckoned with a glance we see only inside, “You won’t find gratitude for a trashcan until you have plumbing issues, “In spite of this, I still wheel myself around as if my legs are working, you’ve noticed I aim for serfdom morality, kindly killing for crumbs different rules apply to the disdain of a yellow water bottle, “Final drops with moistened ears, we carry miscommunication down a river of indigestible following, “The foreground is too far and God plays my nerves like the missing string of a ukulele (I like this version more), “Play, my master’s servant, sing us a symphonic proof, induce me a path to heaven on the lamb’s breath, I am the choking window stain, I aim the stained glass appetite, “

OPTIONAL ILLUSION

“Take it from me!” I once demanded of a slave. They asked what and I said Everything. But on one condition! I mustn’t know that it’s gone. I mustn’t even know that it’s left me. “What goes first?” Responsibility. “For what?” Everything! You imbecile. “What goes first?” The wretched burden of choice. “What shall we choose?” Everything! Don’t choose my coat for today, though. It seems a bit chilly. “What shall be chosen first” Start with the will! “The will to?” Everything! I demand it! “Might I ask, not to bother you, but just to gain insight, what you might want to begin with?” Flip a coin damnit! “Have you chosen faith? A faith of chance?” You must assign the sides first mustn’t you. Be a big boy now. “Ah. I’m blushing. I might have an idea, my lord, if I dare address you as such.” What (indifferently). “On one sees the head of man, the other, a hooved beast, might man be supported by other. Respectively, they might resemble the power of mind often portrayed by but not dependent on brain inside of head, the latter: a reliance.” It’s up to you I suppose, I have given you the choice. “It seems no longer up to me, sir. You have chosen chance of the coin.” It was merely a suggestion! I give it to you! I want none of it! NONE! “Certainly. I shall flip the coin.” The coin was flipped and I did not see it’s landing. “A beast, I see.” His remains are in the river, along with the coin.

EXODUS

In February 2019, five years ago, I came to without a hangover, my mind fixated on the new direction my life would take that day. Overcome with shame and disgust for memories I could not yet conjure, the fleeting motive to get help had lifted me an immeasurable moment off the ground. None of my roommates were awake. This was a part of my brilliantly crafted plan that made sense to no one at all, including myself. The roommate occupying the other bed in my dorm was far from what his father, a sleep scientist, would constitute as actual sleep. I had introduced him to alcohol. To my surprise, it became his new hobby, accompanying PC gaming and statistics class. I would've needed some help with that as well. He got a fake ID rather quickly. I felt blessed to have him. The other room, connected by a bathroom of reluctantly accepted interactions after one of us spent a suspicious amount of time there, housed two other roommates. I gave them each a tab of acid the night before. One of them, whose first time it was taking a psychedelic, was lucid enough to chase me around with a camera as I nakedly ran around the bluff for what was the greatest music video to ever be made (until I finally watched it). The highlight of the video was when I took all of my medication bottles, meticulously opened and set on the bluff before the shoot, and ritualistically scattered them down the side of the hill. In many different ways, this was the beginning. In many different ways, this was the end.

My aim was to sneak out, as if anyone cared where I was going or what I was doing. I was under the assumption that I was being watched by the world. Not in a paranoid the-CIA-is-out-to-get-me type of way but rather, delusions of grandeur, a potential product of my stimulant abuse and the enigmatic trashcan diagnosis surging through my psyche. I called an uber to my dorm to take me to the nearest psychiatric hospital, which I had found with an LSD influenced google search. Obviously, I took no psychiatric medications that morning (0/8 prescriptions of which I still do not know the details), but I also neglected to steal back the weed I had generously gifted to my roommates, taken the rest of the acid and drank all the liquor the night before.

I found myself sober with a sour pride unfamiliar not to myself and others but my entirely separate sense of self-awareness, which had been suffocating for a few years now.

There are two main reasons for my new journey of which I am currently aware, the first being my absolute desperation for a new way of living, for help I knew not where to find, nor search. Student Psychological Services at my school served more as a personal drunk-tank for 9 AM yelling matches with myself, my new psychologist tried to sabotage me with a visit from my family who had flown from the other side of the country (at the time, I didn't know what an intervention was), the drugs were no longer working and a psychiatrist was just a mode of getting more, and worst of all, I was finally a slave to the darkness I sought. This contradiction was something I only began to think about quite recently, which brings me to the second motive of my course-correction: I desired more than anything the psychosocial synchronicity of appearing the way that I felt, both to myself and others. To this day, I believe that no one truly has a grasp on the paradoxical dysfunction of consciousness and, as a whole, we have little to no knowledge or power of solution. I say this not to project hopelessness, but to explain that myself and those around me do not have the answers I desire. Thus, we have no way of communicating with each other on the matter. Most of the time I felt that because I was not properly playing the role of hopelessness, no one seemed to understand or sympathize with such feelings. This may have been because true empathy is unattainable, or maybe I just couldn't accept that I wasn't the only one feeling this way, secretly desiring some sort of unique experience. Or maybe this was my way of feeling that such emotions were justified, as if people could see my suffering, they would understand it the way I wanted them to. I wish I knew. I may never.

I don't remember the Uber but I do the juxtaposition of what was soon to come.

This is a confessional (and the other section that's been cut short): I was dropped off at Exodus Recovery, a mental health urgent care. I waited hours, but had nowhere better to be, nothing better to do. When they finally let me pass the waiting room, I discovered a completely dark day-room (it was the early afternoon at this point) with torn up recliner chairs holding homeless people covered in blankets. I went into a small office to speak with a psychiatrist. The conversation was brief. They told me there was nothing they could do for me, that Exodus was not the best place for me. That was apparent, but I had no idea where else to look. I had no

idea what I needed, what would help. I was hopeless, that's why I was there in the first place. I left. I got in another Uber to Beverly Hills. This is my exact thinking: maybe Kanye West or another big rapper would be there to take me under their wing as an artistic prodigy. I wish it weren't so outlandish but this isn't even the worst of it. When I got to Rodeo Dr., the only other part of LA I knew at this point, I began wandering around. Although the employees of the designer clothing stores looked at me with skepticism, I defended my dignity by telling myself they would one day talk about how they saw me there before I was famous. As I write this, I feel the same skepticism of those employees but for different reasons. Eventually, I stumbled upon a strange path that seemed out of place for such a symmetric neighborhood. Open double doors were glowing somewhere within this weird path of wealth, I entered. A few people were actively setting things up and I asked the woman at the desk what was going on. She told me it was a gallery opening for Picassos and other art. She said I should check it out. I knew nothing about fine art but I had always felt drawn to creativity, so I went upstairs as directed. I thought they couldn't be real, of course. I mean, there's no way they would just let me walk in if this were some fancy art event. I walked around and I looked at these (relatively) disturbed pieces. Looking back, I believe there might've been some Dali and Miro along with the lesser known Picassos I've yet to identify. These people in suits and dresses were talking business, I assumed, but the gallery was relatively empty. It was strange, they didn't pity my disheveled look, my sunken eyes and my knotty hair, and they didn't think I was out of place, at least enough to kick me out. One of the people organizing the event even handed me a water bottle, again not to help me, not to fulfill their duty, but... Well, I don't know. It seemed like I was being guided through the place but not a single person other than the one at the desk said anything to me. I walked around slowly, stopping at pieces as if I knew what I was looking for (as most people do at art museums/galleries). I observed the images of artists whom I could only assume were on copious amounts of drugs. It reminded me that for the first time in who-knows-how-long, I was sober. There was an unspoken dialogue between the subjects and I but mostly we spoke over each other. It seemed they knew just as little about me as I did about them, yet their enigma lured me into a stasis of abstraction. At one point, I found myself in a room, alone, lights off, in it stored a handful of paintings. I remembered the signature of Miro, taking a mental note to look that up later. The dark room inspired me to see what I could steal. I wasn't much of a thief, and I didn't want to sell them. I just felt they needed saving from that overcrowded room, hidden from their deserved audience. I left. I walked around for a bit longer until I found myself at a large fountain, surrounded by concrete benches. It lived at a busy intersection, a place I knew someone important would find me and would tell this story as the momentous origins of... Well, I don't know. If someone didn't find me, then at least I would write something legendary and this would be the story of how it was written. I pulled out a notebook and pen and began writing. Nothing. I had nothing. If I couldn't write anything, then I might as well live a good story. I should spend

the night homeless. *I tried to sleep. How could I not remember that I can't even sleep in beds that aren't my own, especially not sober. I persisted. I needed this, but I, then or now, didn't know what this was. I left. I arrived back at my dorm, drank, smoked weed, and went to sleep. Sure, you (by you I mean me) could say that I was looking for an external reason to explain this mysterious suffering within me. Sure, you could say I was, although sober at the time, still a bit delusional from the stimulants and psychedelics. Sure, you can say that I was seeking attention, pity, and further reason to slowly kill myself with drugs. And sure, you could say that I truly did think Kanye West was going to pick me up and bring me to his studio, introduce me to all of my favorite musicians, give me money, fame, and all those other worthwhile reasons to live. But all of these explanations for such absurd behavior leave out the ridiculousness of a hopeless desperation only understood by those who have experienced it. None of these experiences are the same in story, all are connected by the honesty necessary to share, to listen, to live. Years later, I discovered that the opening was for "Picasso in Color Exhibition at Galerie Michel," and Exodus Recovery was supposedly visited by Kurt Cobain shortly before his suicide, although details of his visit are scattered due to the focus on what followed.*

ANHEDONIA FOR ANESTHESIA

Here lies a reclining nude reclining nude in your bed: you once had a list of actions to take, each more desperate than the next, which you would only permit once desperate enough. You've reached the end of this list. Shame and self-loathing no longer phase you, they are the coat of sugar comforting a placebo, a placebo of surrender, the two sides of a tablet of which one dissolves first. Euphoric/dysphoric, like a coin flip, but the saliva retracts from a halting biology and doesn't reach the other, both are God. Symbolic of too much? Symbolic only of itself. Metaphorical of suffering, experience becomes its hyperrealism. You were told that you had to see the Grand Canyon once in your life. Once you saw it, its photographs became Impressionist paintings, then Expressionist, then Suprematist. And your eyes saw nothing grand but its void not active enough to cover its depth. Its void not active enough to cover its depth.

You love your misery, you are attracted to it because you think it's better than any volume of love you could ever experience. You *have* experienced and it was far from your control. Misery is your power, your vice, yet you know even that is propelled by something else you will never understand. Your psychology knows not enough, philosophy not enough, your theology deemed idealistic, hopelessly impractical unless serendipitously fortune'd like a landmine. There are no connections unguided by spite, by selfishness and lust. You lay there, still, a nude reclining on a recliner a bed a flat bed not even a direction to slide no stand not even a direction to fall. You write this:

"I can't mistake myself anymore. I can't find another corner, a smaller space to confide in. I wish the walls would become me because I cannot cry. It's beyond that now. It's too late. It's time for the final reaction to my i really don't know what to write anymore. Nothing would go nothing is worth it the suffering i say as if i had a choice and then it is nothing left to do and I feel myself a coward because I couldn't do it without there's no more gimmick there's no more sound there's no image to eat. The rest is waiting the

rest is comfort and yet I'm still afraid. absolute absolute it is absolute and that's what I love about it. Perfectly fucked up as I find myself in love with misery and despair like there's nothing left to do left to try. I wish you knew and ”

and save it for later like leftovers. Are we not saying the same thing, you and I? You carry the misery of past selves every time you roll over. Akathesia pressurizes your skin from the inside out, not sharp enough for a distraction, not a laceration but pull, pulling, a pulling of the flesh as if something wants to escape. At the same time you squeeze, pick, peel every imagined inflection on your skin. You seem confused, not sure which forces to work for/against. You're torturing an illusion you know isn't there and you don't seem to care in the slightest. Perhaps you wonder the difference between impulsivity and compulsivity, perhaps the pinch is your escape (although I think you'd be a bit grander with choosing one), or perhaps there are things happening behind the scenes of which only a theatrical nomad could explain. But your questions, your contemplations, you want that to end too. You know there are no answers, no conclusions, nothing.

You return to your list, wondering if anything has changed. You reassess, revisiting each attempt at *survival*, change of anything. They are each more futile, each more absolute than the last. They themselves represent a perverted purpose. While you are dragged along by the Vehicle of time, they are the still soft, newly laid concrete, buying you a few milliseconds before your skin is entirely gone and bones free of their confinement. This is what you wanted, right? Picking seems a slow way to bleed out, only a few drops from each pore. You'll make it eventually, don't worry. “Never give up!”

It looks simple, laying there, still and all. You're not dying are you? Breathing is fine I see. Blood pressure, all the shit they do at the doctors, normal. Why, you aren't even crying! How could it be so bad with the beautiful apartment in an opportunistic city, a private school education, you have gorgeous cats(!), young, healthy, your whole life ahead of you. You say you want to kill yourself but we both know you won't, so why worry us about it? Oh, right, my apologies, it was on that list of yours. Not even towards the bottom was it? It gets worse than that, I suppose. Is there an end in mind? Is death the finale? It must be, given the trajectory. Counting down leaves quite a bit of mystery. How did you choose where to start, if not yet knowing when it ends?

Your creativity is no longer stirring and it seems endless to avoid the truth here: you're afraid of death. You know there is nothing left to write, left to discuss. You were right, after all. This will pass, but worst of all it will return. The time in between you see as not nearly worth it, merely surviving the mundane. *That* is why you are here now, it's eventful, it's interesting, it's anything but boring. You are an art object with no context. You are

DEGENERE SUPERIEUR

The sand smells of soaked band-aid skid marks. I feel I am the man. I cover myself in them to fix it. I stand among skin gowns adorned with MDMA glitter, Victorian-like. But naked. Volleyballs and barbeques I hear the music and laughter but can't seem to translate the insufferable verbiage of plagiarized lifestyle. Dipped by the heel in eternal simplification, envy is the title of their profound unity. They're impressed by waves with data returned to cubicles of content. There's that silent static above the pavement. A lot. From there you see me: a naked owl portrait shivering among joy in bikinis and sharp jaws. Enough color to fill a hyperpop edition of triple-winged Red Bull. Above a mystery of invasive pressure, beneath a desert horizon. We are the flag printed as a nation of gustatory ideals but I like our terror alone.

I observe—can you understand my paralysis? Someone scan my brain please.

THIS IS MY OWN END: I HAVE ACQUIRED AN ABSOLUTE TOLERANCE TO ALL ABUSABLE SUBSTANCES, I HAVE A WET BRAIN, I'M DYING OF AIDS, I'M OBESE AND EATING FOR SURVIVAL IS KILLING ME AT THE SAME TIME, I'M THE GREATEST PLAYER OF EVERY VIDEO GAME, THEY HAVE BECOME TOO EASY, THE NUMBER IN MY BANK ACCOUNT IS HIGHER THAN THE SUM OF ALL PRINTED CURRENCY AND I HAVE MORE FOLLOWERS THAN THERE ARE MEMBERS, I'VE WON THE AWARDS AND DIDN'T SHOW UP TO GIVE A SPEECH, THE LOVE OF MY LIFE WANTS TO SACRIFICE HERSELF TO SHOW HER LOYALTY, THE CASINOS CREATED A SIMULATION FOR ME TO RUN OUT OF MONEY SO I CAN FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT BACK, I CAN NO LONGER SMELL ROSES, ED FROM PORN AND PROSTITUTES MIGHT AS WELL BE SEX DOLLS, I ISOLATE UNTIL I CRAVE CONNECTION AND THEN I SURROUND MYSELF WITH THE GREATEST PEOPLE, DEAD OR ALIVE, AND THEN GROW TIRED OF THEM AND RETURN TO MYSELF, EVEN MODERATION HAS BECOME UNDONE, I HAVE BALANCED ALL OF LIFE

ON A TIGHTROPE AND NOW FEEL LIKE JUMPING TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING AGAIN, I CUT AND BURNED AND HUNG MYSELF WHILE MASTURBATING, NOW ALL OF MY NERVES ARE NUMB, I HAVE FULFILLED ALL OF MY DESIRES UNTIL I DESIRE ONLY MORE DESIRE AND THEN I GROW HUNGRY FOR SUFFERING, I HAVE BECOME MAITREYA AND EVEN SUCCEEDED MUHAMMED, I'VE TRANSCENDED ALL CONCEPTIONS OF HEAVEN AND ALL OF THEIR LEVELS AND STEPPED ON EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF THEM UNTIL I FELT LIKE JUMPING TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING AGAIN, I HAVE BECOME ALL GODS AND gODS AT THE SAME TIME, I HAVE CREATED MYSELF AGAIN SO THAT I CAN START OVER AND REIMAGINE THE WHOLE ADVENTURE, I HAVE REIMAGINED THE WHOLE ADVENTURE INFINITE TIMES UNTIL I HAVE REACHED THE END OF INFINITY UNTIL I HAVE BECOME INFINITY, I HAVE REPEATED MYSELF BY REPLACING "GOD" WITH "INFINITY," I HAVE SAT HERE TYPING THIS VERY SENTENCE AND THE NEXT NOW

REFERRING TO THIS VERY SENTENCE AND
THE NEXT. THROUGH ALL OF THIS I HAVE
LEARNED ONE THING:

ABOUT THE WRITER:

LUKAS WOOD is an English master's student pursuing a professional writing career.

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An excerpt from this work beginning with "THIS IS MY OWN END" on page 6 and continuing to the end of page 7 is forthcoming in the *Fast Flesh* online literary journal.

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Reviewed in the United States on November 23, 2022

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Pamela Casto's new text, *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker*, is a must have "portable workshop" workbook for anyone who desires to learn and practice the many forms of flash fiction.

W.R. Rodriguez

Reviewed in the United States on October 5, 2022

Verified Purchase

An authoritative overview of the genre, combined with practical advice on the writing process and an abundance of writing prompts.

Norman Jensen

Reviewed in the United States on April 2, 2024

Reading is great but hands-on prompts are even better.



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