

SMALL COLLECTION

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This is dedicated to my father, for doing so much—
for one, perhaps most clearly, there's search and rescue.

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ABSTRACT

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by Gabriel Hutcheson

This smugness came over me, the other day, some weeks ago, it was very unfriendly. People were giving me signs and signals I was too comfy in my own head, that's what it was that it looked like, to me, I thought. That's what that look was I was getting. This is what the odd, green vibe was, I said. Later, of course, I felt the lion's reality of what I was doing; that I was projecting a new feeling I was beginning to have, inside of myself (& having on a regular basis, because of a vague, or cloudy idea) but I put it on to others and that is something that I did a few weeks ago, and I admit to this—just before my present thesis here was to come to me in words.

Arguably coming from the same zipcode as Marx and Raymond Williams, from where Althusser + Frank Luntz come comes the idea from out of my head—that first, since my language is English, that my world and psyche are profoundly inscribed & literally initialized by this fact, the fact of English, the ways of English. I'm pointing perhaps, at first, to a common thought in the field—that language shapes one's world and worldview. Now, I focus on what in the world it could be about English in particular that's had me feeling probably wobbly, a few weeks ago: English, the language I've been obsessed with for well over two years, has its own system, obviously: but what is important here is that English conjugates with the past, present, and future tenses; and when I think about the past—say, for example, I am recalling about my being obsessed for two years about something—I am put out of my head, just then, out of the present moment for the time, basically, that I'm thinking about the past two years, instead. This is a critical thing. Likewise, when I think about the future—about fears or goals, to any depth, I am also out then of the present moment, as well. But the mind seems to know, I would say, out

of a survival instinct (I say this with the most cursory observation of man and reptile, in a zoo, flinching at the same time that a woman has dropped her DSLR) that the present is still moving, more or less right before the eyes, as one is thinking or reading, say, in English, about the past; though, no matter what it is that one is thinking about or reading about, the point is that the present is still there—and this is just when a party begins to feel anxious, all so often. “Although you think about the past and the future in a way that seems concrete to you, and it is a pleasure to travel through time this way, do not forget the present,” the mind seems to say, to itself. A million times a day, this happens, figuratively speaking, to an English speaking guy, as I continue to be read-into my own place and time. I think a lot of people’s worry comes from forgetting the present. We have learned to tune this out, the simplest imperative, the present.

“I’m scared,” a child says, because he or she wants to know what is happening, now: not what has, or will.

—But is it merely for the visit of our own tongue’s stupefying conjugations, later in life, especially, when the tense changes are unending, for the allure of the English gizmo to be able to talk about the past or the future “convincingly” that this fear comes for us and to us, often, from inside & from outside our very own voices? No, I would reject that. The claim I am making is hard enough to explain and to indicate, beyond this abstract, in the fictional material, the short stories in which I first truly thought I had recognized the signs of this thing: we have learned to tune out the present tense voice as we write our own short stories! As we even think now! It sounds odd, the present tense voice, but why? Why does it sound artificial? Why, in other words, are almost all adult, literary English short stories in past tense, or in future tense, but NOT in the present tense? And so we begin to discuss what I have found in literature & so we should.

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INTRODUCTION

My intention with this collection of short stories was to specifically explore some problems, today, that go along with writing a fictional narrative in past tense. I would like to be able to say that I've indicated in these stories both that there are multiple kinds of problems that may be expected when choosing past tense, when one chooses the form of a story to be told, and that these problems may only seem like modern ones, but in fact may have been part of the deal of telling a story in past-tense for a far greater time period.

This is precisely one of the things I was hinting at when I wrote, in "They Use It For Parts,"

We broke out of the cornfield, as it were, at different times. CLVIII knew pretty much where CLIX was. There was a ditch before you got to the road. But how does the world always seem to get organized like that? Has it been this way since time immemorial? CLX remember being so mad, because CLXI knew then that CLXII was truly alone. CLXIII felt like it wasn't my fault. My skin looked indigo. It was wild to think about.

In other words, these lines aren't just about what might seem like the arbitrary decision to place roads and ditches into some near-universal orientation with respect to one another—this is about the psychological problem of consciousness: the problem of history, of the past, and of literally living in and talking strictly in terms of the past.

I would like to be able to say reasonably that some of the "unfinished lines" in these short stories come from a commentary about the problems of storytelling in past tense, also. One of the easiest examples to point out in this thesis of an "unfinished line" is the title to the story, "Pretty Roads, Like Black Oliv." Some of the most important statements one could arguably ever make about a work come from an analysis of the title of the work, and the fact that the title to this story seems unfinished, in the sense that the last word in the title isn't fully written out, is I hope a

glaringly obvious point and possibly very important to note with respect to what it could mean as one interprets my thesis as a whole. And I will say, here, to unpack things a bit, that when I didn't "finish" the title to the story, one of the effects that I intended on the reader was to have the reader (as happens with the writer) think about the present moment, of the context of reading and writing the words that make up the story as a context of and for present-time, even though the story itself, in this case, is told primarily in past-tense. I would like the reader to remember the present moment, as they read about the past, in particular ("olives" figure into another story: "olives" figure into the story that comes first in the thesis; also, the main character in a story that comes "later" in the thesis says, in a special hint, says of himself, like Mary Shelley may have also said—when writing about Dr. Frankenstein + Adam—"oh LIV"); but, there is a conflict, if one should ever try to synchronously remember the present moment and also to think about the past—as one reads about the past, for example, in a story told in past-tense—and this psychological stress, I'd like to say, is, in other words carried out thusly by the "incomplete" lines in this thesis.

Q: What is another result, psychologically, of such a problematization of past-tense as a storytelling device?

A: More questions. The narrative flow is interrupted in these stories quite often by questions—one of them occurring in "Pretty Roads...", as the main character reflects on a weighty visitation with his mother: "And so, it's like, sometimes, there's even more?" he asks, wanting to figure out for himself, maybe, some day, what it is that has escaped him. I left this question and many others in the stories in this thesis unanswered, if only to give clear example of what happens to the mind of a person as they try to retrieve into a present moment everything about the past: there is such a spiritual and intellectual anxiety, a bizarre feeling of scarcity, a

feeling of scarcity even in the face of such great plenty. And what I have thought is that a lot of these “negative” moments happen for us in the world of Western letters because we have chosen to write so many of our stories out into a tensing of the past.

Because, I’m afraid, when it comes to the past, we are never going to be able to quite “get it all.” One of the great aspirations, I think, of Western literature is a retrieval and control of the past, to such an extent that we will be able to relive the past through our stories about the past. But we will fail to execute on this intention, every time. The positivistic impulse of science and of history, in so far as all their relevant data are artifacts of the past, has built into it a pretty certain degree of failure, in so far as proper time-travel seems, today, not to be possible. We will not “get” everything about the past, in other words—even as technology may seem to offer a route to a perfect memory. This is what I addressed, partly, when I wrote in “Dr. Arcadia,” like the hole in a processed black olive, about a “rounded” day; I wrote more in particular about a moment in the day which is “off a few ticks” exactly and precisely because I wanted the reader to consider, upon close reading, the mild and pervasive psychological stress of a person who lives in the Western epistomé who is expected to be thoroughly accurate, which is an expectation many of us have of ourselves and of each other, but particularly doctors, who nonetheless persist in thinking about the world in terms of a past which by necessity has already well-escaped the grasp of any human instrumentation or measure.

Later, in that same story, the main character considers what appear to be robots in a hallway:

And to walk up the small number of thincarpeted stairs I feel that the air conditioning is curt and luxuriant and the wide upper hall is quiet all down its longer stretch and it is strange to see a person in the upper hall in the office building as ever as it is today and additionally I do not know why I cannot square it but

there were these new vacuum robots were outside of every door as little discs with little vents do sit and sit powerless and so they were sitting outside of every office outer door but I had no true knowledge had they power or not and so I instead thought again about the future.

The reason, now, for what seems like the convoluted syntax in this parsing may be made clear: when past-tense meets present-tense, syntactically, as so often happens in the mind of the main character, and other people, who live in the West, a slightly different but very similar psychological + spiritual stress as the stresses talked about in earlier paragraphs—it gets in your face, again, talking about the past in the present, and, sometimes, it even would seem to make one's life and one's persona nearly inscrutable—or at least un-writable.

Basically, I've intended to confront, formally and materially, a problem when the reader and writer of Western letters, common in the short story, tries to combine two things which precedence, and therefore a degree of one's own "common sense," often seems to indicate are not alike, but are markedly different: past and present. The combination is jarring, today, and results in the above syntactical anomalies, and in strange lines of thought like "thincarpeted," itself; like in "Pretty Roads...": "The old governor of New Jersey who resigned because he's caught cheating on his wife by then with a male appointee was discussing his chances of making it through discernment a priest of the Episcopal Church". This line is a material engagement with the confrontation of disparate elements (in the case of this thesis, I am arguing, with two tenses) beyond the level of strange grammar. The sentence must be hard to understand, because, firstly, it's hard to reconcile the past (being a governor) with the present (being a priest). But it is the material change of person, of role and function, of persona which is taken up by the story here with the expressed intention to show another example of the ways that past-tense in Western

storytelling is a stressmaking complication of the form, for whatever else it does for us that is good.

Many of my favorite authors—and here I’m compelled to say this is a matter of course—have taken up past-tense in storytelling as their primary mode, and I’ve been influenced by many of them, naturally, and, would do what I can to acknowledge them by name, and to thank them for their work. In fact, such an influence on me, has everyone I’m about to mention had on my own work, that it makes me uncomfortable, but still happy. Uncomfortable for the common reason that I might be too much like one or all of them, and because I criticize the past-tense form theirs’ (and my own) stories often take, and happy, because reading their work has made for some of the most intense and valuable pleasure of my life.

Raymond Carver + Gordon Lish. Probably the most important “single” influences I’ve got—like many, many others. In fact, I believe my fourth grade teacher, whose name was Mrs. Adair, at the time, and whom I credit with giving me my first inkling of a writer’s motivation, was probably an acolyte. The minimalism in the work is honest and deceptive, at the same time, which I think is perfect. Also, he has a talent for making the middles of his stories the best part about them. But the ending doesn’t ever suffer. “Ray C.,” in “They Use It For Parts,” is for him.

Denis Johnson. In my book, he seems like a hot perversion of Carver’s. He is invaluable for the way that he is able to combine a material, orthodox comment, with an arcane one. I studied him during my earliest and most formative stage as a writer.

Isaac Babel. Isaac Babel writes so beautifully about the saddest and darkest stuff that I couldn’t believe he was able to do it, more than just the once—which was the work of a single short sentence. And he does what he does best, ripping big beauty out from the jaws of defeat, many, many times in a single short story—which is often only two or three pages. He does what

all writers try to do, and gets something good out of something bad, but he does it on a whole other scale. My favorite part about his stories are his endings, which blow my mind, and make me feel good, like a greenhorn.

George Saunders. His expansiveness, and the sense that he is giving you a gift, out of the most well-intentioned largesse, without blame, without guile—it's beyond me, and morally-speaking, as a writer, he seems like a high water mark.

—For every time, talking about the greats, I know more about how far I have to go.

My sentences are over-complicated, right now. I've gone a bit too far in my experiments with form, I see. Also, my endings need work. I know that I need to travel farther out in the story, in drafting, and then come back with only a bit of the distance showing—but I get a little lazy at the end. That is something personal, and it's the biggest life problem for me now that I'm choosing to work over. In fact, I think this thesis has helped me to resolve some issue I've had with respect to endings. My transitions, from one paragraph to the next, should get better, too.

As for the future, I would like to rework this material, and leave it open. The questions in the thesis are largely still open. Work could possibly be a book about time and material. I need to work on my endings.

DR. ARCADIA

Dr. Arcadia's happy.

He's looked into the fMRI and sees a story coming.

He's alone in the cold lab, save the child.

The poor kid is eating black olives, from the can.

There are two more olives in the can. We know the can was opened three days ago. But the olives are still good. They're still kind of hard and smooth. They jumble around when the poor kid shakes the can. They're still good, somehow. "What do we do to olives to make them like that?" says the little guy.

This kid doesn't have many memories, yet, Dr. Arcadia says, privately. The child—who's a boy, nine—is in big trouble. There is a problem with his brain: he has Mad Cow's Disease. Therefore, he's going to die, and so Dr. Arcadia is there. Dr. Arcadia is standing by, in so many words. He's reading into a brand-new fMRI machine. The machine is a good one. The lab just got it in. The monitor never blanks, and is glare free. Sensors attached to the silvery machine are reading Patrick's mind—Patrick T. is the kid's name. And since Patrick's about to die, Patrick's brain is organizing itself for a breakthrough.

I mean, for a story. Organizing.

Going on. (This helps Patrick.)

Patrick's story is o.k.

Told from overhead, told from a place when, and where, one's died, or fallen asleep, and the human spirit, Patrick's spirit—who might be telling this—has traveled outside of the body,

and we can look above his body, now to a degree of a few feet, says the story, says the fMRI, having gotten kind of an aerial eye. The boy's spirit sees a form of his own self. A nurse is helping birth a child, he is the child. The nurse gets him with a knife, real quick! She marked him that way in secret. Even if it doesn't seem like it, she was taken by him. Her shoulders were super muscled. Not much was telegraphed. This could be a real memory, because the kid is marked a little, in the same spot, which was the same as t.v. stories, but different from t.v. stories. Dr. Arcadia is a little jealous.

Patrick's tale is real good, for nine.

The Mad Cow seems to definitely be helping, somehow.

Patrick's doctor takes Patrick's gum out of his mouth. Then, he takes a drink from his drink. All the wood esther in these products should help the doctor. It might be the vector to help him get it too. One just has to keep a close eye on what happens from here, he thinks, on out.

The rounded day I, the name is Dr. Arcadia, am to speak with Dr. Fe, both a cognitive behavioral therapist and a college professor who has been kind enough to sit with me for an interview—a reader of books, from England—the day is warm and bright and it is the middle of September and it's a Wednesday—a day in the middle of the week when the many folk of many children and sometimes parents of few children and the ones without children too and even some of the children they remember that we are of course book-ended by our own lives as our own lives are in turns public and professional.

I am driving.

It is off a few tics from the center of the afternoon on this fine day on my way to the new-looking brick offices where Dr. Fe practices and in an attempt to gain on ideas for the interview

to come I am in mild danger of losing myself on the good fare when I see that somebody is getting pulled over by the city police: it's a sports-utility vehicle is what it is, looking steady as a level and going the other way more and more at my back and changing lanes as the sun carries itself over all of everybody... Their situation is in phase I am thinking about them but I am alone and what rotten luck for them and I continue to move well over the speed limit as I am gone somewhat dumb at this little set for a time of fear that I might still be late.

I alight then upon the offices early enough and am well enough to park flush and for myself the cast to my own future I secretly consider to myself briefly a protectorant and also the clouds have re-calibrated themselves and the sky is shattering and it is all quite wonderful together.

The proper shine to even the glass in the side door to the building is well taken care of and as I open the portal to make clear of my shoulder and pass further inward I consider that I too may soon be rendered... I forget now if this mooring which I have made favorite because it is nearest happens to brace the name of the practice which secures Dr. Fe at this time and in such words that it would take: Calm Deal: I will not look back to check for this it is something like a small detail and there is only but for me to remember that the name is a fitting one and well respected in the city and otherwise elsewhere so there is nothing for me to worry.

And to walk up the small number of thincarpeted stairs I feel that the air conditioning is curt and luxuriant and the wide upper hall is quiet all down its longer stretch and it is strange to see a person in the upper hall in the office building as ever as it is today and additionally I do not know why I cannot square it but there were these new vacuum robots were outside of every door as little discs with little vents do sit and sit powerless and so they were sitting outside of every

office outer door but I had no true knowledge had they power or not and so I instead thought again about the future.

And as I have archly a new arrival I push open the great glass doors the greatest of them all in the entire of the office building this one with all of the names of all of the faces Dr Fe's as well in the one big name on it open to me for only the waiting room to for me to wait which led for only the invisible few to all the other rooms in all the other places in the office.

There, entering in the waiting room, things seem to change, as per the usual. It is known to any one with any sense—it is irreducible—that you are being monitored by mental health care professionals in the waiting room. I sit on one end of a nice big leather couch. There are other people there, people waiting to go, or waiting to stay, but I do not look at them now. Although it seems like some of them are waiting for me to look at them, I do not look upon the one of them.

There is a coffee table with some books on it. These are the books: Unlikely Friendships, Make it in America: The Case for Re-inventing the Economy, and plus a *Calvin and Hobbes* collection.

Abraham, the dog, walks from an inner office into the waiting room, and sniffs my knee. He is wearing a tie today. Sometimes, somebody will put a tie around this dog's neck. He is big and sturdy. (Sometimes, not.) To speak to his breed, he is a golden retriever, and he is getting old. His fur is wavy. He is immaculately well-trained. I pat his head, and he pushes up against my hand: he doesn't like to be pet. His eyes are just starting to cloud. He stands and stands, but he is calm. He licks his nose when a doctor I don't know but have seen before enters the waiting room wearing a dress shirt with many small squares on it and begins talking to a client, taking the client away, into one of the inner offices.

Then Dr. Fe enters the waiting room.

“Hey, Phil?” he says. That's my first name.

“Hang on—one second—I have a quick fire to put out,” he says.

He has left the waiting room. I'm here because I'm sick.

There is an unfinished puzzle on another table.

I don't know what it's about yet.

Dr. Fe enters the waiting room after a moment.

Unbidden, Dr. Fe has a brief conversation with a young girl, she looks like she is five years old. She says something to him about what she is doing, which I guess she was drawing a house, and he says, ‘Oh, really?’ and then he looks at me, tells me that kids are ‘...his weakness,’ which really doesn't strike me one way or the other, thinking about my own problems, again, and then he tells me to come along. I am hoping for the best. I'm canny to all approaches, save hypnosis. Maybe he can crack in to me and you can tell a better story about me, with my help, when I die, but I don't tell you this.

He leads me down a hall to his office. The light in the office is always bronzed. He usually sits in what looks like a leather swivel-back computer chair, professional black, on wheels. I sit in a broader chair, that may or may not be able to recline, but to me, it looks like it might if I tried it. There are two padded chairs of similar size and construction in his office: one of which I am now sitting in, and another one, unoccupied, with an end table between the two. Dr. Fe sits in his chair without delay. I take a look at the kleenex on the end table. If there is another way to describe the upholstered chairs, it is that they are gray, although there is a pattern on the chairs: shapes in various other colors of stitching lay over them, a pattern which is regular only to one who focuses on it. I thank him then in person for taking the interview. I think that we

are both a little giddy: I snap my fingers twice to check that the mic is actually on and the level is right.

Freak tree on property, growing huge in the time of the ash-borer, the skeletonizer.

First time it was topped, years ago, the cutting was big enough at the "base," the thick part, a whole tree unto itself, that he'd practically taken off, that he was able to cut a cross-section of that, lowering the ash in height something to see even that, with a bit out of the first cut for memory, which he had made a wood-burning out of the first. But we got rid of that old thing. Though, had to cut the old looking tree again, he said, meaning the lampblack force of unholy nature, I'm talking about, striking one and all who beheld the area with the tree's pointed gigantism, threatening our home such that it was hard not to have a feeling of seriousness come over you and really start to fuck your every-day head up, beginning with the window, at breakfast, as a kid, and, I remember—Patrick's dead. And now this is another dying subject that Dr. Arcadia is able, with the fMRI, to read—let alone, the geriatric woman thinks, what it must've been like for Mom and Dad, particularly so with all the ice which was heading down, in a crystal clear day and one night's heads-up for warning. And Father went back up there into the here of today he'd gone so high, just like tomorrow seems to me now, gone in the tree, superhigh, he was gone that much unto it, arguably. I'm thinking, Dad's on a first-name basis with the invisible, and then he tried to tangle with it, and fucked up real bad, because why fuck around with being all political about what happened to our family, here, you know, when it's not cool, obviously, and I'm not okay with it, and fell to his untimely death. And it is retarded, so fuck off.

He was set up on this idea he'd gotten out in the cold as tits of night, deep and dark, I guess, one winter night that it was really cold, actually, like the weather was in those years,

guaranteed cold, meaning like it's 100% not a joking sensation during this time period, for those of us who know what the fuck we're talking about, right now, and when it comes to this shit, in particular. My old man was psycho after it for a trice or pulley—for safety, he tells me, and fine, but only in the most figurative of senses possible could he have meant this, one was left to gather as fact, this about what he says about the trice, looking on, that's for one. But it also falls on me that he might've decided to get bonkers in the last of his own life for the purposes of showing off to his Dad, meaning my grandpa, who was fucking dead for a while must of been at that point. More than a handful, one, two, three years, for chrissakes—basically which just comes down, for whatever reason, to where now here he's got a line with this great big honking old heavy ring as a counterweight on the one end of the ring: the weight was to have slowed his fall if he had ever fallen, but the weight, the ring had gotten caught in the intervening years by a limb which had grown to size, growing as a small branch advancing sidelong thru the hole in the weight, until it had itself impressively stuck, if you looked at it (the ring, I mean) with these big old branches at the time coming off the first branch, every couple feet, about, the thing stuck up there like magic to a kid until maybe they figured it out, how the weight must have gotten stuck, between the trunk way-high up there on the one end, the starting end of the branch as big around as both Dad's arms when put together, and on the other side of the mother, the old rust-spotted weight, were lesser spidering tree limbs; but these were still large enough to stop every guy who came with the notion that they could get that weight free + down off that stupid branch, which just a few years ago was so little that branch that nobody alive could have possibly seen it wheedling out the side of that damned tree, which was rotten, of course, because there's no such thing as an ash that's gypsy-proof.

Dr. Arcadia has Mad Cow.

He liked birds, he liked them alot.

Heavily edited, out of respect:

A ken of you, all woken, now, as the birds are gone to breaking—
hoping hope with cistern tight; colors bright and full-on entered; a
fractal saw t'all silent lines—comes this wind, so far, and gone, for
what is lucid's broken.

PRETTY ROADS, LIKE BLACK OLIV

I'm at breakfast.

I was driving home on a detour last night. (Highway.)

A horrible public radio show was on called "Interfaith Voices."

The old governor of New Jersey who resigned because he's caught cheating on his wife by then with a male appointee was discussing his chances of making it through discernment a priest of the Episcopal Church. I can't remember who + what that is at first and then I do.

My waitress has a mustache and all that attends it.

As I was driving down the highway, Dad was walking to his dictionary.

We were talking on the phone about the book I'm reading called The Critical Theory of Religion by Rudolph J. Siebert, a man who, I presume, is a multinational.

He wrote about a certain aporia, which means doubt, it is Greek. For some mean food for one this morning I'm having an omelette with corned beef and swiss cheese, hash browns, pork sausage, rye toast coffee and water and a croissant with chocolate on the inside, mn!!

"Said Dwayne says Matt Davis is on his way!"

I looked, but he wasn't talking to me; it's just a stranger.

This hotel is really nice.

I'm just saying that—I didn't really look at 'em, not really.

But, that's o.k., I didn't have to. I got good ears, so.

It's pretty natural to want to say hi, though.

It's fifty something and gray outside.

Work and father have called once each.

* * *

I'm in the bedroom.

There's no lock on the door.

Maria and G.A. are cleaning house.

The house was lit when I arrived. I walked through the open door.

I don't want to hear about it, G.A. said.

I had only said about the place smelled so much better.

Today it was Easter. I went to Mom's first, so, that's first of all. In my car full of just god-awful shit. So, that's second, that's the second thing about it, basically. We peeled apples together.

Why isn't it working? she said. The apple peeler wasn't working.

It was a shiny looking thing. Could have been expensive or it could have been inexpensive, and we just don't know.

You just stick that sucker on there, Mom said. There were prongs.

Mom said, Well, it was working before?

That's o.k., she said.

And just like that, it was.

And so it's like, sometimes, there's even more?

That's kind of my question.

* * *

I was tense walking in. But here's a reason.

I remember when I got out of bed this a.m. with, unfortunately, the presence, it was pretty fairly apparent to be a wad of cum I realize I gotten on my tummy. I needed to get going, but then again? I had jizz on me. So I was pretty still, I was like, I have to make sure to keep my back to her—Georgeanne, obviously, who'd—maybe maybe not—not woken yet, since she essentially sleeps through all sort of things. Here about this, yes, I know, now, for certain. Yet still I try at this time to be careful, relieving myself physically off the bed, as she's sleeping one off. Again: but in hindsight, she's horrible, and I never know why I even! so, unto myself, I ask this question: Why all the effort hiding anything, mister, or trying to be nice?

When the woman opened her eyes to me, at pains, she said, Every morning!

I'm sure I said back to her, I said, Tell me about it.

My car's noises are expensive to fix, such is the tie rod; so is the control arm loose.

+ Me and curr. woman are in a bad way at this time.

And now, do we try and fix these things?

Basically no. Because, we both know, don't be retarded!

So, if that's o.k.?

I told Dad. Now he's also done some things, but.

Tonight, upon dinner number two for Easter dinner at his, he told me that:

If you don't like this soda bread, then I wasn't Philip, which is my full name.

His eyebrows used to be nice, they were such a great feature, but they're barely there anymore, there was that much done to this human being, or by this human being, over time. The soda bread looked just like itself, that's the only way I can describe it, because I'm trying to hold on. And if I really should be that honest, here? Have I ever really questioned, as a grownup kind

of privileged to their own interior, that there is that much-all to hang onto—even after getting that it totally felt like there most definitely was?

Even during a midst of an utmost, four times a million times a million times infinity super-private instant kind of miracleburst unclosing/annihilating all concepts of flavor or smell for you etc. microbleep bloop better perhaps than cumming together w/ The One then again perhaps not but it's just a split-second that one is allowed so few of anyway as a human mortal who is therefore super lucky at any rate that they ever should get to have this feeling happen to them, keeping in mind one day they will absolutely fucking get to die? Is this correct? Has this question come and found me sitting in the lap of in this case my truest feeling of utmost plenty?

The answer to that is yes I did, yes I have.

Maria and G.A. are both here. I'm saying it now. All's I'm saying is don't be so especially weird. Maria: I want to fuck!

G.A. opens the door to the bedroom, which, as I have said before, is where I was from the beginning. She is thinking there might of been a man in the basement, and she tells me so. This crazy idea gets put in her head because a door is closed down in our basement which could only—or *can* only be closed, rather—from the inside. Me and the two girls went go go going down there to check this very interesting thing out...

Maria was at the perfect weight but then she had lost some more; or it's more likely her jeans aren't a name brand any longer?

Her jeans have to be just right because she has that such a cherry ass.

It's hard not to get carried away.

I have only grabbed it once. Still drunk, I got out of bed and walked out into the house proper.

She had slept over, and the couch wasn't in its normal spot. It was moved to the middle of the room. This was enough to throw me off to the point and degree where I grabbed her ass. She didn't have much to say about it. Thank God. Hey, Georgie wouldn't like that, I think she said.

Sometimes I wonder. I know what I'm talking about.

* * *

I would like to touch on Quinto, who is my boss. I took him to the bar and paid for all his drinks, and then he'll screw me over like this, and why? Then I would like to touch on Georgeanne who is not paying her half of the power bill again—fucking hold that, no not at all, nevermind, let's drop it I think—I ran into some of my sister's old friends today when I was picking something up—believe me, it doesn't matter what this was.

Laura and Kaitlin?

Listen. Tell me. What am I not getting?

Why am I such a bastard?

The patches on the ceiling are cracked, themselves.

I shift and I fart. This is true, but that's not it. The iPad just came out. True, and + but that's not it. It is a friend of mine's birthday. Also true, and also, that is not it, either. Personally, there's an un-comfy digestion happening. I am beginning to see a real problem—you must sense this. Listen to me, “Heaven,” or whatever! I'm so full of hate, plus I'm zeroed out in humor right now! “I'm very, I'm very sorry.” And where is my joy, God? But are we not, then, each one of us, your children, not so much? Not at all, but it's more like it's, We have admitted our fuck-ups to You like we should have (I know I have); but that's totally not the point that I'm trying to

make, because you somehow know about the fuck-ups, anyways, sometimes before I even do them, mystically, to the point where now it's literally impossible for me to be any more deserving of the utmost worst, the kind of an unmitigated supermax prison sentence that we have, here? Let's face it. Let's face reality. Dad wants me to move in with him? Last night we discussed gold versus platinum? No, I get it, I want to say. O.k. I get it, now.

* * *

My body temp is way up because I basically just got a full night's rest.
Work doesn't start until ten. I checked my email and Facebook updates.
G.A.'s status is, well, I was going to check it but I'm looking at the deals I can get on a mountain vacation.

It's been a while and now I have to get ready for work in ten minutes.
I scheduled my vacation in the middle of June. A shower is going to be nice.
I'm going to have to walk past G.A. on the couch in the living room.
Her feet will be jammed.
I'm getting an energy drink before I punch in. The fan is on and I can't hear the birds outside. My pants are only half on under the covers. Swimming sounds nice. The prescription on these glasses isn't strong enough anymore. I'm cold. Is it cold outside?

* * *

After work in bed under the sheets. It's got a sixty percent chance of snowing tomorrow.

The dog is making a lot of noise in its cage because G.A. is cleaning. This is a nice pen but it looks to be dead soon.

I am playing a lot of videogames. (I'm going to lose some weight and go tanning!) Grim Grimoire. Demon Souls. Final Fantasy XII. The Dow Jones gained twelve points today.

Information is coming down.

I'm helping to train this guy Jim at work.

That fucking bitch is in here “organizing her things.” She's

* * *

It's a nice day, there are three planets in Taurus, and I'm high, which means something's not right, am I correct? I am down to one or two friends outside of work, for example. I'm supposed to go over to store three tomorrow at noon, but am to report to seven to start at nine in the morning. I've always thought that if someone brings a whole lot of numbers into the conversation that something was on their mind, which would be death. Native American death. Way way too serious. I have the hands of an old man for them being so dry in the past four five years. I bet I know somebody who's going to win the lottery, I just get that feeling. My feet are cooling by the fan. Today would have been good for camping. I'm trying to think about what I want but I'm having some trouble: I can't clean my glasses with my shirt. ...Today, Maria drank the hard water, right off the sink. A person should go into the bathroom to get any kind of water, here.

The tub though is full of purple water, which is because G.A. hasn't gotten the water out of there, yet.

I let Dad's call go to voicemail.

I have to run another store tomorrow, Ken's going to be there, who was born with a nasal voice, which makes him unsettled and aggressive. Then, his ears stick out too. But he's probably smart + he is a good worker. I want to burn something. I want to light something on fire and have it all lead to the big fire. Out of all the reasons why I want to turn something to flames, I want to hear it. I want to hear the biggest fire. There is a false nature and there is a true nature.

Why, my work pants hardly fit anymore, I've gained so much. Georgeanne's even worse. It's too bad I didn't get any pictures of her two years ago.

I want to destroy my body. My heart doesn't feel like it is an organ. My teeth are losing. What is it to sneak into the hotel pool? The new guy at work and I don't get along.

* * *

I am scared.

Friend of mine Nate called a while back, a few months ago.

He had heard that I was upset because somebody had told me at the bar that he had died of meningitis.

This was true that I was upset.

Nate called and left a message on my phone.

The message was that he wanted me to call him and to know that I was still alive. He said his number was nine- nine- something, and when he said what his number was, it sounded like he was sorry that the number started with nine and nine. Why would he be sorry? Yes, the oil was still coming out into the ocean, but the mother is alive. Nate, lighten up for fuck's sake! He

should have been thinking not that I would have a reason to be upset—do I?—but instead that I would go on thinking, naturally, it's essentially dope that he's just calling, just because I thought the poor guy dead. (@ breakfast. That's me I'm talking about, now. I thought maybe I should clear that up, okay?) I work at the Tittabawassee store, with Ken—see attached. The parts guys at work are sensitive to human concerns, lately, it's kind of something else, but it's not even enough. Is it? I should really ask myself, here. Do I want to go to work, or do I want to go home and play Super Street Fighter IV, maybe play golf with Dwayne? Yes I do. It's 2010.

Here's what I'm thinking.

I figure if I keep thinking about what I want to happen right? That some of it might actually happen. My little note to self might be something like this, Keep track of when you—Phil, Philip, are coming up with your stuff—plain and simple, it's Keep track of when Phil is thinking about his stuff and then you are seeing pretty much whatever that stuff is, in all the realness of reality right after. Keep track of that * right there in whatever way possible, Do you know what you mean with all of this and you are certain of it, Yes, that is the case, says me back; and it was true what I had said, and not a part nor not the whole of all of the powers in Heavens—inclusive of Hell, too—can get what I mean when I'm thinking about it right now, can see it in a way that's any better than how I'm seeing it right now, so certain in this matter am I +

* * *

I'm at Big Boy. I'm in retrograde: is whatever that means. It's moving day.

G.A. asked me if I needed help, and I'm sad thinking how I shouldn't take it. The thought is that she would drop and break the t.v. or the computer. She came out of her room wearing a shiny

* * *

I am glad to make it happen... right out the end of this pen, you fucks!

“I was pounding the roof of my car today, as I was driving.” Do you understand me?

“The names of roads, and the makes and models of cars, all beyond me; the time of day.”

How dare you.

I don't want to write this anymore.

I am laughing in my father's basement. I played golf today. I later played pool, with Dwayne. He said I was bad at confrontation; and then he left.

Nightmare ex came upon me before that; and before nightmare ex came before me, I got let out of work early for not charging a customer for an oil filter.

God damn all of them and those who train them. God damned me and all those deeds I've done—let them all be repealed, with three or more fingers.

Shame on the eyes I've seen today; they triangulate with the front teeth of villains.

God damn the time passing and burying the value.

Gone are the bosses.

When there is no family!

All water is repellent, it's gross.

Start talking this out loud.

I have to demonstrate these fucks, no matter who they are.

* * *

In the car on some lane with no house and the end is dead. I'm listening to a song on 92.5 with the standout lyric, The lid's off the grave. Now, they're playing one of the best Metallica songs I've never heard of before. Four deer are grazing in a bye. They were doing that when I got here. I'm avoiding Dad who just went to a meeting. I don't know what this is all about yet.

The car is stained to shit, I know that.

It's getting dark.

This's the best spot I've ever found in town.

There are new cars and only new cars driving down Cook Road. They don't come down this lane, though! It's the strangest thing.

I'm off in the Heritage Park parking lot, there's only one way in to this parking lot and there's no sign on the road. It's like a perfect black asphalt parking lot. The signs all face away from you so you can only see them on the way out.

A wasp or something flew out of a flower bed is the only reason I came back.

There was a sign that said Barrier Free Entrance to the Museum.

The door was locked and they had turned the water off to the spigot but they had the lights on the bridge walls on and lights on in two buildings an the grass was cut. There was a deer that stayed when I got out of the car and a deer that left right away. There were two deer. I could see how the fur went, it was a young deer. There was almost something else in the grass, which is ridiculous! I mean, it could have been a duck or even a turtle.

I can't believe yesterday or the day before, with the two pigs and the turtle crossing the dirt road by the disc golf course. But before that, it was that fucking bird! It had a big-time vocab, it waited until I stopped tracking and I was looking right at it and then it laid this super long song out onto the course. I butchered this description but I'll get it later, it is really dark.

* * *

I've dug some paper out from under a pile of my dirty clothes, which I keep in my bedroom closet, to write down some things about today and yesterday in particular but also about some things from other days. A lot of things have happened since I've gotten the new job, and most of them are good; but I don't have enough practice kind of thinking about the good things yet to feel confident doing it, and so, just out of habit I feel that I should talk about the bad. I'm sorry. I've just had one of my old thoughts recur to me.

—A weird distinction is that, as has been the case with a lot of people, my thoughts affect me overall positively—and yet many times my thoughts affect people other than myself in a bad way, so that my stomach gets upset, and my head hurts, and there's just so much more important stuff to observe + feel when someone—as is so often the case—'s affected in a bad way by what I have down? or what sometimes I have only just then in conversation or in activity with another person simply done or said. Such is this resistance, I'll tell it that way, that I feel at risk of getting not very much of things that I feel are good and right that lots can get out of life. Working on computers, as I do now— writing Python, R, a little L^ATeX, the orthological stuff, getting recognition for the fucking toroid—these things are of course the easier things to talk about for me in so far as it has been such a hard time with getting these ideas I'm having across to the team

with any sense of pride and or bon homie generally intact. I haven't chosen to "butt heads," as Dad has said, with any one of these people I've just met; but still, these telling confrontations keep popping up.

I've just gotten back from "Win Win" Barbeque. Talked w/Dad about problems with the team leader re Hilbert space project, how he said Thanks for the humor, to me in the main office he says this, after I told him kind of what I was working on? I think we all needed that, and the next week, he presents on the same stuff: emergence, and set forgetfulness, etc., telling us to sit listen to him and Do not offer comment... this will be an easy one where I'll just talk, which was way out of form, and of course I'm going to think that. Because the work on the project, we were all pretty stumped, and last week, any input was encouraged. No. Yes, I'm right about this. Then he said, There was nothing about forgetfulness as regards the emergence phenomenon in our instance, but there was, there definitely was, like I had gone through it with Stephen in the main office, and w/Pauline and Char, the other two there there was, and but having said that, he didn't elaborate. There was nil in terms of support, evidence, or an argument as matter of fact coming on the tail-end of this claim, Stephen's words v. my own, obviously. So I'm sitting on it, going What the fuck? a little bit, as it becomes ten times clearer to me that the team lead is trying some manner of professional + personal fuckery in this case, I supposed some of which having to do with me; there was hardly any way around it.

I looked to the girls, Char and Pauline for support. They were both saying: No. Please don't do this. You're going to give me, or us a heart attack, Phil, if you keep this up. Keep what up? Do you know what I mean?

Also, I talked with Dad as we ate BBQ in the BBQ place about how the day before, the problem with Stephen was brought to my attention one, and also this other thing happened. This happened earlier in the day.

I had driven to the research facility in the desert, out by the playa to check the progress on some of our phenomenological stuff, where perhaps one of our vectors (or operators)—an eigenvalue had finally elected to appear, really is what it's looking like. And I'm getting a call from G.A. So, I answer the phone.

I'm outside, just standing outside, in the inferno.

I told Dad that she had said that I was in a “hothouse” and a “skunkworks.” I think she was talking about my professional situation, but I could tell that she was mad. We were still fucking. I could hear her stretch out in a chair. Probably a recliner. The last time I talked to her, she told me to stretch out if you were concerned with appearing upset. I'd been worried about the team's reaction to a grant proposal I was floating. She was saying to me on the grant I got the name of the grant writer's greatest love of all time wrong, and she thought that I'd must of been trying to keep the name for my real best love confidential, and then she laughed.

But I was telling Dad about both these things only because they're examples both of times? Times I was paranoid about the effect my work seems to have on important people in my life, I will allow for that, and how upsetting it can be for me to have to deal with this kind of thing.

Dad said I was butting heads.

I asked him if he liked his sandwich, his was pulled pork.

He said, Mine? Well, mine's good.

He said that I was at a fork in the road.

There was a trash receptacle behind him. No, it was a recycling bin or just a trash. There were those arrows wrapping around each other on the outside. I thought about it. There was a picture of a cow, it was an exploded diagram of one, with all the different cuts explained. In this particular area, there was hardly any talking between he and I; not that I can remember.

We walked out to the van. It's a big white van, with no windows on the sides, save for the windows in the driver's seat and passenger's seat doors. "All Seas Heating," it says on the sides of the van exterior. Dad has scraped some letters off so that's what it says, now. Before he bought it, it was used as a heating and cooling van. Sears had been running a heating and cooling business for a while, and Dad bought up one of their vans; changed the words to hint at global warming. What it said before was "All Season Heating and Cooling," give or take, really simple, it could have said Sears also. But he doesn't seem to understand about my work situation. I know he's faking it. That's horrible to say, and it's worse because I'm not sure it's true.

We drive back the way we drove down Mission Street, with the G.P.S. telling Dad where to turn. Then I tell Dad about how I had considered going to the Project Manager about my team leader Stephen if he continued to act with such hostility towards me and my ideas, and of course Dad is saying don't, they would only protect themselves at the facility, and I don't want to burn that particular bridge. I brought up the tire place, my old job, and how I had gone to the President. That was my decision. Dad said, Yeah, and look how that turned out.

Yeah, good, I said.

You think so? Dad said.

Yes, I said, I had removed myself from a hostile work environment when my boss had attacked me physically. I was mopping and he went and grabbed me for sending a fax to the most high on ups. It was a letter a customer wrote me for getting a tire on. Quinto had also one

day gone an ordered me to write up a false work order, which I refused to do. He wanted me to put somebody down for doing the brakes, or as having done the brake work on a car, when Pew had never laid even one hand on this vehicle. Also, he couldn't have, Pew he was off that day. I saw that you couldn't really get away with it. We had one guy that was certified, and the other guy wasn't; that was basically the problem. Quinto didn't explain any of this, or this, or that, not ever. So, time being by then, he knew I knew the situation; each one of them: they were coming + they would come, and so they shall go; and that was becoming the primary duty of mine, is handling it, I got to understand all that service and work order shit it was going on, and by the way, the situation was never good for anyone who worked in that goddamned hole of a shop—no, I could be exaggerating, it's fine.

Said he, the usual reply of That's not what I was talking about. O.k., so what was it, then, Dad, I don't know—if that's not what you weren't talking about—and whenever the G.P.S. would tell him that a turn was coming up, he would say something weird, then, like Oh, shut up you dumb bitch, and, Oh, just shut the hell up why don't you? He asked me if we were going the right way in one sense just to get me put on the record. I remember something else, too—I've got it, now.

I had smoked a cigarette and ashed it in the glass tray on the black chest I got; and I was sitting on the livingroom carpet of my apartment.

Dad knocked, trying for a tune with it. He was on time.

About the keeping of time, and being punctual, I am so bad, in many ways.

I unlocked and opened the door, and saw him leaning at an angle against a wall in the landing just outside my door. He was wearing glasses with lenses that get darker as it gets brighter, and when I said Hi, Dad, his face wasn't hardly moving, but for saying that, he had

already stopped whistling, and then he smiled; then he said Well, hi, Phil, and I said how are you, and hugged, and I said come on in.

Ooh, it's smokey in here, he said.

I just smoked a cigarette, I said. We had made plans to get some food. I thought I should ask him if he wanted to stay and chat a bit first, since he has driven to see me + we hadn't seen each other in a week. We used to live together, for a couple of years, and then I moved out after I got my job I got.

The people who rent the apartment above are making such a racket, right now. If the inspiration hits it, sometimes, in a time such as now, their white person dog will start running back and forth up there, in not so much a circle, it's these great long lines, the longest line which is possible for it to pull straight down + across with, that little motherfucker, it was like he was a most knowing stunt-dog; maybe, but that's not the dog I hear. Nope. Nevermind.

No. No, it's way smokey in here, he said, ...way too smokey.

I said o.k. and grabbed the apartment keys and we walked out of the apartment and I locked up and we walked to the van in the lot and when dad broke to walk around to the other side of the van, he said, So, you know where we're going, now? And I said, Yes, and we pulled ourselves in and closed our doors and Dad pushed out a noise in the form of a laugh and said, So, where are we going? And I said a barbecue place on Mission.

Say, he says, What's the name of it? I said how I thought it's called "Win Win" Barbecue, and Dad said, What? I think the problem was that it was called "Win Win" Barbecue, you tell me; but I've told what the name is and that we take a right on Mission and it was on the right side of the road. He asks me how did I spell that? Gotta take a guess, and he said he was going to try to find it on his G.P.S. I told him I'm looking on my phone at this same time, also.

He said, You're going to beat me, aren't you?

I don't know, I said.

He was driven to calling names of places out loud as he read them off the wee little screen, in comparison to how big Dad is, shops where one could spend one's money should one have any of that; that that arguably had zippos to do with what we were doing was an only a my deal kind of thing, is what I have gathered.

I have a "Robin Hood" Barbecue, said Father.

Maybe they changed their name to Robin Hood, I said, because I thought it would be nice, really, for my Dad to say, I mean, if Dad had said that back to me, I suppose, instead of what he had actually said. Dad was disconcerting to me.

He plugged in this name and we drove on our way. FatherMan keeps whatever he's driving parked for a long time before he gets going, if there's somebody else in the car.

I knew where we were going.

The place was down Mission after you took a right.

But the G.P.S. was telling us to go another way.

Mission's through the next two or three lights, I said.

It was an easy drive.

It seems like it's telling us to go the backroads, though, Dad said.

He was talking about the G.P.S.

He changed the voice on it since last time I was in the van.

We passed the Win Win Barbecue on the right.

Oh, is that where we were supposed to go? Dad said, and louder than normal, he laughed.

We missed it, he said. He didn't sound well. But what was it? He began to make odds favor

unhappy faces as I spoke, and his eyes were a teensy wet. Teensy, that's it, too. Well, my brother is getting married next week—

crossing the threshold of reason, a curse'll soon lay, by the bye, covering the foot of the gringo bed in single sheets, crisp and crisply cut they're first, paper stacks following that of stapled packets, glancing up to mid-back, level, mutely, bunting, dumb peal + pale tongues, baking wetly next your loved one, tacky, sickening paper, rites and passages cheapened, etc. Madness due us, large, with all respect to the above! Where's the fire originated + we don't know + here's to the nothing we can do re messes this whore's hour a coming which are 10/10 inevitable—

* * *

I heard this story at work.

A customer told me. She's a civil engineer.

She's in Hawaii.

She's in a cab.

The cab driver and her are driving and of course it's just fucking beautiful outside.

She says to the cab driver, How are you?

Cab driver says, I'm good.

Thinks, Yeah, I'd be good, too, if I lived here.

Ten, fifteen minutes go by.

Cab driver says, I'm not so good, something to that effect.

So, she's thinking.

'What is it?'

So she asks him.

He says, My wife died.

How long has it been? she's asking.

She's thinking, like, two years, or so.

Fifteen years.

Then he points out the window.

Then, he says to her Now, look out there.

The road is good, all up and down.

Out the window is the ocean, sparkling.

Now, she's the one telling it, remember?

There was a baby mountain. Palms. It was like, 'Here is one of the prettiest things I have ever seen.'

You see the construction? cabbie said.

Cabbie says You see it?

Right there. It used to be so beautiful, right there.

Everything changes.

NOTES FROM WORKSHOP:

Pauline said 'greek' nature to the words. Bhg = BLACK HAired GIRL, 'hard to read on paper,' but when she imagined this being read out loud

THEY USE IT FOR PARTS

A long time ago—almost in another world.

I.

A boy is working on what is called a piece of art by the generous people that come around his girlfriend's house: it's a styrofoam block as tall as the living room, a bee hive type of statement. All of the little cells which have been put inside it by him are now together. And the cells are for once approaching a classic type of organization. Though, but whatever it is, there is no name for the thing yet. (Some would say that name-wise, and more broadly even, these circumstances are operating at a standstill.)

For, lo: ← joking w/ you but look:

Even after two standard, rather fantastic, commercial breaks, for diet pills, and for other products, such as Fixodent the girlfriend, young too, assumes him to look *diferente de cero*, to look the same, if she were to venture a peek in that direction, meaning, here, that she thinks in Spanish, only that he is standing in the same spot—her boyfriend hasn't moved from where she seen him yesterday, in that he is standing in her house, as it were, his back is still turned from the t.v., and he is continuing on in his work. He has embedded himself in his work again. It's a sense she can get, that she gets by way of the thick and terminal body feel, in all corners of the place, which most times seems to keep company only with his so long f'in standing in her living room—her boy having again so well-established his darkened back at an unwatchable angle from where the flatscreen would seem to want a person each time to sit, and enjoy oneself, and yet he continues on, trying to gain on a breakthrough, trying to lose himself in his work again, guessing obviously. And like most other nights in recent memory, he won't explain the weird attitude he refuses to leave behind all of them, which is in evidence today, to her, and, it's also clear, to her

new visitor, too, who is (understandably) rather quiet.

Sometimes, on his more talkative days and evenings together, when he's "off," hanging round another person who is from outside the relationship, holding something good, a good cold beer, words will occur to him re the reasons for why he is so wrapped up in all of these—in this work, and there is the making of pretty good and funny jokes, which is his actual gift. The sum of what is said to be his real work, however, comes out equaling to a whiteboy-type lameness, which is unfortunate, or, in other words, it is just not worth the while to look at. What else is there she can do but stare both of her eyeballs at the stupid retarded cellulose? Plus, what he is doing now seems to be against a number of really important laws, fuckers will say. And he is considered to be, in the way of a judgment, kind of the biggest of the bummers as he works, grinding and brushing; that's what most people think, if you ask them directly, in the kitchen—or else that there is something wrong, something not right with him—and the girlfriend in the picture learns how all of this is true, in the important sense, on the highest level. &, as it just so happens, that leading up to this new thinking about it, she has been very much on her own wanting to break up with the individual, forever an independent type, a loner type, to the point where it was not fun for her. & so, in her own way, with her hands, via text, she calls it off: (Under God, is what it's like, when she's crying her eyes out in the bathroom, because who is always watching her, anyway, even now as she cries—and this was the nature of the whole mountain of the entire thing! She was always being watched. And she needs some time by herself: she thinks that's what people say to themselves, in cases like this one, and others, she needed space, if they are in a similar one. This is what she favors hinting at if her newish visitor, an important coworker, a new white person contact to impress, seems nice): & as well for the boy, he hides in the styrofoam, and the plastic + metal thing, black and white, which he has been

working with, and he memorizes this moment—her crying somewhere behind him, with something of an appalling and foretellable rhythm; also, he coughs and makes noises in his throat area and so on as a young man will in this situation, in a small apartment after insight and vision, & as the little thing happens, he catches himself doing it, and he notices it: it's perhaps the sound of him coughing: he might sound young and not like much of a man, sounding small, although he tries to cough etc. at all times in the way that he thinks that the more pro—on the roads that he walks for example—older geezers would do it, instead of how he would pop a little one off without even thinking about it. In other words, to sound off, like a white hick in love, if there was to be any noise from him at all, at this time, given present company, was correct. Here that was just about the entire point of his method with anything: to make sure to at least sound *largo*, and in line & with obvious intentions, before he proceeded too far into any of his affairs. In other words, to sound right, with this thing, he thought, if there was to be any noise from him at all, was o.k., but slim chance of that, and especially at a time like this one, this is a sad hour which he has felt coming for a while—he enjoyed taking appropriate to the next level—

to the extent where the medical opinion on this behavior such as it is described now is that this is quite often evidence of a sick person, as the greater meaning and value which comes and goes within this moment, and others, for him has been lost, which could otherwise be available to him but is not, due to the quality and duration of these thoughts, and he is therefore missing out re a very specific pathology

—and from inside the bathroom, on the other side of the b-room door, she feels with most of what she has that he has gone by now quite far, after having left her premises a few minutes before. And she opens the door that she's been sniffing at, and she looks around the place, and he is in fact gone from the house, for somewhere else, and she knows about this because she makes sure. She looks everywhere. She makes sure that it is over all the way. And so it is that now they

are broken up. Although it seems to her later like there is still a problem. In any case, after not a long while, though, and about this, about it not being a long while, who is to say?

& but the discerning and, it shall be revealed, wise young woman gets a brand-new boyfriend. They both know where this is headed right from the beginning. And it is known to be a thing which will transpire sooner rather than later, between these two lovebirds. This is of course a while later which we are now speaking of, as time is always passing on, and moving forward, and this is no matter what. As far as we know. And she brings the new boyfriend home. It could be big for her, what is about to happen: for example, he is honestly nice, not with just a great sense of humor, and they are about to really do it. It's her and the new boyfriend now. And the old boyfriend sneaks straight out of what they had all described as a work in styrofoam, and attacks the both of them with a retarded vanity. ← This was not to be believed, later on, in the telling, because it sounded too strange to a person, the way the coffee table exploded, like it was magic. Everyone's okay, though. And that entire situation, although it is *not* over, in point of fact, and more than a little strange, is in a way sort of like this other one, and this other one— isn't it—if considered in the proper, singular frame of mind, is like another one, which is yet to come. Well, they all got the same people in them, sort of. So they could all go together.

II.

Let it be known to the world: that we went to Potter Beach today on the corporate pontoon. Not one of us there had any job. This was not strange in nature. I had my work to think about. The pontoon was holy. Somebody who was capable eventually got around to untie us from the cleat on the dock. It was Ray C.'s dock, who is a man who always likes to say that he is

retired. Ray C.'s b-day is March twentieth, and it was coming up. That's nice, said Char. And it was. Ray C. was born on the cusp of rebirth. II remember that. And III haven't figured out quite what that's supposed to mean. But that's only what we like to say about that.

His dock was right by his house.

Ray C.'s house sat on a special place, on the endpoint of a current line. He called it "the cut," where two different currents collide. He picked up beach balls, life preservers, stuff that people lost out on the lake waters because the current line sucked everything down onto his property; and sometimes his neighbor's property, too. We discussed what Ray C. owned in the world. Then Ray C. told us that he wanted to sing a song for everyone. He played the guitar. This was no big surprise that he played the guitar. It kind of was that he sang. IV or we looked at his bony neck. There was the guitar. But Ray C. said that he wanted to do his number, which was a song, in a special way, without he himself having planned this number, he said—not entirely. We were almost strangers and he was just about into something already.

...He wanted to lay down as he called it a number, but it was a song for the day out on the pontoon, with some ideas in it, ideas that the song expressed, which, and this was important, he didn't just dream up by himself, because anybody can do that—people did that all the time, that is, write their own music on the fly, at home, put it to memory, and then pretend it was created in the moment, and original. Because you could never tell if it was from the spirit, he said, unless you did it this particular way. He was just about right, V thought. VI remember thinking, too, but what was ever created in the moment and original anymore? To what extent was this kind of thing still doable?

How could we tell that that was what he was doing?

Did he want our own gnarled/knotted brains, not his, to cook something up for him to

work into a song? That's what he had said. Then Ray C. would go from there. VII wasn't one hundred percent buying into it. But it would be super-impressive if Ray C. could do it. This was something that we had to continue to try to do; we had to choose, let's say, a subject for him to consider. VIII was just then starting to feel the warmth and the sun.

He asked me to land on something. IX couldn't figure on this for the life of me. X couldn't think of anything. And after a while XI just said, XII don't know, a burning boat. And he sort of looked at me, and he said, "If you know that the boat's burning, you know you're gonna go down, don't you?" and he didn't play my song.

Sara was standing behind me on the pontoon. She was looking at fish. "Oh, no," she said. It was maximum light outside. We were talking.

III.

...What kind of world is this? For an example/for one, XIII got back from the neighborhood party store. It took a while because XIV had to walk the back roads to get there, just like all these other god-forsaken people; me + them lifting their little bony knees, losing a boot, if they have anything, we're all so poor... They always say to count your blessings, but they also have good teeth—that is to say, they are in a better position than those of us in town—and they are without any great vision generally. The thing about it this time was XV was really thinking some things over. I was able to feel some of the breeze. The air was nourishing me, nursing me, although it was cold. ...I have just about bought an orange Crush, chips and salsa, and a pasta with olives combo presently. It was a little expensive, but XVI guess it could have been worse. Mark was working the store. He said, "Jeez, look at this guy tonight." "You're

buying everything you lay your eyes on,” he said.

You’re never not here, Mark, XVII said.

I brought my things to the counter where Mark was. He asked me if all the food XVIII had was for me. XIX told him about how XX was going to perhaps eat by myself. Then Mark said, “But usually you've got a lady?” because he remembered, and XXI said yeah. And then XXII said not for much longer. Mark must have seen XXIII was happy, because of what he said next, he said, “So, that's good?” An XXIV said well she's married. That’s why. Then he said that he would do it. Do what? Do what, exactly? At first XXV didn’t know what Mark was talking about. And XXVI didn’t want to know...

And XXVII am not sure, as they say, that XXVIII even quite heard the man right.

Because then he told me that he was married. Then he mentioned that he was engaged, which he thought was pretty much the same thing. XXIX was relieved when XXX heard him say that—not that XXXI was overly concerned. XXXII think XXXIII got his meaning. XXXIV liked to eat something with Mark at this time. My face must of been doing some funny things. Then Mark moved around a little. He wanted to actually pull the trigger. That’s what XXXV discovered. XXXVI can sort of see it now. We were both hanging around this old store. It was the same as how things tend to happen with this other fellow XXXVII know, his name is, ostensibly, A.K. But things get that way with him, this other dude XXXVIII am talking about, because he always tries to be, XIL don’t know, *like me*, it seems like, which makes him come off as a huge douche bag, when a person is just supposed to be a good person: you know, walk by their own light, XL guess, and sometimes there's an old build-up, or, a lot of activity—Mark is a good guy, though. The next day he and XLI went and played disc golf, which is and is not important.

IV.

Maybe one of these days XLII'll tell about how XLIII just about got punched in the mouth region—that should do something for them—XLIV don't know, four nights ago, by a person about thirty years old. This was his age. He had on a Jordan jersey from when Jordan played with the Bulls, plus a mohawk. That night XLV was given the impression that when people looked at one another, and that night was a clear one, to me (for obvious reasons), they seemed to say after a short while, over and over to one another, not me! Not me! Isn't that weird? And it was that this dude was drinking in the midst of these other strangers in this barn. And me.

Well, XLVI was there.

XLVII didn't know anybody except for my "date." I had a "date" with Sara and she was next to me the whole evening; and when XLVIII began to telepathically call right up her leg with great happiness and without breathing in any conspicuous way was when: whoever he was: just another guy with a mohawk, probably had had words with himself, i.e. he creeped into our area, like on a queue + he was exceptional, the stranger motherfucker, the one we had all heard about earlier in the poor man's club and been expecting something from. He must have been fixing to jump, he used the corners of his eyes to full effect, or so it was described to me later—no, XLIX remember, and as a matter of fact, for my own reasons, I have memorized how this went. For example, LI saw and remembered how he had turned his back to me, earlier in the night, and the way he had done it: there was a clue, of course, is what he had done, this guy: he had given me something, in the way he had turned his back, and how he had walked away: LII saw that, too, the way that he had said to me that it was all too much, basically: 'just not her', that's what he

had said, and that's when LIII said to Sara, oh LIV think you scared him, which LV said in part because she was dancing like a crazy woman. Also, she makes me personally want to send at least two sneaky messages for every normal one, to both man, woman and child. She has long hair down to her butt almost. Many women look bad this way, LVI know. However, she is in fact so beautiful, it makes the beams and mortars have strange emotions. And it's like, she wants to fuck *me*...

That guy must have been a good twenty feet away was when LVII tried to say my thing to him, whatever it was that we say that was said. And when LVIII said it, LIX wasn't sure if LX had wanted to help him, or if he needed assistance, especially from me, or from what. And there was a red flag waving somewhere. And somebody had the loudspeakers cranked way up. It was pretty good. Certainly not technically perfect. But he came right away, and he said what? and as the blackest chorus LXI have ever heard in my entire life, which is saying something, gave way to an eye-dropping refrain, which is saying something, LXII became convinced of the idea that he wanted to wrestle with me. It wasn't hard to figure out.

Sometimes, LXIII remember when LXIV was, LXV suppose, a lot younger: when LXVI was at a summer camp that had what verged on an indian name, as in, native american. All the kids were put together in these cabins. LXVII shared one of these cabins with some other kids, like four. The pine trees and the shades of pink in the light? were new to me. We had a pillow fight on was it the first night? And somebody who's me broke the one stupid kid's glasses, and as it turned out, this kid was the person was also cross-eyed without his glasses, whose glasses were broken—and he ended up throwing a mattress down. He said that he had wanted to wrestle me; and LXVIII remember thinking, do you even know who LXIX am? That happened ten years before the major heartbreaker, about, in the old barn, in the woods. So now LXX know how he

wants to end me, then, LXXI was thinking, kinda more presently. Not a chance, of course. As a young boy, LXXII was learning what happens when you fuck with strangers, even at that age. Well, it's nothing to talk about.

LXXIII found out he had once shot and killed someone this one time with a bird gun. There isn't much more to be said, just say bird gun, you know? If LXXIV had known this just then, though, about him being a truly crazy motherfucker, then LXXV may not have gone along with it, with his wrestling concept.

LXXVI was going to wrestle the indian who, and this was fair, had begun to receive a wider attention from the lot of us combined, until Sara stepped between me and him and slowed down our moves. Then he walked out of the barn so LXXVII couldn't see him in the best way, or for some fresh air, and LXXVIII turned around and started to dance with Sara again. She's like my girlfriend, etc. Most people say she's above average. That's what my neighbor said before LXXIX started dating her. That's just because his wife was extremely rich that he can talk—and she has a nasty mole.

LXXX think she should get that looked at.

Then the indian, he came back from the wide open night and the black wind blowing and from the lord knows where else back into the barn—there was a big party continuing on, living on—and he started to make like he was dancing, adding to it nicely; but it was weird, because he was just pretending, and when he got close enough he cold cocked me.

LXXXI didn't know anything at that very second—was it even possible?—that maybe he was about six foot, and maybe he played rugby. And LXXXII say it like that because there were some things that had been done to me. My head hurt. And, because LXXXIII had remained standing, LXXXIV was beaming, and my nose bled when LXXXV looked down at the plastic

bottle of vodka LXXXVI was holding. Sara asked me what had happened, although LXXXVII am sure she had seen. LXXXVIII was that humongous. And LXXXIX can't say, though, that XC saw the indian do this, but after that, at some point he must have walked off by himself into the grass, and sat down and held his own head in both of his hands. He was sitting like that in the grass.

That is because of since me and Sara walked out of the barn and saw him. She was shaking just enough. She was very warm. XCI could tell. XCII was looking somewhat at her.

And soon thereafter we walked down the dirt road that's in front of the place. We had to, it was the only road. And we were having a good time until a cop pulled up and stopped. Nobody wanted him around. It was just me and her, basically, mixed up with a vague wont for blankets. He asked me + Sara if we'd been to the barn tonight. To the officer, one of the two of us said, XCIII can't remember, okay? That's exactly what we said. But it was a love note between us. It was so obvious. This is what happens to other people, not to me, XCIV thought. XCV was lucky. The cop said he was down on a noise complaint, and one of us said but the music's off now, and we acted like we knew that, but we didn't. Not for sure. What he said was a small, flat field, as he spoke, and XCVI gathered that we were supposed to put something in his field, and then he got in and drove off.

We were looking for Sara's car.

Then came the officer, again, it was the same one, driving himself back; he got out without giving anything away and asked me and the "date" if we wanted to press charges. It was as simple as that. And he was harmless now that he had something, criminally...

XCVII looked into the distance, where me + this girl in particular have never ever been.

XCVIII wanted to say that XCIX should press these charges if the guy with the mohawk,

whoever he was, except he had this literal bronze skin, had any priors, only because at the time that sounded pretty fuckin' good. C knew CI was going to get laid then, if CIII said that. CIV didn't say anything about his skin, for christ sake, but CV thought it. The cop said: you'll get your I.D. back when I'm done here! and he walked to his cruiser and opened the door and got inside. And he looked at the computer for a while in the cruiser, looked into the trees, and operated the door handle real quick and came back to us again. Then the cop said to me, yes, he had priors. The cruiser door. The g-man had left it open. And the things that could happen. The state would prosecute. It was at this time in which the officer also said: this thing was in every way out of my hands. Well. He was looking at her. That's when CVI found out about the murder problem with a bird gun. Then more cops came. They ran into the woods, and they had their big flashlights out.

Me and Sara stood there nice and quiet and heard the indian run and hide and after a minute, you could be sure they had him. CVII kicked some stupid stones around. We were way out there, CVIII will say that. Picture this: there was zero trash in the area.

One cop said things to another. They were being vain about being able to speak under the circumstances. For example, they were very loud. CIX know that this was on purpose. CX heard it said that the mohawk had called those police officers everything but a low number of white men, which is in fact exactly what they were. Though CXI couldn't see too decent. My eyes weren't very good at the time. But they were walking out of the woods and onto the road.

V.

Monday, CXII was in the hospital, because Char, who is Sara's, she belongs to Sara, it's

hard to explain, something happened to her which is she fell in the parking lot of Hawk's which is a bar and smacked her head? bad enough so that after the ambulance took her away, and me, and A.K., and old Pewski Boy, now a legitimate citizen, got to the hospital, we found out how she got a C.A.T. scan, and turned out to be okay. This was in a way my fault.

But before the ambulance came, at first, in the parking lot, in the camper, Char, Charry Night was okay about where she was in life and not crying. And then her female buddies started giving her the treatment and she just sucked that bunch of baloney up. Then Char went to pieces, which is what those girls wanted, that's a fact. CXIII know those girls. Besides that, CXIV personally had been doing great.

CXV was talking to A.K. and Pewski Boy in the bar about their ex-wives. That was fun and entertaining. Also, about how Pewski Boy had himself killed around two people, so, there was that.

Once in the barracks, one was a nigger who pulled a knife on him, and the other time, the genius Pewski was playing Risk, also in the barracks, with a white dude who Pewski said had always had something against him, CXVI'll forget what. And at one point because he's losing, this forever empowered white lizard sort of flips out and pushes the board off the table. This was spectacular to hear, that night, the spot that we were in.

Then, and CXVII don't know how he gets away with it, A.K.-47 butted in, as he is apt to do, and told some of it. It was all wrong. "[He] is a good man, nobody fucks with [him]," etc. Who was A.K. even holding forth on? Himself? Probably. He knew the story that the Pewski, whom we all know and love! was telling. Most of us up at the bar do. This was a case where, because there was a new crowd that night, A.K. was compelled to try and change the focus.

The white mother's pieces were the um red pieces, so if he picked

them up, cleaned up and am I right, because somebody here is a neat-freak, then everything was, nope. [Beat.] But he thought he was too good for that, you know this, clean up after himself yeah.

That's what he said. That's literally what he said. CXVIII felt horrible. Nobody was making any sense anymore. Not A.K., not anybody else standing around, as CXIX leaned in, and creatively eavesdropped, or sitting up there with me, not anybody else on the fucking gypsy's t.v., etc. Everybody was too far gone into their own heads, or they were crying out like green, burning wood, whether they were sober or not. It did not matter. CXX concentrated on it. And it was that, that night, that did it: because the world was begging to its blackeyed mother, and the gates had been left wide open by some dumb fuck far more important than me for what CXXI had hoped was only a super brief moment.

Oh—it didn't seem that bad.

That's when Pewski took the other guy, A.K. said, just like the nigger with the knife in the barracks, by the head, and he went, bang! bang! bang! with his fist on the bar. What CXXII'm saying here is, CXXIII didn't need a weepy drama like the girls did, because me and the rest of the guys were sort of in love with something else.

VI.

We were in one of those things, they always—a pastry shop. She picked out a caramel pecan roll! and some kind of french thing with blackberries and strawberries; the poor slob running the register said to her there was a minimum purchase if she was going to use a credit card. Her purchase couldn't be made. Unless there was something else she wanted. To add on to the bill. That's about how he talked, too. He needed some food and water. CXXIV thought that

was funny. It bordered on hilarious. CXXV felt like saying how none of us are mind-readers. If you are starving, and you work at a place that smells like a cartoon character, then there is something very wrong. The question was, how did he want us to free him? CXXVI am so sick of this process. But CXXVII sort of asked Sara if CXXVIII could pick something to get things moving. She said yes, so CXXIX picked out an absurd, shiny slice of baklava. That was good enough. The baker gave her the bag with all of the product and we left. It was surprising how cold the handle was.

CXXX felt like the baker got me. We were both hungry.

CXXXI will give him this, he wasn't scared.

Later CXXXII asked for the baklava and she at first pretended she didn't understand. Am CXXXIII not even there at this point? Then she said she'd already taken a bite out of it and she opened the van door and got out. "I told you you could get whatever you wanted," Sara said, and she walked into her house. She lived uptown. Everybody called it her mom's house.

VII.

Sara's mom, she is one smart whore. She is a real prostitute. Nobody else had any gas, for example. And she did. And this woman had a running coupe, and a van. CXXXIV am talking about the money.

But not as much as the neighbor's wife.

So me and Sara went back out in the prostitute's coupe. To get more firewood, we tried going the other way. We didn't even know where we were at this point. It was all very normal. Understand, her mom had just moved. There were american fields, and CXXXV yearned. There

were like no woods. CXXXVI didn't appreciate the situation as it was dawning on me again. We couldn't find any firewood. They needed more of that bigger shit for the bonfire.

...The two of us do like we did the first time, and we pull up even more fence posts. Sara explains it like it's not a farmer's fence, it's a city fence, so. As many of these fence poles are sticking out of the trunk, and we need to move. We are in the car, and we are driving home. There are no signs for a very long time. CXXXVII like to play with the radio at this time.

...Then there was this pair of headlights. There was a lot of fog. They were a quarter mile back, anyways, the sparkling, sparkling pair. Sara hit the gas to be safe, the instant that we both knew that she would. CXXXVIII was still looking over my shoulder. CXXXIX noticed the upholstery. For some reason, this vehicle has always enhanced my taste for couplehood.

CXL witnessed then one of those moments when Sara said, help me, 'keep your eyes peeled, there was something up ahead,' which she would have been saying into complete darkness, outside of the headlights, which showed a person who was in the car at the time absolutely not a motherfucking thing.

Then a rabbit scribbled out from left to right, in the dirt before us, and sped up the chemical processes between me and my other. Driving that old stretch, it looked like she was the psychic one! That kind of thing is exactly what has put me on edge all along, but nevermind, and then, on top of that a dangerous looking curve came up. Let's say, let's just say that would get the old wheels turning. It was strange to me, is what CXLI'm saying, too much of a coincidence, what with everything, such a perfect sense of invitation came over me, what with all of the danger, and Sara's comments just prior about danger, and CXLII gave the wheel a little extra flair. Then CXLIII over-corrected, on purpose, for effect, obviously, but since CXLIV have also gone this far, CXLV will just admit it, because CXLVI wanted to prove CXLVII also had

powers, to her and to myself, CXLVIII figured CXLIX might as well let my hands off of the wheel. And in fact the whore's only coupe had become totaled, and whoever was in the driver's seat, doesn't that part not matter at all to everyone, except, not not to her, and not not to me?

Just a question.

We were not harmed, a true miracle with those alien trees.

We had forgotten about a number of headlights. That was something. They weren't anywhere on the face of this earth; that's how it then seemed.

Look at this glass, CL said.

The car had changed shape; we were scrunched. This is no joke, but CLI have no other way of saying it, with our knees up, it looked as though we were both having babies.

Later Sara and CLII were fine with getting sober in the wreckage, and then, fine with walking through the barren cornfield for two miles, and it would not ruin our chances with each other.

She had to walk barefoot. Her flip flops were no good.

CLIII kept saying, go faster, even though she was the one holding all of the fireworks. We had to leave all of the posts behind. Then CLIV realized CLV was mad at her, which CLVI tried to keep a secret.

CLVII got sick of waiting up for her so CLVIII took them back: some roman candles, and some other little things.

We broke out of the cornfield, as it were, at different times. CLVIII knew pretty much where CLIX was. There was a ditch before you got to the road. But how does the world always seem to get organized like that? Has it been this way since time immemorial? CLX remember being so mad, because CLXI knew then that CLXII was truly alone. CLXIII felt like it wasn't my

fault. My skin looked indigo. It was wild to think about.

And then, again, this kind of thing will happen to you, and then all of your thoughts will be lifted up and away: CLXIV climbed up the ditch and a bright screeching tracer of light went right for me and missed out and popped, cutting sideways, a body length away. And after that it was CLXV assume entirely vaporized. ...Sara may have lit that bad boy off from the porch, is how CLXVI realized we were back. CLXVII saw. She stood for me against the house. Then she looked at me funny and went inside. CLXVIII thought that everybody was perhaps in all likelihood there before me at the house, waiting for it, waiting for me inside the house, CLXIX mean, CLXX don't know why CLXXI said it like that, the way the house looked, kind of smiling. CLXXII hoped so. CLXXIII know that must have sounded odd. CLXXIV was maybe thinking that way just now because CLXXV needed to talk to my man Jesus who is also spanish and then someone else as well; it's understood that it is impossible for me to say who this other person is, believe me. This person was just passing through, we're gonna say, for legal reasons, etc. But CLXXVII thought that CLXXVIII had heard them both coming in on the other side. Then CLXXIX was close enough to the screen door that CLXXX should have been able to tell one way or the other were they there or not and CLXXXI still couldn't see or hear either of them, Sara plus the other. They were probably around front yet, somewhere. CLXXXII would have to check. Then CLXXXIII thought that CLXXXIV had heard something additional coming from that direction. And there was the sun, a big giant filled-up zero, with nobody out back, just the yard and the old phony fire. CLXXXV don't know why CLXXXVI was beginning to feel especially off, earlier, but CLXXXVII was, and CLXXXVIII wanted to crack a dumb joke, pretty bad, so, please, CLXXXIX'm thinking, just be my guest.

STORY 10.21.13

Nice to meet you! I'm Assistant Research Director at U of M's "neuro" lab, participating in and contributing to an ongoing paradigm shift, which is about the most exciting thing; but I can't talk about that too extensively; but I also write on the side. Does that make sense? A little more about me, it's been nine years since I graduated with paper from my alma mater, which is Northwestern. So, I work at U of M, right? Even though I'm posted up at the desert, far from home, I still work for U of M; well so anyways. These schools are rivals. They may as well have been for all of time—years upon years, now—and about that. There was a riot in 2001 that I happened to get caught up in. I guess I could tell you about that. What can I say about what happened, there with the riot? It had something to do with a football loss between these two.

It was 2001, that was when the paper coverage on it came out, it was some time after September. I don't know what caused it to happen. Now that I think about the date, maybe it wasn't the game. Maybe it was nine eleven. Do you know what I'm saying? After the events of that day, the football game, that's what I'm saying, after it had ended, but it was still—still they were on us, a bit—the worst parts to the game were working on us, getting on top of us on into the night. Some of us playing this part over, then that part, versus looking at the whole thing? Which, of course, looking at this in full-scale must've sucked, also, for a football fan from my school. It just it must have.

I kind of have to think about it.

So, with the Dolphins, at the time, okay, first of all, who could have even comprehended the first quote unquote whole sports picture? There, it was no small feat, when you are seriously in school, if you follow me? Think about that. See? I mean, to really come to grips with this? Yeah, say if you were supportive of the institution—as I was—I was going to school in Chicago

at that time—but you were just a big fan. A big big fan, big as in to react to this game, the loss, you feel that you are going to—you wanted to start a literal riot, now, really, it was only a couple of hours after, and that is what you want to do. Well, who the fuck were you? and what is your name? There, because, I really want—hold it—I really wanted—yeah, sure—to meet you pretty bad.

Because to be that upset about a football game that you are going to want to start a riot somewhere, or anywhere over it—think about that. This implies that not just a one, but a lot of people know at least something about how to think about the "larger picture" vis-a-vis what actually whatever it was just now that went down just prior. Or went down before. Or way before. Keeping the thoughts that one has about all of whatever that was. You would think so. You'd hope, at least in this hypothetical—which is kind of ours, if I am alright in addressing the then student body that way? If not, you know: let's just hope if you are doing this then that then you know everything about this one. Is that asking too much? It is, I'm sorry. But at least some of the kids must've worked it out part-way before the moment we actually lost it, huh. What it was going to be like. It was like, it must have been, a lot of them were saying, 'Let's get ready for it this time,' they said. Well, it wasn't just their ordinary game. It wasn't—that's for sure. That's when everybody's game had started was before the game. That's where everybody starts—started at.

That was like a "base" or home level.

Which means everybody knew.

Plus were together on this.

This wasn't maybe ordinary.

The answer to the question, who started the riot? and why—sure, this was the question,

for me. Yes, oh—oh yeah. There were some of my peers, fellow students and friends, almost all of them, well, you know, young, or what have you, who still likely took the game serious enough to be able to see it for the, well, the big picture. They were there, sure, and—okay. They were thinking about the implications, and were honestly devastated, because they understood the whole thing, and what the recent outcome probably was going to mean for the team, etc. But I just wasn't on their level. No. So, sure, it could be the game that caused the riot! It could be either of those two! It could be nine eleven, right, and then, it could be the game, also. That's what I'm saying.

The little clips of earlier in the day, all of the play by plays kind of grating down our forms, as human beings, making us small; what had happened seemed to mystify even for some of us our simplest thoughts. Certainly, what some of the sentences meant that were coming out of our mouths, and noses, if that's what they were, is sentences, were hard to get those. That's going to happen, right?

You are not going to understand all the things that people say, sometimes.

Some of the comments at one time or another were clear, as clear as the setting sun. But then, a phrase or a single word popped up, again, in somebody's, in what someone was trying to say, that it was kind hard to fathom, to me. That is going to continue to happen. You are not going to know every word that people are saying to you every time. Sometimes, people talk too quietly, for example. You can't get what was being said, then. Pronunciation issues, dialect issues, and so on.

I know I've tried to explain, but maybe I can't.

This was truly, truly strange. People were talking in little murmurs. They were acting strange, and it wasn't just that they were a little bit drunk, on the average, and they were merely

acting like it. No, these people were mesmerized. Could they see that? You could see one person slowly convincing the other, at a party later on, the same day, with a pull downward on a shirt bottom, or on an open-mouthed resting face, or a slow reaction to a hello, that if you acted as if you have just had a stroke, and made it harder to understand what you were trying to say, if you did that, and you dumbed yourself down, it was going to demonstrate your super high-level (and therefore attractive) secret sensitivity and sympathy, if only ostensibly, with respect to the ongoing movement and its many appearances. That is, to the little retarded social, interpersonal feelings and expressions we got from perhaps the events of the day, to the game. Which had inspired a feeling that, who cares about Northwestern? And that was the sentiment that had gained momentum, and it was a mesmerising idea, quite possibly going to lead something good to happen outside, somewhere, possibly soonish.

Okay, spirits were down, and it's always hard to talk very clear when your spirits are way down, and you're also kind of drunk, trying to get over whatever was your thing. Or, very drunk. And, I get that.

Problem being, there shouldn't be a problem. There shouldn't be a problem, for you, understanding what the other person is getting at, if you know them, they are your friend, and no, they are not a sports person, nor are they very drunk, and therefore, your friend should be precisely zero upset about any football game, including this one, setting some people's hair on fire. But there they were. They were pretending to be upset, too. Is that what it was? That's definitely what I was thinking. It was strange. And there was a ton of that, that day. For some reason.

What was gonna make the riot happen, then, eventually? It wasn't just the game. I don't know. Maybe there was something to the fact that we sometimes hypnotized ourselves. To each

other. I guess? The way that they did end up, though, acting like they were trapped, but they so weren't—I didn't really go in for thinking there was anything to be that worked up about, at the time.

Was the sky blue, just like normal? Yes. Sure it was. Were people getting the correct change, that evening? Yes, I'm sure, that, nine times out of ten, it was correct for you. Were you wearing pants, all that calendar day? That was up to the person, but you would think that they would literally check or uncheck the pants step, or part, rather, for each major phase of the day. Just like you normally would. There was no real emergency. This wasn't a nightmare where we are rushed, and we forget to put on our pants.

These are simple every day thoughts that you, if you'd been in the riot, or, I, say. We wouldn't realize we were even thinking these things, that day, the day before, which we were, of course, just not consciously, and having these kinds of observations about ourselves, and the world, day before, which, again, we had probably been having and making stupid observations all day. Of course, because we are talking about the most basic shit in life, where you have to think and register about that stuff to survive in this world, and you almost always take that type of every day shit for granted. Because we can. Otherwise, you'd spend too much time making sure that you took care of yourself, making sure that you took a shower, and wiped your bottom after you went. You are a grown-up. That's what I'm talking about.

Not a lot of that was going on.

Like, 'Am I even here right now?' That was the look on my friend's face.

The answer was "yes," obviously. He was pretending to be upset. But, was he? No one had the words for him, at the time. What is it, selective hearing? If somebody said it, and it didn't make sense, or if somebody did it and it looked dumb, or it was on the side of being fucked up,

then, as long as the score was settled, with respect to our particular rivals, and it certainly was, then nobody said anything about whatever it was, and things moved on, and it was pretty much super uncomfortable, when you stopped and thought about how it felt.

We'd lost and many of us that lived in the city, they were quite hungry. I'm not pointing any fingers. A tribe of greedy goats, that was us. Me, included. I guess a bunch of goats is called a tribe. Because you couldn't get anyone to deliver, or take your order, even if you tried. You'd think, maybe, Hey, business is booming. They're too busy to take my order. I was trying. I was trying to get pizza. I called the first place. And I asked, I asked, Why not? Why wouldn't those guys deliver to us? Because, they say.

"There's a fire in the road," guy says back on the phone.

I was totally surprised.

Earlier, with all the noise in the street a person could tell that there would be a bit of one thing or another. But what do a few cat calls and then a couple of boys wailing for the certain love of their mothers ever make, besides a more or less normal night? Yes, there was a "mood," but what the hell is that? And in response, as the night had begun to earn its name, when they came, the police were more careful than they would be today, in a similar situation; but of course that wasn't something that one could appreciate. I think the police just took three kids. I saw a kid do chin-ups on a powerline over the crowds as from below they counted higher and higher. I saw a canoe and somebody's gorgeous headboard get passed from a house along the road to a great fire in the middle. A few of us were kicking at the fire and sometimes right into the light we kicked. I was poor and this all seemed free; and a name for the night went on, growing, with my mind fixed like that well into most of the night.

Really, what does that night have to do with me, though? What does that memory about

the entire day and a little before have to do with me right now? Well, let me think. There are some days and nights that you live through, that—when you think about them, it's almost like there is a different spirit to each one of them, calling out your name along with theirs, for you to work out an answer to both them and you. One has a lot to do with the other. It is the same with this one—the day and night of the riot. But why think twice over about the burning green sedan, or the guy's story—he was giant, like, so tall that he couldn't help but seem like he was gloating to you, somehow—which, his deal kind of goes into the pros and cons of getting maced for standing in your own yard, that is, his yard—why get into any of that, finally, on a dating website?

Please, let me try.

Real quick, I grew up in a duplex. Nothing special. I lived there for thirteen years. So I got what it looks like from the outside, and on the inside, still. Okay? I have it pretty much mapped out. There's pretty much a model—my stupid old duplex is totally in my head. Okay? I'm trying to tell you something, and I need you to get it. So it's important you get this. The old duplex is in my head. I can show it to you. ...From the top of the staircase, on top of the steps: a memory, or memories, are what they really are, will call out to me. Understand? Information that says, or describes, first of all, what the particular footing looks like to you from up there. If, somehow, you manage to make it into the house and get to the top of the steps. Are you there? Pick up a spot, there; you are welcome. Now I can say 'there' and you know what I mean, right? Do you see it? It's it, occasionally, in the evening. That's where we seem to be, metaphorically, then. A lot of my memories. Okay? Calling my name— isn't it funny to say that? That memories are calling your name. But that's what happens.

When I say that, though, it means that a little piece of history is calling from the top of

the stairs, for me to come back. Here at the top are a few of these random thoughts, I guess. Remember? The head of the staircase. You are almost really there, I figure. I hope this has already been figured out. And when you get up there, to see why did they call out your name? instead of anything that I or maybe others could say is something pleasant, or happy, no. You'll find your work outfit or your pants or whatever you have put on for your day, that's been put together for clothing already all nice and it'll get ripped down off your silly hide again.

Now you are getting taught a good lesson.

What do they say? What have they said? What have they always said would happen? And then what happened? Don't you have any experience with people? Didn't you see it coming? How is any of this surprising to you, in any way? Well, that is what is happening.

There should be no surprise. With whatever's laying around—you'll say to yourself later, did I was I thrashed to tears with actually only the memory of a jean shirt, with brass buttons? Or a piece of a broken out old storm window frame?

Now, take it outside, where it belongs. That is rational. Take a look at that part of the old window. Well, that's what it is. ...And in the end, this is one of those nights. All of the windows were bad, looked sick with pale tongues. I am here to catch myself. Even though I can't really see behind me right now, and it hurts more when I try, I swear to god I will never forget about any of this, and it doesn't matter who I am.

I get looks from girls who look really pretty every now and then, and, sometimes, I can see in one of them the semblance of an older girlfriend that I felt very strongly about, at least at one time; then I might call them up, in a time that they are looking at me, again, from back in the day. Sometimes, it's all that I want to do, is try for the best kind of light. You should maybe want to feel like settling down.

* * *

Hi “mysheeeeeee” :) No. No luck, yet. So I wrote this thing for you? It starts right now :) You said you were interested in what a Doctor's ideas of romance are? Now I've got preconceived notions about all sorts of things, but the idea that one's heart shaped chances with another—the possibility of romance between two people being a fascinating sort of open question at first, to the most significant extent, in my opinion, precisely because the conditions which make love possible even initially between any two of our kind happen so rarely, it seems to me (let alone between more than two) and are never self-announced as such—at least to the average person as through the years both recent and further removed I've been made to gather along with the other lowlifes this is catholic that some of us are openly courted, love signs announced as an exception to the rule that love signs are silent, supine lots of human hearts lit on fire to the rich and powerful—so in other words this is a happy question is one about love's chances, one that a guy can start thinking about in all different sorts of ways, I guess, and it's almost necessarily like that because my heart's question is a most open one—but you've asked and I've decided I'll share with you this confession—the love question I start thinking about for better or worse always the same way and never any other (though I might change my approach some time) but by asking myself whether the hallmark phenomena Lo-fi Optics, Vermillion Evinced is likely to affect in the very near future or is already affecting even either me or the other person, you of the present, in this case—or the you of the near future—all "you" who I'm probably already doting on a little bit, frankly, if the analysis has gotten this far in all this thinking about the possibility of you as lover, in re to the question, is my gut saying something

pretty much super-intelligible right now about how I feel and will probably feel about you?—I think this is a thing both knowable if one should ever like to look into it for themselves and then in addition pretty fucking unreal just then as to most people I've seen who branch out and explore further all there is to look at beyond the basic level of their own gut—head to toe what it feels like to think about you plus me like from the neck down but it's super healthy if neck up also feels like a perfect ten, in so many words, if you like, here meaning your thoughts could be a congruent ten with your feelings also at ten as the world spins in the old way it's presumably always had for chasing round and round its own broken-legged horse of an axis round the embarrassing sun with a crystalline + glinting aquamarine nod to the past here but then more to the point the earth spins out with us on top of it not just in the old way but also in making the most current day as well, today, made explicit in any such reference to its ubiquitous and therefore repulsive vulgar laserbeams, now so boring to the eye of the contemporary everywhere of the First World as to be near classically profane, every one of our star-crossed magics of twenty years ago, immortalized in the same way that we'll hold each other up with little retarded jokes in one another's most busted-up parking lots of need, the dumbest of sentiments inflicted on purpose upon our closest people, smacking them in the littery dark with a ghoulish forever-line of the most black-evil genius, uttered like magic at the exact moment of their nadir, I've seen, for sometimes petty cruelties one has no alternative but to memorize, as a few pennies in change max for bail money configure themselves in a highly personal affront re you in your palm, perse ocean since you don't remember when lapping in record-breaking waves of heat at the parietal wall of history, a fucked alluvium dating from approximately forever ago going from the place of its creation somewhere in the great and godless blind of earth's first turns for to some of it beach itself on the penultimate edge of our half-cut moment like a stone rendering down

smooth against its own material aspect in a tumbler each point in time emerging in the individual out and away from the set of all everything else about which one may speculate or say they know as regards the surroundings, a cavalcade of waveforms, also points I guess, to some people, whose initials I'm guessing are boundlessly large, though material—unless you are an idealist, and please tell me you're not—the unknowable and for now undifferentiated remainder of reality, outside diachronic time, unfractal uninterpolated and numberless irresolute and unhusbandable assemblages of inter-gnarled inchoate probabilities, senseless artifacts of an ape's symbolic invention, sensed only in dumb retrospect in so far as each of these brain farts usually disappears, and does so in what might be the most absurd fashion possible, thoughtforms gone from our kens great apes screeching in pace with each their own emergence; somewhere the world's happy catalogue lengthens, though, witnessing to the unreal: involuntary legs clapping sex because of the best-fit luckout of human plus human combo professionally uncorking itself somehow along with any locally newest moments which along with who knows what else in our universe plays in the unfuckable light of its very own witnessing and knowing but kind of not telling of it—part of which is fathomable in a very real way it feels like to me.

* * *

Hi, Pauline!

I came up with a plot yesterday, which I should like to run through a little.

That's the main, real reason I'm writing.

I'm worried it's too much like something else.

I don't have anything specific in mind as to what that might be.

But, who knows. Maybe you know a book or movie.

It could be just like this.

Medical doctor: of neuropathology.

But, he always wanted to be a writer.

So, he joins a workshop.

To nobody's surprise, he sucks, he's real bad.

But he still loves to write, anyway.

He doesn't have any illusions. He knows he's bad.

What does he want? He's not killing himself.

He's a brain surgeon. Essentially.

Surprising to everyone in workshop, it's how hard he works.

Yes, he's very smart, a neurosurgeon. But still, they say.

But still. He's getting, like, good?

Frankly, they think it's plagiarism.

And, it was.

Story goes, he starts taking his writing to work.

He works at a lab. He really is what he says.

Well, that's kind of a lot for him to be handling...

I mean, the lab, plus writing short stories.

But, whatever. He's got security. Somehow.

Right?

He lets it go.

—Workshop's like, 'Oh, o.k., then.'

They knew.

Doctor's at work. And he gets his new fMRI.

It's the new scanner.

The old one sucked.

They didn't know how bad it sucked till that article was wrote.

Resolution. Interference.

If you want to know?

The new one is kind of awesome.

—But see this? ^^

Experiment with this.

Okay.

I said neuropathology, and that is correct.

Just, this week: he's looking at dead people.

I will be a little bit more clear. Dead and dying people.

fMRI is indicating.

It's indicating about the language center.

It's like, hello. The brain is.

I know when you're gonna die?

And, I know it just before.

Long enough to indicate—

Hey, look.

I'm gonna write something.

Hey, I'm gonna write something a little more.

Q: What is it?

What is the answer to that question?

F'in fMRI, please, just tell me!

Oh.

It's a story, each time. Pretty much certain.

That's bullshit!

That patient just died. So. Well, pull the code!

But is it fiction? is it prose? Okay, well, now that's greedy.

You're gonna have to wait.

And, calm down.

Then, Doctor publishes two collections.

Oh: plus.

All the sudden he's a regular mill.

Not gonna last, though.

But do we get that? Death?

That is, yes, that's the royal 'we'.

Christ.

Well, come on.

That ones one that shoulda been clear.

Well, don't blame me.

Doctor starts reading these, actually.

I mean, instead of just plugging and chugging.

As it were.

He says, Is it that good?

Or, is it like genre.

Oh, they're very good.

And it's all selling either way.

So, that's good too.

He keeps reading. He gets deeper in his appreciation for life.

He's seen tons of people die. It's like what you'd think,
the way it's talked about.

Rattle.

Dementia.

Usually, co-occurring.

But now, he knows.

Kind of cool, kind of not.

Because, think about it.

Yes, he was a famous writer, now.

Plus brain surgeon. Correct.

But he was a thief, kinda.

Plus, still some questions.

Oh, I don't know.

He gets like real sick. Physically.

He's like, God, ha ha ha.

This is funny at this point, right?

In pain upon pain
like thin gills,
in a way,
on the hand
we run down
the side of a book;

book's closed,
but you can still
take inventory again,
feel the paper lying
if you should want to,
and sometimes, you do,
or does the f'in
paper feel me:
no, that's crazy,
that's just I'm in f'in crazy pain.

Dr. tried everything he could to make it.
You know he did. But he didn't make it.
As in, he didn't live. So, but, obviously, right?

Because you're reading this.

I don't know what else to say. So, I hope this is good enough?

No, that's stupid. Guess I will leave you with this:

* * *

An M.D. has worked eight long years, well, this one most, in particular, to eventually become just a disgusting monster. I don't hate him, that's a part of the story—a humongoid in terms of the amounts of work he's doing to a greater or lesser extent, as a neuropathologist. He's done it, he says, he's doing it all in part because of the speedy upticks ("...outtakes," he says by mistake, and it's like, what?) in the progress he's gotten to see, that he gets to see, talking back as in a really young kid he is in pre-, seeing the life and death literally unfolding before his very eyes; in residency, it was the same deal, says he, that there were new miracle-ish things being done for the patients, with respect to each of the field's successes, regarding the staff with the brain cases, anyways, very exciting for him when compared to the other areas—and that (he saw) there was chance for heaps and heaps more progress, too he thought, at least on floor eight, his favorite for one for how exciting it is seeing the brain of another more or less live person; where the surgeon stood v. where the assistant stood was all wrong, back then, and he saw that right away, o.k., and there were no lists anywhere for anything, everyone was just supposed to remember every little thing that they had to do to get the work done right, that is, correctly, procedurally, and stuff got left inside of people's heads that way, things like that; and he's bet the house, this man, as it were or as it was, on the sense that possibly pretty soon, for himself, like, a couple months, lots + lots has got to be happening from here, more so in this field, especially; or, in there w/ the brain stuff, in other words. This'll be good thinking, and shows his intuition about

himself, when put into this light, is it's almost very keen. Although there's a ton more going on in the background, that's the idea, essentially, something to which he's almost married himself to it, too, now, by and by this certain time (if you know what I mean when I say married), basically, with a nod to his devotion = more than what is asked for, whatever time that was at, f'in...

And, that's the manner of the thing.

From the outside, looking in.

Listen, brain imaging, if you like this, this technology is just amazing. Like all our new tech is amazing, the Doctor sometimes thinks to himself, like the fMRI, for example, or, take that example, just take the fMRI; they keep getting better and better, the scans, I mean, he's saying, and not least in part because of this: this sexy sexy sexy niché (neuropathological vector) (fMRI stuff) is (in reality) is it's so f'in huge, now! which as a matter of of course it's going to continue to be positive, it's a great thing! In re medical knowledge, oh my God, sharing our successes at the level of the globe, now, we are, f'ers, and so on, and so on, it's a blessing, really, already on it's own account, is neuromedicine, always has been, and it's not a curse and it's not something to be scared of that some people make it out to be. Now let's go, now and go ahead.

Just I will make a mention of the fact, that one—that the scanners it uses (science, o.k., but, again, Dr. #1 uses them too, like I said) today on a super-daily basis, these particular deals, they are holy cow... at least the one in Toronto, are already, you know if you've already used one—and if you have ever used one, you know they're way: times: way: times: way additionally even crazier than that. Believe me, I really mean that. But you don't have to believe me. It's like I almost don't. So, then the question's got to be so who could ever in their wildest dreams, right, imagine this, if you're this kind of guy, in particular, generally f'in killing it, swimming through a city like T. town is right now, one day, meaning that for example it's raining, or it was a minute

ago, but no problem, hanging out, going to work, changing the world for the better, plus you can assume you're a complete stud no matter what, since you saved three lives yesterday, have never been sued, not even once, and are on the verge of a big-time breakthrough, because he is and so, if that's you? And, I'm like, o.k., would you ever figure, or could you ever figure on where and when this type of M.D., mind you, this is the penultimate of breakthroughs (\pm) that are incoming, f'in what have you, ye olde top practitioner, that's me and that's fine, like I say, a one in a million guy, a 1/1000000 like this, could I, as I'm thinking, could he ever truly have been thinking, although, doesn't everybody have thoughts like this once in a while? about the possibility that he would have to discover today: like, oh my God? and realize, today, in an alternate reality, almost, but it's not—he merely wishes it so, or he will, believe me, but, yes, no, it's in this reality about which we are talking, of course—that his hands are tied in terms of, you know. But, he's gonna die with the best of them, I'd die well sort of if somehow the moral disaster of this tale is notwithstanding of itself; and who knows about that, yet. At the moment of one's death, How could he know about this? He can't, really! He can only pretend to know what it's like, right—until... just because I've seen hundreds of people die if I'm a doctor, it doesn't mean I know what this is. Oh! and though he might say presently that life's a moral dilemma, life is, while you and I are still kind of living it, well o.k., then sure you're gonna feel also under the surface like A.) you're going to hell or B.) you're in it right now actually. Maybe once in a blue moon, if you're atheist, so, if you are totally still living and breathing, which is the assumption, because I'm trying to tell: the question on his mind for today, being, again, riding in car, stud, it's gonna be, let's pretend what it might be. What's the big 'blueprint for the future'? Nah, there's no real blueprint. Now there, let me tell you what's really going to make you happy, kind of instead.