

Going over 65 miles an hour makes my skin crawl so I take the detour that passes my old apartment. I get lost in my dissociations and placebo on shiitake mushrooms. *I hate motor vehicles but they are a hot commodity.* That's my pitch whenever people ask me how I get around town. I feel the need to explain why I bike rather than spit the honest truth about the lack of commas in my bank account. *If I can fake it till I make it, is it even worth making it?* All these thoughts on my bike ride to work. Eight miles to and Eight miles from. Walking in I leave tire marks on the tile my boss religiously makes me clean. Like Sunday service and Wednesday mass. I've gotten the art of cleaning up my mistakes perfected. I wish they would celebrate me for this like when Van Gough cut off his ear. He was mentally unwell and gets praised all I get is weird glances and bills that result with no tips. Today was mid July. *I don't believe in keeping the time because that messes with my internal clock and no one is correct but me in my world.* I only messed up once at work today. I gave the man sweet tea when he asked for water. He looked like he could use a little sweetness. His mouth had forgotten the shape of a smile; he lacked creases around his lips that represent years of joy. After a grueling Five hour shift and 16 miles of pedaling through cracked streets and busted side walks. I made it to my roommate's house. It's their home not mine. I don't feel welcomed anymore. All my art took itself down from the livingroom and patched the hole that the screw left behind. They were not being appreciated and they know their worth. Now they lay dormant, hibernating in the corner of my room. They won't let me put them up because they represent what I was and not who I am.

My room is now separated into four quadrants. Q1 my disgraceful workspaces cluttered with half drank lattes and unfinished portraits of my life in a college ruled notebook. Q2 is my clean laundry shaped into a body pillow on the left side of my bed. I have to sleep on the right but I can't sleep alone. So when it's dark and I talk myself asleep the figure of clothes brings a conflicting comfort. It's the definition of loneliness but at least I stay lonely with myself. Q3 is where I keep my important documents hidden in the cabinet that's deeper than Hermione's bag. I've only opened it once when I shoved everything in it when I moved In. Years of W-2's from jobs I couldn't keep and old pictures of people I refuse to let go. That's the only corner I would let burn in a house fire. Q4 is a step into fashion week. My lamps are set up around my room to emulate cameras flashing. Paparazzi trying to get the best angle of the hot new style of a young writer. They just got invited to the runway after a break out series that rattled the world. The holes in my armpit of my shirt was a statement piece. Not just poverty. *It's always fun to pretend. Is this pretending or manifesting?*

My only tolerable roommate is my son. He sleeps all day and catches cockroaches at night. I think it's him trying to make up for not paying any bills. What he doesn't pay for he makes up with quality time and great conversation.

"Long day at work huh" Trey the cat said.

"You have no Idea! I passed by eight birds and three clouds that looked like they never wanted to see me again."

"You know it's unhealthy to speak to water vapor, they always are so steamy."

I love my talking feline. (He hates being called a cat. He says he remembers the days humans worshiped cats in Egypt, back on his first life. He says he is on his last life but I think he's been on his last life for like three lives. I can't tell what he is hiding.

"Yo today we got to drop off a zip at Raul's before we can go to Zumba class." Alexander huffed as he threw himself over the pile of clothes and onto the right side of his bed.

"Trey can you weigh it and bag it up please? Remember last time Raul gave us a tip so throw in a handful more." Trey never wastes a movement in anything he does. He adjusts the chair and adds the booster so he can reach the paraphernalia properly. He isn't fully comfortable handling cat nip because it takes him back to when frats were cool and he was barely making it by at Grand City U. So he is particular when he does these things. In a single motion he flings his claws out and hits the play button connected to the armchair. *Closserrrrr *huff huff* Commee closserrrrr* (closer by Ne-Yo is his dealing song). After the armchair makes two rotations he has ditched the naked look of just his shiny fur coat and is rocking the perfect triadic color mix in his tie. Red as the base with yellow and blue paint splotches and a top hat with holes poked out for his ears that sit like isosceles triangles. He weighs it, bags it, seals it, and writes a haiku poem all before I finish the latest article by AAC (Animals Against Crime). Trey gives the sign. Two clicks of his tongue and a meow with emphasis on the E. This just is our lingo. Two clicks with a mEEow just means we good to go. I grab my board and Trey laces up his rollerblades and I send Martin the falcon to let Raul know we're in route. Usually when we leave the house I do the same routine. I count every crack in the cement on our porch and say goodbye to the rose bush because romantic flowers should have someone romanticizing them. It just makes sense and soothes one of the many "disorders" in my head. *My attention was just locked on that article. AAC sounds like they are a great organization but I know they are a front. I've seen 3 cats cut in half just this week on my cycles to work. I always stop and dig a proper grave and perform a funeral. I always cry at the eulogy. This does explain my excessive tardiness this week. At every site I always decorate the tomb just to brighten a terrible tragedy. Every tomb is topped with wild flowers and pigeon feathers. I always find an abundance of pigeon feathers around the "crime scene". All this gruesome crime and not one mention of it in the AAC article.*

Chapter 2

I left Xan's room in the smaller door directly to the right of his door. Xan made me a special door because we kinda share a room. I am such a good friend for letting him use my sleeping space. After three heel taps on the middle wheel my roller blades shift to hover blades. I just do this inside the house so I don't mess up the checkered pattern in the carpet left by Xan with the vacuum. He is a weird fella. In my whole existence I've never met a human that thinks so much like a feline. I toss him the package and he catches it with pure instincts. He gets like this when he is experiencing internal monologue. I usually let him think because most of the time his thoughts are correct. On the concrete I tapped back to wheels and Xan hopped on his board. Raul lived not too far if we cut through the park. It's about 4pm now so the squirrels shouldn't be too obnoxious. It was a casual ride past the oak trees, over the bridge (the troll was off duty) around the pond when I started to really catch speed. My whole body emulates the wind. I shift my fur and my tail into an aerodynamic black bolt. I got up to what felt like light speed. Fifty feet true north a white and brown blob laid in the middle of the sidewalk obstructing the path. I turned my blades sideways and the cement ate my wheels bottoms flat. The brown and white blob was daisy. Well the lower half of Daisy. She lived under the bridge with the troll.

They had a weird dynamic. I know she has three more lives but she has only been in this one for five years.

“TREYYYY pigeons from above” yelled Xan. I couldn’t move. *Usually death didn't affect me but since I've been living with Alexander he has been teaching me Buddhist ideals.* I could sense the group of pigeons nose diving at me. *Am I their next target? Was it the pigeons who have been slaughtering the cats in the neighborhood?*

“Trey side B, down B, Back dash till we meet.” Alexander commanded. My body went into react mode. Just like SSB I side dashed through a hoard of swooping pigeons most of them tried to trample me but I switched my wheels to hoover blades and burned the pigeons going for an aerial attack. I flipped and pranced till I cooled down in Xan’s shadow. (Usually I would take on the whole flock but Xan was already in pursuit with his board cocked back as a mace). In two steps Xan’s trucks made contact with the rabbid pigeons. No blood was shed, only divots in the pigeons left over from impact. The injured ones flew away and the rest of the hoard set targets on Xan. He had a second to breathe and he took the valkyrie position. His ankles on a swivel he jumped into a double axel on cement!! Holding the tail tires of his board the nose sent gray blurs fifty feet away. He landed with his feet in dance position A. With his feet parallel to each other and each heel pointing the opposite directions east and west. The Pigeons that that were hit continued to fly away. They all waited hovering in the air across the pond above the treeline. I know these animals are not acting naturally. Pigeons never wait in the sky and hover. They take up every park bench and don’t say a word to ya! Especially on a sunny day like this one. After the third wave of pigeons all of the winged army stared from across the pond. Xans board had dents and wood chipped at the nose. He was surrounded by shrapnel. It looked like the aftermath of war.

“They are calibrating you don’t have seconds to waist” a voice that sounded like sandpaper on wood but had depth like gumbo said.

An orange tabby with a belly larger than conceivable from a 3ft tall tabby. He had a white belly and his whiskers curled at the end. A utility belt held up a pair of denim starched jeans that had a disk in the back pocket perfect for a fancy feast.

Next:

Xan fights off the pigeons and starts to get overwhelmed. A tabby cat gets their attention and they go through the drainage pipes underneath the train tracks. They enter the cat realm and chapter 2 starts