

Who I Am

First off—nothing happens to me. And when it does, it's not something fun or big, it's always little hurtful things that build up. But that don't matter; it's about what you do with what life throws at you than the actual thing itself. Two people can win the billion dollar lottery and react completely different with it, two people can become orphans at ten and react completely different. It's you that matters not the shit around you. That's me, controlling myself through the shitstorm. I get punched and I get back up. Depending on the situation, I either punch 'em back or move on. That's called adaptability. How do I survive friends abandoning me over and over again and family not accepting me? By fucking morphing to the situation. Just because you can beat paper with scissors doesn't mean it'll work for the rock. Adaptability, people, adaptability.

I'm a rambler. Got no shame nor pride about it, but that's kinda the feeling with lots of traits about yourself, right? But don't let that stop you from being you. Sure, maybe I pushed those friends away because I refused to be what they wanted me to be. Now, I know I just gave a whole spiel about adaptability, but that was about reacting to shit in life, not about caving to the masses about who I want to be. How else am I supposed to live? If I gotta go through life being hurt and alone, I'm gonna at least do it by being proud of myself. And since no one seems wanting to be proud of me, guess I'll have to do it myself. I'm proud of who I am. Making it to MIT on a scholarship with an orphan title and a drunk aunt on the couch as I spent countless nights snorting Adderall to make valedictorian. If my dealer ever blabbed, I'd be discredited, but I got the street smarts just as well as the book smarts. I did my research, found the most reliable, unnoticeable one in Chicago. I also managed my intake to avoid addiction, like a damn diet a middle-aged suburban mom does to make herself feel pretty again after three kids. If I'm gonna get better than everyone else at MIT, I gotta cheat, but I gotta do it the right way. Ain't no point

breaking the rules if you're gonna get caught. Besides, they got bigger things to worry about than drugs or selling essays on the web.

Losing parents simultaneously frees and chains you. Because I'm forever stuck with the title orphan, and that results in people often responding with pity, which I don't need. But it also forces you to trek out in life on your own; I'll never have a sweet mom letting me stay with her after a major breakup or comforting me after a bad grade on a test. The aunt doesn't count, she drunkenly confuses me for her sister more often than not and insults me because I look too feminine to be a man to her. Well, that's because she drinks more beer than anything else, it's made her grow hair on her chin. She taught me one thing at least. Don't trust anyone, because they'll just disappoint you, betray you.

I thought if I could just get out of town, away from the neighborhood where I had no friends, I'd find the people I was meant to be with. But guess what, turns out people are the same, no matter where you are geographically. People who appear nice and supportive at first, but then I make one—*one*—mistake and suddenly I'm back to where I was before: on the floor after a punch, figuratively speaking of course. But at this point, I'd rather take the actual punch than the choking, soul-sucking feeling of an anxiety attack because I messed up again.

And guess what's the funniest, most fucked up part? Or perhaps it's the best part. I'm not giving up. How can I? When I have no one else to fall back on (no childhood friends that I meet up with during spring break or parents or even a pet) all I can do is go forward, looking for the ones that'll be what's actually worth living for. Awards and degrees and money are nice, but that shit's about quantity over quality. I want quality over quantity. Eventually. Right now I'm focusing on

the quantity, I guess, with good grades and a boring-ass degree so I can get a boring-ass but well-paying job anywhere I want. But that's just so I can go out there and find the quality, the thing that'll make buying a boat fun instead of just pretentious. The one that will fill the emptiness inside me that I've felt since before I was born. Did I not grow completely in my mother's womb? Is there a part missing in me that everyone else has and that's what's been wrong with me my whole life? Not sure I can ever know, it's not like there's doctors for the soul. And I don't count priests thank you very much.

I wasn't born exceptional. For sure nobody ever thought I was or treated me as such, with that aunt and friends that ghost me just because I'm a little weird. What the fuck's that about, anyway? But, whatever, since no one cares about me being exceptional, I thought I could just make myself so. It's not like it's something you're born with. Except maybe Einstein. All I know is, I got myself here and that means I can get myself somewhere else. To a place with someone who loves me for me and friends that call each other "brother". I always wanted a brother, someone to share the burden of the name orphan. Hopefully he's out there. Hopefully he won't abandon me like everyone else seems to love doing.