

The Sensationalist: #2

9/21/22

"Paracelsus was mid"



This Edition Includes:

2: Footprints in the Sand (The Man and Jesus)

3: Silent Noise

4-5: On the Merits of Intentional Acts

6: The Flower

7: Careless Whisper

8: Desire/Burning Desire

9-10: O.A.R. Project Update,

10: Music of the #2: Apple Cider Song (Working Name)

10: Editor Recommends: Twitter Account

Footprints in the Sand (The Man and Jesus)

Matteo B.

A guy is walking on the beach. Beside him is Jesus.

"Jesus?"

"Yes my son,"

"Is my wife going to come back?"

"Time will tell, son, the best we can do is pray and if you do it hard enough god will answer,"

~

Day 2: Walking on the beach again.

"Jesus I've been praying, nothing's working,"

"Pray harder, in time she'll return. Have faith my good son,"

"Of course, thank you Jesus,"

~

Day 3:

"Jesus I've been praying and still nothing. What do I do?"

"Oh you didn't see on the news? She was murdered by that serial rapist. Your wife's gone."

Silent Noise

Ben W.



On the Merits of Intentional Acts

Henry Levitt, July 22nd 2022

I come to you this morning sipping the remnants of my rapidly cooling tea in a well-worn mug. Sitting beside the ceramic monolith lives my cast iron pot (or rather, steeping-pot) still warm to the touch yet empty of its amber nectar.

This tea was steeped using loose leaves of a carefully concocted blend I enjoy drinking most mornings.

~

As a liter of water boils violently in that electric kettle (that happens to glow a gaudy electric blue as if it must light up to prove its modernity) I carefully unzip and unravel these plastic sachets of tea--each vastly different from the last despite their common identification as black tea.

~

Though I am now boring even myself with these mundane descriptions of my tea steeping expedition, (notice this word implies an adventurousness which is far from reality) I will make my point in the reasoning of bringing this anecdote to your attention.

Each morning I choose to drink tea, I perform a moderately more complex and lengthy process compared to simply dropping a paper sack of tea dust into hot water--the commonplace understanding of "making tea". I do this not only because the better tasting tea is a morning boon, but also because the intentional act of curating a perfect teapot blend is enjoyable by itself and raises the pinnacle of my total tea tasting titillation. The extra time spent in the steeping process forces me to await the drinking with even more excitement. Furthermore, by putting in more energy to brew tea to the best of my abilities, I derive a special satisfaction by knowing that my efforts contributed to an elevated form of a familiar beverage. And within this, I derive a certain self reward of contentment from my actions and therefore the act of preparing tea comes to hold more meaning than simply the taste or caffeine content of the tea itself.

What I am attempting to demonstrate through my tea-brewing-diatribes is that intentional actions bring pleasure by themselves and assign an elevated importance to mundane tasks. Intentionally attempting to perform an act "the best way", in the most favorable conditions, or the perfect way or the right way (as defined by you) yields a contentment unmatched by the brainless method that can be oft employed in the intentional act's stead.

For example, some men use straight razors instead of electric or safety razors even though these tools are readily available. Others find satisfaction in applying 3 coats of lacquer to a bookshelf when two or one would have sufficed. Many chefs choose to forgo a shortcut method when preparing meals even when their patrons would be hard-pressed to taste a difference. Many people put dedicated effort into choosing and dressing in the day's outfit when those they will be interacting with do not care or don't even notice the clothes in question. These examples can go on infinitely and I'm sure you can find at least a few examples in your daily life.

What can be observed through most of these intentional acts is that the increased energy and thoughtfulness elevates a necessary or purely utilitarian activity into something more resemblant of an art form, something one can take pride in. Through this aforementioned intentionality, it becomes easier to obscure the abject pointlessness of existence and in turn each Sisyphean action we perform. Therefore, we can begin to find an unique meaning in performing an activity correctly or in the best way we can. Through this, we obtain a greater contentment with ourselves and possibly life, if even for a brief and fleeting moment.

Of course intentionality has its merits if you do not believe in the objective pointlessness of the universe, too. In fact, there is even more reason to perform one's super naturally assigned duties with intent and effort.

Prayer is an excellent example of this, as prayer is more beneficial to the devotee (and their God) if it is performed with energy instead of perfunctory effort.

I do not want to be misunderstood as preaching that all acts one performs ought to be strictly intentional. Many of our duties do deserve perfunctory effort or that intentional effort devoted to some action will disadvantage us in a far greater manner than the previously mentioned advantages will generate. For example, if one's pure intention in a morning cup of coffee is the quick hit of caffeine, then of course the effort of brewing a perfect cup is moot. Especially when the flavor is not enjoyed in the first place. The same goes for an employee brushing his teeth in the morning when said employee already anticipates being late for his boss's arbitrary arrival ordinance.

This is not to say, however, that not every action can be performed intentionally. If one identifies the goal of an action, personal definition of a good job, best effort, etc of an act and attempts to achieve this, the action becomes intentional. This increase after it is not necessary to achieve intentionality, however, and is more of a "shortcut" or cognitive trick I use to create intentionality. Truthfully, all that needs to be done is to increase one's vigilance and presence of mind in performing an action (what many in academia like to call mindfulness, though this word repulses me), however you may find this more difficult to achieve or containing a lesser benefit than the former method.

Borrowing a metaphor from Camus, it might seem asinine for Sisyphus to contribute increased effort or desire for perfection in rolling a boulder up a hill only for it to rush to the bottom before reaching its peak. However, in Sisyphus's confined, absurd, pointless, and seemingly deeply depressive universe, intentionality in his singular duty may be his only way to find meaning (or at least temporarily forget that meaning is a concept). By using focused effort in pushing the boulder, The Condemned Man may at least find contentment in his own abilities and perfect rock rolling form.

In a world where technology and fast pace expectations add pressure to perform actions efficiently, perfunctorily, and overall brainlessly, it becomes even more inherent that we strive to act intentionally in order to retrieve a semblance of meaning and satisfaction in one's self. Whether this means cooking your own food, taking better notes in class, making an increased effort to listen to others, recycling all your plastic bottles, etc, there can be merit found in any intentional act. If there are few words I would like to leave you with above all else it's this: if you want to do something, do it intentionally. And if you are overwhelmed with apathy, choose one act and do it right.

The Flower

Henry Levitt

*Flower flower burning bright,
Billowing smoke in the night,
Which wayward lattice of the tree
Thought it wise to discover thee?*

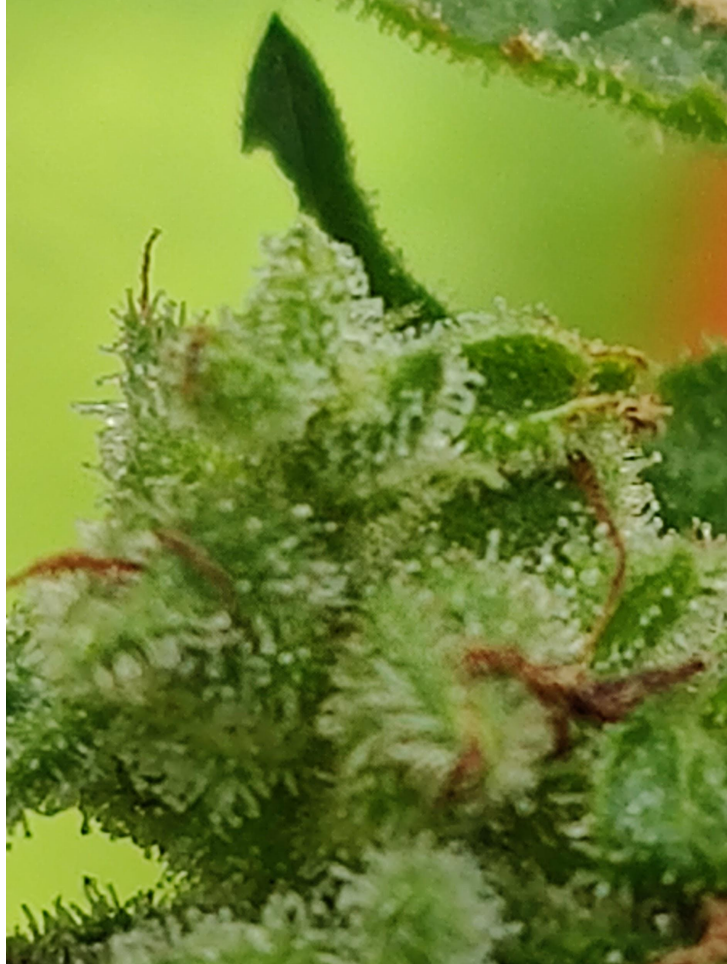
*Whence the crystals dance like rain?
Owing to the ruler's bane,
From which vivid jungle feather?
And which storms the threads could
weather--*

*From which garden emerged thy hands?
Seven fingers firmly banned,
Now a blossom licked by flame,
What my pleasure? Gone my pain!*

*What the goblet? What the wine?
Wherefore art thou deemed divine?
When thine odor reeks with fright,
Where's my pleasure, and thine plight?*

*Yet being under lock and key,
You somehow learned to set us free--
Did our maker grin and praise
That little flower set ablaze?*

*Flower flower burning bright,
Billowing smoke in the night,
Which wayward lattice of the tree
Thought it wise to discover thee?*



Careless Whisper

Bekah Johnson

Doo do do do

Doo do do do

Doo do do do

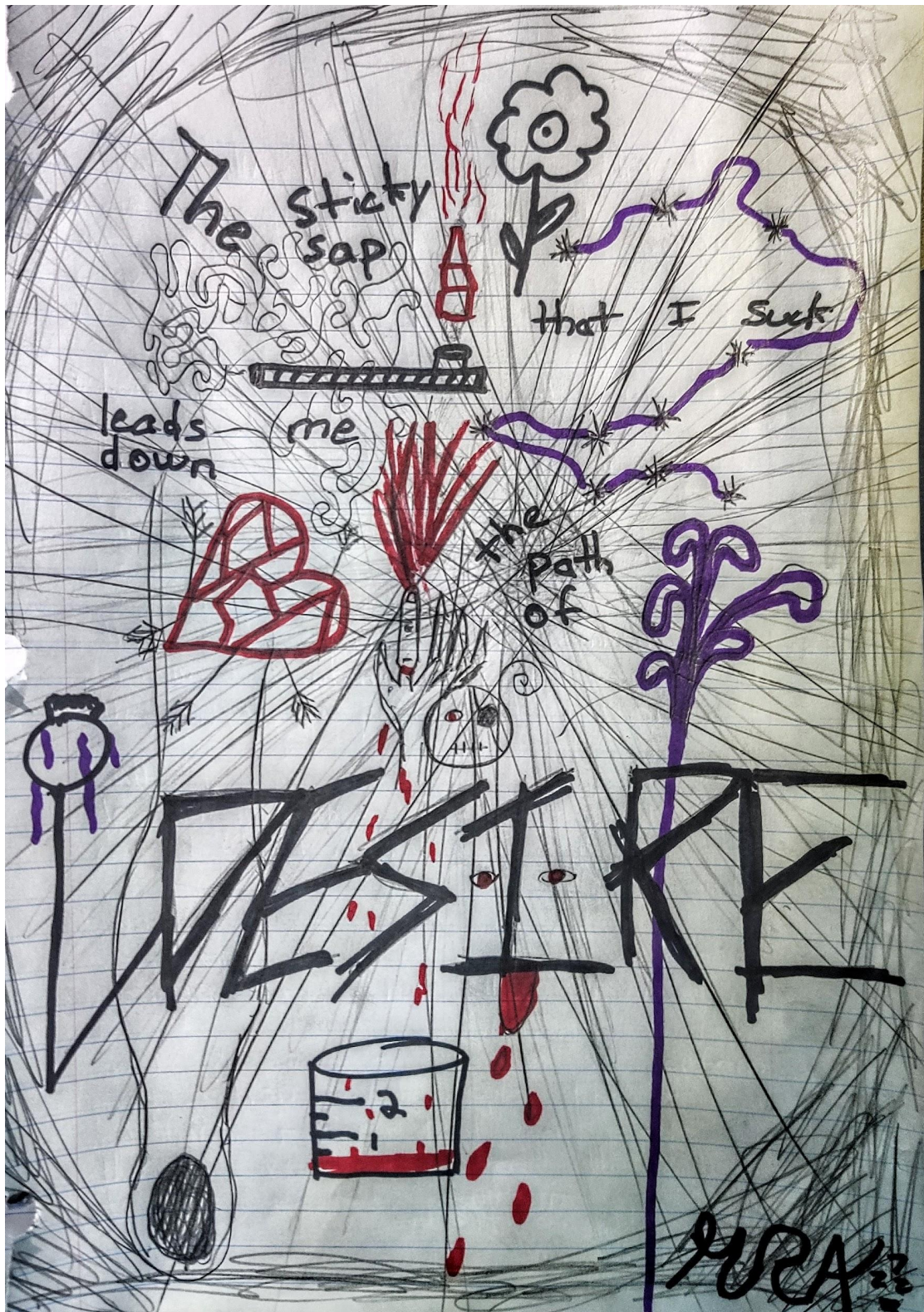
Doo do do do

Do do do do dooooo

Do do do do **do do do do**

Desire

Henry Levitt



Burning Desire

The O.A.R. Project Update,

On Wednesday 9/21/22 I broke ground at the site and constructed two rough, raised beds. Last week I ordered a pound of daikon radish seeds (which is way more than I need) that have been specifically bred as a cover crop. While digging at the site I had an encounter with a certain Mike F. who was skeptical of the project (and its legality) at first but quickly offered his help as he is a gardener himself. Mike lives in the apartments behind the lot. Because the UGarden shovel I borrowed broke (causing the work to slow significantly for an hour or so), he offered his shovel which happens to be an absolute beast of a digging apparatus. Thanks Mike! The site used to be a veritable bamboo forest so there are significant roots within the area. Below are some images of the first day of digging. I plan to go back on Friday and build the third bed as well as plant some seeds.





Music of the #2: Transience

Henry Levitt

This week, I recommend you check out Pakistani Nationalist Twitter account [@abbas_al_kabir](https://twitter.com/abbas_al_kabir).

The content is top-notch and gives a view into the exciting life of a patriotic Pakistani citizen.

This has been the Sensationallist: #2

"Elon Musk still hasn't settled my Splitwise"