

Nathan Hallam

Eason

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Personal Narrative Draft 1.1

Life meant nothing to me. Remembering my past events now give me no change in emotion, nothing that makes me particularly happy or sad. I simply drifted through life like a leaf in a stream, going with what I needed to do without the drive to do so. I was and still am the type of person to watch as the world goes by, not bothering to make my world move in any significant matter. It wasn't until my life was on the edge of continuation and an abrupt halt that I realised how pathetic my life was, how little experience I had in the greater scheme of reality. The vague memory of the incident still haunts me at times, with the few notes I took to cope with the stress reminding me of the finer details. Sitting here now I only think of how stupid I was at the time, not that anything major has changed.

Snow had fallen the night prior and school was delayed, but even so I had a lack of sleep. My dog had woken me up numerous times throughout the night adding to my already sluggish morning routine. As usual I am greeted by a cheerfully loud tune from my phone alarm telling me to start my day, at a wonderful 6:00 AM. I went through my usual motion of checking the time to make sure my alarm went off correctly, looking at any notifications on my phone, and checking the weather. I saw that school had been delayed for 2 hours, so I slept for another hour before deciding to be slightly more motivated. When I woke up at 7 I continued my morning routine of breakfast, and checking my daily tarot card. Today I had The Tower. Sudden upheaval,

pride, disaster. This was the first of multiple signs throughout my morning attempting to warn me. But due to a lack in synchronicity with the cards and my life in days prior I thought nothing of it, my first mistake. My breakfast, a premade breakfast sandwich, and an Essentials powdered breakfast smoothing was my usual generic breakfast due to my lack of time to actually cook for myself, but I did have 3 snickers bars to spice things up a bit. With over an hour left to spare before needing to get ready to leave, I decided to kill said time by playing Dying Light. The title of the game could be seen as my second sign of distress.

Around 15 minutes before I needed to leave I began to prepare for the cold. My loadout consisted of a heavy, multilayered jacket that made me feel like an overweight penguin, gloves thinner than paper, and a backpack full of books heavier than me squared, and my guitar. With everything I needed on my person I began my trek downstairs, waddling as a penguin does. My mother was in the kitchen making coffee as she usually did. We greeted one another and she asked if school was delayed, only after hearing my reply exclaiming her disapproval in the district's choice of keeping school open that day. Unbeknownst to me, she was worried. She had dreams the night prior about my car lacking in all wheel drive and studded tires. She simply warned me to drive safe as she usually did, however due to the monotony I less than cared for the meaning of her words. I simply walked out the door after saying goodbye and entered my car. I put my bags in the back seat, and rolled into the driver's seat. As I shuffled myself into a comfortable position the cold leather seating began to sap the heat from my jeans making my legs cold, I didn't mind. I poked the side of the driving shaft trying to find the ignition port, and when I did the ignited the engine. Between its old age and the cold it took a moment for the engine to catch light, but once it did I cranked up the heat and connected my phone to the

bluetooth to play my morning music. I started my day, everyday, with the newest songs first and began my 10 minute journey to school. We lived on a private road, and it was barely plowed. My old Taurus skated across the road as if it were the rink, something I noted at the time but put no meaning behind, my third sign. Once I got onto the main road I saw that the plow job was not much better. The yellow line was barely visible with only around 3 feet of visible blacktop on either side of the line, while the very edge of the road was still covered in at least half an inch of snow. The town thought it would help to add a small pinch of sand to the road along with the salt, but now we had a nice road slushy to drive through. With this in mind I kept the left side wheels practically on the yellow line to keep some sort of traction and arrogantly went the speed limit. I was only around 2 minutes off my road, around 3 or 4 minutes into my trip to school when the song Error began to play, my sixth sign.

It was only a split moment when things went from fine and dandy to a slide show. People always said you would see your life flash before your eyes when you were about to lose your life, but all I saw was the imminent motor vehicle vs tree accident about to occur. I had hit a patch of ice on a relatively sharp turn for 40 miles per hour and could no longer turn the vehicle. With nothing but my own body under my control I simply sat and watched as I went straight for mother nature's greatest stopping device. I remember holding the wheel left, my eyes bugged as I watched the tree slowly inch forward. The sound of the crunching snow cascaded the music of my errors, and only one thought crossed my mind.

“Am I going to die?” This thought lingered in my head in that quick moment, and a second before impact I gave my life to fate. I closed my eyes, my body frozen stiff. I heard the crunching of metal, the abrupt stop of the music, the tires drift in the snow, the squeaking of the

suspension as the car came to a halt. I ripped my eyes open. The tree was gone, what remained was my hood blocking the windshield, and a mysterious vapor coming out of the vent. With my adrenaline in maximum overdrive my animalistic survival instincts began to kick in. My first thoughts were of a caveman questioning the vapor coming out of the vent and the hasty conclusion that it was dangerous. Due to this I tried ripping the key out of the ignition. Jammed. I wanted my lanyard attached to the key but my fear of the blue fog was greater, I stumbled out of my car with blurry vision. I quickly checked my body for injury and to my surprise I had a lack of any. I scanned the area to see that I had caused no one else any injury, and all I heard was complete silence. Shortly after the woman from the car behind me at the time came to ensure my safety, to which I replied in a broken fumbly speech to call 911 while I informed my mother. I stumbled back over to my car and located my phone which was still in the tiny slot underneath the radio where I usually put it. I unlocked my phone and my brain at a cool negative two thousand percent capacity could not locate the phone app to call my mom. I panicked, but eventually found my mother's contact and began to question how I would explain the situation to my mother without making her worry too much. So I said what any responsible person would say.

“Hey ma, I got into a car accident.” She asked if I was okay while I tried to act calm and collected, but began to panic as I did not understand why I could not see anything clearly, only to slap my face and realize my glasses were no longer present. I fell back into my car to see them neatly placed on the dashboard, as if I had placed them there myself. Still on the phone with my mom I try to explain where I am with no recollection of how anything worked.

She eventually arrived after the usual emergency vehicles. But those few minutes of just waiting on the side of the road were probably more frightening to me than the accident myself. It was then that I realized how fragile life was, and how insignificant mine was. I felt like a fish in a bowl as people drove by churning their necks to see the events, nearly hitting the people trying to direct them safely in the bitter cold. My emotions began to be more apparent. The sadness of losing my car, the sense of being a bird with its wings taken from it. The sense of anger, at myself and the world, for being arrogant and stupid as teenagers are. The sense of disappointment that I couldn't have just died in that moment, sparing me the pain of loss. When my mother arrived I realised that I should be grateful to be in one solid piece. The look on my mother's face was that of intense worry, much like that of a dog when you are crying alone. I began to change my way of thinking then, the way I viewed myself, my life, and the lives of others.

Life was more than yourself, but the people who care about you and in return care about. Before the accident I only cared for my life and the translucent hope that something unrealistic would just happen to make my life better and more interesting. Afterwards I realised I had to do it myself, that sitting around would not get anything done, and that death would not fix the problem for me. It is through life that we learn and grow, and death is simply the end of all that. It is true that I was learning, in some respect, but I deemed it boring and rather useless for my current self. Now I realise the importance of the things I do, and perhaps that is because I have moved on from high school, but I would not be working the way I am now if I had not realised that I only have one shot at it. I now look back at my past and see the effort I did put in, the things out of control that happened to me and see learning experiences. All things that happen, good or bad are necessary for our own growth. It's just a matter of pushing through it and

reflecting on what happened in a positive light. Everything has a purpose, for my past self I simply refused to accept it due to its monotonous tedium and similarity to other people in the world. Now I know I am unique, despite doing the same things as others I know that I am special in my own right. I am special because I believe I am, I value my life. I work hard now to ensure I can live the life I want to later, something I lived by but lost the meaning of as time went on. The accident was an eye opener for me, a reminder of what I do and why I do it, and it's not entirely for me. Everyone must acknowledge that their life is not just theirs, but instead partly the peoples who supported you into becoming who you are in the present, and who you will become in the future. So even if it seems meaningless, find a way to make it meaningful for yourself and others so that we can all enjoy our one life.