

I am the **period** at the *end* of this paragraph.

B Y B E N G R E E N M A N

Look yeah I keep to myself that's just the way it is maybe I'm shy maybe I'm aloof maybe I'm both shut up who cares what business is it of yours anyway did I ask you no I did not sometimes people talk about punctuation all together they say comma semicolon period like we're all the same but I mean come on I'm not a comma commas are whores I know that maybe you think they are as controlled and reserved as I am because this paragraph has thus far created that false impression but if you want to see how easy it is to get a comma to give it up just just bang on a tambourine, or whistle, and a comma will start shaking its ass and saying your name all sweet-like, disgusting really, why can't a comma be more like me, stronger, with more self-respect, even hyphens are whore-like, jumping willy-nilly into any stream of words, and apostrophes, well, don't get me started on 'em, in fact, I can't think of a single piece of punctuation that's as dignified as I am! Can you?

I'm guessing that you've been through them all in your head: brackets, interrobangs (that's the question mark and exclamation point shoved together like they're doing it), even parentheses, ecch they all make me sick to my stomach, and I know that by now the pressure has built to an almost unbearable level—I know because it's always that way, every time—and that you just want me to appear so badly that you can almost taste it, that you're shaking physically, that you think of me as the money shot of punctuation, and, well, you're right: all these other marks are pretenders to the throne and yeah when I want to make an appearance I'll do it on my own terms, gloriously, and you may think you know it's coming but you'll still be awestruck so brace yourself if you want or tell yourself you're ready but you're not ready **I'll take your fucking breath away.**