

Darning the Days

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Abstract—It's Tuesday night and I have decided that it is Tuesday night.

Index Terms—cold coffee, sweat, back acne, shoulder acne, chest acne

CURLS

My hair is getting longer. I'm a disheveled reflection: locks of chaos behind a dirty mirror. Flippant strands are tempered by fragile fingers, carefully combing back dark brown sonnets as they surrender to soap and water.

I DON'T PLAN ON KEEPING THIS BUT MAYBE I WILL

"This is pretty miserable, ain't it?" The farmer gestured to the field behind him. "Nothin' grows 'cept them damned puff pastry thangs." Just then, the Pillsbury Doughboy himself materialized and sucker punched the farmer, flooring him.

PLEAD, PLEAD

Quarter past, the bells rang. Dry-erase the night, scholar. You have sticky notes all over your wall. Maybe this is the part of my life where I'm supposed to feel alone in the worst ways; I thought that was behind me. I feel naive. Mom, I think I need to find someone to talk to. Well, we *do* have health insurance. I spent hours counting to eleven. Nine, then ten, then... then... nine then ten then... then ten then... then... quick, exhale. Close your eyes. Slowly, scholar, slowly.

GONE SO SOON

This could be fun. Pretend to fall in love and forget the rest. Maybe all I need is a daydream or two. Maybe that's all I can handle.

JUST NATURE

I'll just float here and think. I'm sick of all of this sunlight. I'm writing Home: overnight ship me some melancholy please. All of my windows face west. Each and every evening I watch the Sun die. I have to. All of my hopes face east. Each and every morning I wait for a sunrise. I'm losing my patience. I will wait, though. I have to.

COUCH SLEEPING

Contorted, lethargic limbs lean on fake leather. One small blanket, and an elbow pillow. Ankles and pale feet hang over armrests. The TV was on. Thank you for turning it off. I'm skating on 4:00 AM's thin slumber. Soft, sticky breaths and warm skin. I'm perfectly caught here, until the blinds surrender to the daylight.

LITTLE SCRAPS OF PAPER THOUGHTS

I am pulling out little pieces of torn paper from my back pocket. Little notes and smiley faces and grocery lists and ideas. On one: "oatmeal, eggs, skim milk" on another: "this too shall pass; Persian" and another: "how to realize you aren't doing good and how to begin taking actions to become better." I'm really in a spot right now, friends. I am feeling so isolated and lonely and disoriented and lost in this heat; the sand is so abrasive and the air is devilishly unforgiving. I am here, though, and trying to make things work. I feel bad about setting imaginary finish lines for myself. "If I can just get to the end of this week..." Is that any way to live? Though, it can't be worse than pretending that I'm doing fine when I'm not. A little bit of fighting here, a little bit of fighting there. This is just growing pains. Keep your head up Greg.

ACKNOWLEDGING DISCONTENT

Today was candle wax and crystal facets of miserable. Sweet, burning, glimmering and deceptive. I don't know which emotion to trust anymore. Even the moments of bliss, in their refractive bliss, blind me and bind me to the fierce feeling of displacement. I don't know how I am.

I'M SORRY I ACCIDENTALLY LOVED YOU

Tick-tack-toe limbs get tangled on a lumpy mattress. Every night is something better and something worse. Listen, if I told you I almost cried over nothing, would you believe me? What's nothing, though... There's nothing there! It's just air, Greg. Just air. My tongue is burnt. Why do you feel so far away from me now? I am almost disappointed in myself, for manufacturing love. These kind of feelings cost hours, days, weeks. I'm rich with infatuation. What's it worth, though? Nothing. Infatuation is just inflation if there is no buyer. Supply without demand. It's simple dollars and cents.

JUST IF I

I don't know what I get so upset for. Well... I do... but part of me things that sometimes I overreact to situations because I want to write something moving or dramatic. It's like turning a simple pencil sketch into a gigantic watercolor painting. Maybe that's what expression is, though. I can't just go around doubting my feelings at a time like this. If I feel it I write it. That's that. It might only be a fleeting thought, but it's enough. I'm just a kid with a butterfly net, running around catching these tricky little creatures, looking at them for a bit, and then letting them go.

MY TRASHCAN IS FULL OF GRANOLA BAR WRAPPERS AND MY DREAMS ARE STRANGE

Tin roof hammer nails, seeds in a package. Don't tell anyone. Vaporized by electromagnetic energy. My mom carried me to bed like she used to. Running around; Lawrence, that one shirt, on a bike, I collapsed and asked for help. Overwhelmed, mud in hands, squishing, injection, real pain. Huge demon, arm break, evolution, avatar, death, no hope, plans. Reoccurring, medical room.

BIKE THOUGHTS

I started thinking about the current state of my life while I biked to campus today, in an effort to escape the monotony of my apartment. I became concerned that my spirit is being crushed slowly, quietly, without my knowing. I mean, I can't help but think that this is how every eroded person suffers, until there isn't even room left for such a dismal indulgence. I don't think I am meant to be instantaneously ruined. There has been no *impulse* or *singular event* that, in a few brief moments, has managed to demolish my spirit, though I can think of a few situations where that *could* happen. No, if I am to fall it will be slowly. I guess that I just think that here, now... I feel more like I'm *surviving* instead of *thriving*. I'm fortunate, I think, that I know the difference. Thank goodness for that, because if I wasn't privy to these differences I would simply lead a life of blind dread, limping along, dripping, like syrup from a bottle. I was trying to think back to how I felt in Rochester when I first arrived. Was I experiencing these same things? Time are certainly different now, so it would be difficult to compare... Anyways. What's to be done? I need to figure out how to make this place feel like home. I'm transitioning from miserably sad to hysterically sad, which is nice. I don't feel like I'm faking it anymore. I don't like it here and that's that. (Well... *here* is such a funny thing. It can certainly be more than just a place. I'm not sure what I mean when I say *here*. I still enjoy what I'm studying and the program I'm in but everything feels so tainted because of the space and the whole situation. If things were "normal" I'm not sure if my feelings would change. Hopefully I'll get the chance to figure this out, if things ever return to how they once were.) It's tough work, pretending. But now that I'm through with that I can start to work on how to feel welcome. I need to be honest. I don't want to lose myself to this mess.

CLEAN FEELING

I washed my face this morning. I'm just getting warmed up here, ya know? I turned on the shower and there's a fizz and a hiss and this morning, I went gently into the cold water. I love feeling my mind suffer this brief physical panic. What does that make me? Every fiber is screaming but I'm smiling, letting ice melt along my back and over my shoulders and down my legs. It is so consuming. The kitchen is clean and my gait is careful, quiet, and strong in the morning's light.

ANOTHER SELF-CONFRONTATIONAL BIKE RIDE

On my bike ride to campus I had another "Hey Greg, you should really take some concrete actions to resolve your deteriorating mental state" conversation. I think I finally accepted

that this isn't just another "funk" or "thing that will just go away by itself." I'm really into it this time, I'm afraid. It's a damn shame, really, how miserable it is. I keep asking myself that really terrifying question "Is my mental health really worth this?" How can it *not* be, right? I mean, I moved all the way across the country to do this. It *has* to work out, right? This is what I *wanted*, what I *want*. Everything is just so... bleak. I can feel myself unraveling. Maybe I just don't know how to take care of myself. I always thought I had that under control. This might just be a caliber above what I'm used to. I just don't know. My brain is always spinning and I never feel at peace. My OCD is getting worse by the day, I'm pretty sure I'm developing other mental issues, I don't feel like myself, I'm not eating enough, I'm not drinking enough water, I've been getting more headaches than usual... It's just kind of a mess, really. Well, I'll figure something out I guess. I *have* to. Right?

IT'S FRIDAY MORNING AND I HAD PANCAKES

This morning has been pleasant. I dreamt about Bessel functions, the bedroom light that woke me up was not as blinding as it usually is, and I feel more focused than I did before. This is suspicious. See the strange thing about this is that I feel *guilty* about these moments of peace. Like, maybe I've just imagined all of the bad things, or that I was just overreacting. Do I really deserve this? A few minutes of clarity while I'm flipping pancakes? Yes, perhaps I do.

SOME SINUSOIDAL WISDOM

Consider nature. I exist in space and time. Where do my experiences and my emotions exist? Regardless... I am a superposition of plane waves. Up and down, high and low. Experiences, good and bad, all at once. I can exist in perpetual oscillation for eternity. Up and down, forever. THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS GREG. JUST A SUPERPOSITION OF PLANE WAVES. YOU ARE JUST A LINEAR COMBINATION OF EVERYTHING ELSE. YOU ARE JUST A SINUSOID. BALANCE MEANS HAVING GOOD AND BAD. IT MUST BE THIS WAY. Wow, who would have thought that my electromagnetic waves lecture would be what saves me.

PAJAMAS

Soft, red and pink on the shelf. Clean, candlelight, cradled by the night. At 10pm my mind is sterile, violently washed by the day. There's a warmth in my blood and soap in my eyes. Shampoo, toothpaste, moisturizer. Cleanse me of thoughts and baptize me in porcelain fonts beneath stainless steel faucets.

EVERYTHING'S A METAPHOR NOWADAYS

It's 5:30pm and I am a silhouette. Evening, why do you pretend to like me? I went for a walk just now. Just a few moments ago. There is a community garden right down the road. A fence protected tilled dirt and a variety of plants that all looked dead to me. I got lost in a daydream in between my strides, a liminal space filled with fresh green plants and grass and the feeling of Home.

I pictured myself laboring there in the garden, turning over dirt, turning over sand, turning over hours while the Sun sets. Daylight lingers here, reluctant.

LIVING NIGHTMARES

I woke up at 3:00 this morning and managed to convince myself that it was 3:00 in the afternoon and that I had slept through my classes and most of the day. How my brain managed to convince my sweaty ass in complete darkness that it was an Arizona afternoon I will never know, but it was real and viscerally uncomfortable and then, in a sudden flash of relief, wildly hilarious.

ESPRESSO ART CAFE

A white pawn sits at the table across from me, waiting for my first move. I swirl my espresso thoughtfully, or, what I hope comes across as thoughtfully. I'm biting the rim of my cup and thinking about all of the things I could be doing. I don't want to do any of them right now. Right now, I just want to sit here and think and swirl my espresso and look introspective. I want to spend my time here defiantly. It's not very often I get to sit in a cafe nowadays. Bouncing a knee nonchalantly, giving brief sideways stares to strangers at nearby tables, staring aimlessly at nothing... I miss being so perfectly absentminded.