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Brimming with Squirrels

Having analyzed my life carefully, I can say that the following is sincere, bright with life's humor, and designed to not only tell the reader about myself, but show them my soul. I invite the reader to lean forwards as I reach my hand deep inside my mind and pull out a squirrel. My mind's unlit corners breed wonkiness, which the squirrel represents. I treasure every squirrel. Each squirrel inspires me to pair old things in new ways.

For example, has anyone ever paired Latin Dance with Family History? It melds surprisingly well. I helped plan this event through my current internship with FamilySearch. More than three hundred people attended and we added more than seven hundred names to Mexico's family tree. If anyone ever wants ideas for fun family history projects other than indexing, I'd be happy to help. My current community tree building project is adding an all-female group of World War Two Russian night bombers, 'the Night Witches', to the family tree.

I pull out another squirrel.

One of the greatest emotional displays I've seen is in a commercial where a man looks at a garage door. He then looks at his neighbor, then looks back at the garage door, barely holding his emotions in check. That may seem a strange and boring concept for an advertisement, but this superbowl commercial by the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism then goes on to show the man painting over antisemitism graffiti someone else had sprayed on his Jewish neighbors garage. The advertisement told me that antisemitism still exists, and it did so in a simple way, exemplifying human goodness and focusing on our connection to each other. The media world needs messages that uplift and inspire. To this end, I've applied to the BYU Advertising program with my portfolio of apocalyptic essays, hot air balloons, and instagram ads featuring 'Uncle Starry', a fifty year old angel who dares everyone to live life. It's an odd collection, but will show my commitment to new ideas and creativity.

I pull out another squirrel.

Writing, to put it morbidly, is an occupation for cannibals. The four novels I'm writing are wet with the blood of authors living and dead. Homer, Tolkien, Rowling, each has influenced me in their own way. Consuming them gives me energy to keep writing my own books. It's an addiction, leading me to grave robbing in the local library. And actually no, not robbing; think free buffet. I'm different from most cannibals, however. They eat to put the spirit at rest. I eat to keep the spirit living within me. For example, I gorge myself on Ray Bradbury so he can haunt other people through my words. He can be contacted through the shimmering heat of ink and page, burning at four-hundred and fifty-one degrees. I sit in easy silence, consuming his voiceless soul, draining his essence into my own hardbound phylactery made from tree corpses. The wondrous horror of it all makes me feel giddy. I can't wait to spring his spirit on some

unsuspecting reader. Join with me in seeking out the greatest authors to delight in their fatness. So there, I've come clean. My hunger emerges.

I pull out another squirrel.

That makes four squirrels altogether. They huddle close, pull out a pitch pipe, and break out into a beautiful barbershop rendition of 'Lida Rose' from one of my favorite musicals, the Music Man (1962). I join in, belting out the words and adding in a little improvised dancing with a girl who happens to be walking by. On one knee, I pull out my banjo and serenade her as the barbershop squirrels croon in the background. I tell her of my love for community theater, the many roles I have played in Shakespeare, and ask if she's ever played a rousing game of Ultimate Frisbee. She screams yes and proposes we get some ham radio licenses. I say there are classes held close to my parent's house in Eagle Mountain, Utah. At that instant, she poofs away in a cloud of textbooks. I realize that I'm single, a Junior in college, and probably need more sleep. My banjo sits unplayed in a corner of the room. I'm alone. Then, at the door, a quiet tapping is heard. It's my friend Rosie, arms laden with textbooks, the smile on her face a proverbial cupid's arrow in my heart. Isn't it wonderful? That's it. That's me. I've shown my soul, who I am at my center. I'm brimming with squirrels, and I'm grateful for it.