Vulgarity

// For narcissism and love of myself.

Write the beauty you want to exist in the world. What is your beautiful vision that others cannot yet see?

My novel should be concerned with borders, especially with regard to setting, identity, etc.

The border between San Diego and Mexico. (middle class to lower class)

The border between Coronado and San Diego. (upper middle class to middle class)

The border between an ocean view and a bay view. (upper class to upper middle class).

I know that people will love my novel and read it over and over because there are other artists’ work over which I obsess.

As I write my novel, I want to forefront Thomas’s characterization more than the plot. I want his personality to drive the plot rather than have the plot dominate the readers’ attention. I want his deluded Petrarchan love, glossed in Hollywood sentimentality to forefront his demise.

Thomas later learns HTML from his younger after choosing not to major in Literature.

Memory is metaphor, not the thing itself. Remember when writing I don’t need to embellish my memory with fiction until I’m editing. For the most part, my memory is already fiction and should be merely polished and framed for my own purposes.

As my novel is a satire (not overly dry—a beautiful satire) Thomas must always be the butt of the joke, at least until he gains social awareness and then other white people are the butt of the joke. Thomas’s shift in social awareness should mirror the gradual shifts in my readers’ consciousness. The ongoing critique is white ignorance of white privilege and white counterarguments to accusations of racism or cultural imperialism.

My literary ancestry is DH Lawrence, Oscar Wilde, James Baldwin, Gore Vidal, Yukio Mishima, Leslie Marmon Silko.

I will release my novel on a static webpage with a pdf and an optional $5 paywall,

Write what you wish existed in the world.

Write as though you’re writing the best letter you’ve ever written to your smartest friend.

Thomas speaks with a southern Californian accent.

My novel is a queer coming of age experience.

The main focus of my novel is Thomas but his little brother is heavily featured.

Thomas’ voice is not satirical. It’s empathetic but brutally honest and desperate to express itself. Earnest but smoldering and reflective with searing wit.

A trans woman who hates gay men except the beautiful ones who see her as she is.

Thomas’s contempt for poor white people.

-Thomas makes broad sweeping generalizations that the text must critique.

Thomas is merciless in his judgements of others and therefore is extremely harsh on himself.

Thomas really wants to be friends with the Janna character but he’s just too ignorant.

Thomas is a total dick / queen about how he sees the system and his life. He is a nihilist. The nihilism builds toward the climax of his suicide.

My novel is a late capitalist socialist novel.

The gradations of bourgeoisie.

Thomas is one of those skater boys in grade above me.

I want to see my world through the eyes of Noburo Uematsu.

Over-exposed designer reality TV spiraling glam train wreck.

The use of punctuation as a narrative devise to slow down readers.

My novel is a critique of a white gay alt-right/libertarian class-wielding capitalist-subscribing.

My novel is about show the permeability and, at times, fragility of heteronormative masculinity—torturing the queerness out of straight culture.

My novel takes place in Thomas’s senior year of high school. The end of the novel addresses how Thomas plans to attend a bootcamp before majoring in Computer Science.

There is one tense the entire time, even though Thomas will often talk about his childhood.

My novel is an assault on pure technique and all of its maxims.

Thomas is now an old tech worker.

The balance of taking for granted what your audience already knows and gracefully imparting new information.

Use the present tense to describe both the literal present tense and the past tense. The opening prologue is in first person present tense but so is Thomas’ memory.

*Prologue*

Don’t look at me.

Decadent years have revealed the hideousness I’ve always felt lurking beneath my skin. Naked with age, I have only money to blunt the truth’s cruelty as I decay.

In my youth I once believed that solitude could be the cure for all of my suffering, that I merely needed to forsake any audience to experience peace. But now, since having crafted my reclusion, I realize that I cannot escape my pain by merely deafening myself to the world’s vulgar critiques, for still a more sinister voice breaks my silence.

Nostalgia! I remember when the spring of my life burned into summer, when out of my melancholy an unfamiliar warmth beckoned me, long before the inevitability of time pulled the feeling of wonder away.

Since that era’s departure, I’ve attempted to conjure **its feeling with** overindulgences in my many vices, while the gifts with which I was born wither like dead flowers, leaving only guilt. Guilt, a predator that threatens to swallow me if I cannot confront it: the truth that I’ve allowed my life to become an epilogue for my memories, when every pleasure is derivative of a stronger feeling I’ve felt before.

In this slow and contemplative demise, my dearest consolation is my belief that I would have become this, even without him.

Vegeta is an influence on Thomas’ character.

These scars prove it must have been real.

The yearning to feel something stronger than what you feel now.

What has Thomas lost? More than just the love of his life. As he dragged my gilded delusion through the vulgar truth.

1) Background

the old maxims of our fathers decay into lies. Capitalism evolved to thwart many of those who relied on it. Even if you believe in capitalism, you can still believe in the repatriation of wealth from the top 1%. They will have you believe how blasphemously unAmerican it would be, but you can still want it.

This is his senior year of high school. Thomas is 17.

Thomas is addicted to smoking weed.

-I like littering.

-I like going for walks late at night by myself.

-I like listening to songs that make me really emotional and feeling like I should cry but never can.

-I like laying in bed all day.

-I like being obnoxious with my friends late at night on the streets and knowing we won’t get mugged.

-I like being perceived as artistic.

-I like being rich.

-I like being known.

-I like overcast days with a bit of rain when no one is home.

-I like writing in this journal.

-I like feeling really grungy.

-I like messy hair.

-I like waking up with no idea of what time it is.

-I like knowing I can go a day without food.

-I like being skinny and underweight.

-I like being weak.

I wake with my stomach braided in knots of fantasy and dread. I have the feeling that I was doing something that felt good but wasn’t allowed, and I was about to be punished for it. I see that it’s 6:29 AM, and so I silence the alarm on my iPhone®.

I lost both my parents a year ago. After my father’s melanoma took his body, my mother decided motherhood was no longer the cross she wished to bear. She travels the world while calling from spiritual retreats to tell our family of her many revelations, never forgetting to say she loves us. She lost her father a year before I lost mine. What she inherited alleviated any pains we’ve had about money, so I don’t want to give you the impression that I’m worse off than I am.

I’m fifteen and live with my aunt on the same island where I’ve always I’ve been since I was about five years old. My family came across the bridge. In the sixteenth century, after Spanish colonists harrowed the indigenous people who have dwelt here for millennia, they named their prize of genocide what translates in English to “The Crowned.” Enduring another conquest through the Mexican American war, the island became a resort destination for British and American tourists, where in the 1950s Marilyn Monroe starred in *Some Like it Hot.* Today two thirds of the island is occupied by the military, and many civilians born here, including myself, have seen less than half of its surface. We refer to the local community as “The Village,” and we are “Islanders.”

We live in an age when we often can’t look to our elders for wisdom, only reassurance.

We’re so content starved. We’re searching for iterations of memes and ideas that we haven’t seen.

Straining out my thoughts from the day into words.

Everyone and their cats are writers these days.

What conversations are not being had?

Conversations according to a measurement of entropy.

What conversations are we having over and over?

How can an analysis of class in America consider the above?

Portrait of Kim Catrall.

Nihilistic apathy.

The seamstress and the carpenter.

The balance of bringing enough gumption/energy and being relaxed and taking things as they come.

How long can I rest on my laurels?

Why aren’t we using AI to make angels?

Those old gen X queens like Augusten Burroughs and David Sedaris.

People from Coronado identifying themselves as locals with somehow a claim to the land of Coronado while associating the bourgeoisie from Arizona as tourists and encroachers.

Critiquing the foundations and culture of Coronado has everything to do with critiquing the foundations and culture of America. Critiquing the foundations and culture of Coronado has everything to do with critiquing the foundations and culture of America.

Frank L. Baum and anti-American Indian statements; Coronado’s fascination with his house and “The Emerald City.”

John L. O’Sullivan—The United States Magazine and Democratic Review: first publishing of Manifest Destiny.

Natural features in my literary landscape should be self-standing and not mere backdrops nor agents FOR human activity. Is the Strand in Coronado not “natural” (not part of nature because it was made by humans)?

Mexican/American Civil War

Father’s day coming around and Thomas resenting the consumerism.

Does one need fear to have respect?

Cabrillo

De Guzman

1847 California still part of Mexico: something happened in Coronado between 1847 and 1940 to make it a Euro-American tourist destination. Something happened before 1847 that took land from indigenous people.

To speak of “The Island” is perhaps inaccurate today, however, for in addition to the Village there is a community stretches across a nine-mile strip of engineered land, which connects the Village to the most Southern areas of San Diego, those closest to Mexico. This stretch is called the Strand, and most of it remains in the possession of the military, where the families of its officers are housed. If you try look at the island on Google Maps® you’ll see the strand grayed out as well as the western half of the actual island. Of that remaining portion, the eastern slice of the island is a golf course. Of the mile by mile that is walkable for civilians, it might be of interest to note that there are at least eleven city-recognized churches of varying Christian denominations.

Aside from the Strand, you could drive a car across the Coronado Bridge. tracing the serpentine spine that separates the island from the rest of the city. The bridge unloads into three lanes with 25-miles-per-hour speed limits. As cars brake, coming down from the high of a stretch of unenforceable speed, they glide past a mural on the side of a small white bungalow.

The mural shows the occupant’s son, who was murdered by police, beside the story of his unjust death. “get exact words” I’ve never heard anyone say anything about those and words and images, though, and as I write from memory, I have only myself to trust that it exists, or at least once did.

The island continues to be a resort destination, an oasis of sorts, especially in the summer for the wealthy white people of Arizona. “Islanders,” as they call themselves, bemoan the seasonal presence of tourists, even though the presence of such interlopers is what sustains a large portion of the local economy, not to mention each owner’s real estate equity.

My aunt tells me that once when we were younger, my sister and I asked her why all of the people with black hair lived across the Bridge.

Ours was a community in later years I’d describe as “Pleasantville,” sometimes employing such clichés as referring to my friends’ mothers as “Stepford Wives.” But the truth is, those analogies more accurately describe my experience of that place than failing to do so.

People commute to the island every day. These include those in the military, nurses, retail workers, teachers, and landscapers, domestic laborers. And construction workers, From the first house in which I still have coherent memories, I remember a Mexican family visiting once a week to clean our house and beautify our landscaping. Fifteen years later, my aunt still hires the same family.

Most relationships here are based on getting into parties or social connections. It’s not that I don’t enjoy parties, but if I go out, I feel like I have to drink or smoke pot, which fucks with my antidepressants. I didn’t want to get on them, but after my father died, I stopped eating and sometimes wouldn’t go to school. My mother says we shouldn’t have to work so hard to feel happy when we have so many gifts. So here I am.

We should celebrate artists, but we should still hold them accountable for their relationships. Yeah you can be an artist, but don’t worship yourself, and don’t expect others to worship you. Recognize all of the artists out there. Say hello!

People binding their fates together.

The fear of knowledge. Angering and hostility toward that which you do not know or understand; rejection upon discovery.

Having each character of Thomas’s family represent their own idealized versions of themselves.

Like warts, these memories are surfacing.

In 2017, you really can’t trust anything. I’m convinced that I’m starting to see bugs that aren’t’ there in the corners of my vision. As soon as I actually turn my neck they disappear.

We live in a time of confusion where we look at our dollar bills and ask, “Is this who we are?”

You don’t even have to succeed. You just have to do it so other people notice and pick up on the message.

The cumulative deaths of fathers in my family bounced me straight into the upper middle class upon my graduation.

For a time, before the patriarchs of my family passed, we found ourselves living beyond our means. In 2007, my father’s substantial small business loans could have been feasibly been paid back had the Recession not leveled the businesses of several larger accounts. After he became the beneficiary of their bankruptcies, we were dangerously close to defaulting on a multimillion-dollar mortgage. One night, while my father spent another late evening at his office on the waterfront, my mother, in a signature gesture of melodrama attempted to save money by preparing a pizza with Heine’s® ketchup for tomato paste, which my sister and I obstinately refused to eat. My mother began to cry in exasperation and walked out into the garden while my sister and I stared at each other, as if between our gazes we might be able to piece together what was happening. Meanwhile my little brother, who was five-years-old at the time, began to eat.

I’ve suffered my entire life from the feeling of the world some artists can project for others but never experience themselves

Thomas thinks he’s a genius.

Yet later my mother became a beneficiary of my grandfather’s wealth.

Everyone thinking I’m my aunt when they call.

Thomas’s aunt thinks New England people are repressed and uptight.

Before I was a teenager, my father’s leisure was enough to lure me away from the computer. Every day at lunch my father would play tennis with friends of his who did business downtown. He had a membership at the Marriot® that also included access to the pool. Often on weekends he would take our family for afternoon excursions in the sun. After so many hours bobbing in the chlorine and ordering sandwiches from lounge chairs, I formed a pleasant cathexis for where I thought my family went to be happy.

In the summer the pool is open late, and one night my father takes just me.

As we lay our belongings down, I wait for him beside the florescent blue water. After a moment or so, I feel a feathering at my heel.

Turning around, I scream when I realize I have been tickled by the antennae of a giant cockroach. I scream again and jump toward my father when my foot crunches down on a second roach, which scurries away into the shadows of the manicured flora beside the path to the pool, a pulpy stain left where I have stepped.

{shrieking}

My father tries to console me with reassurances of the roaches’ insignificance but realizes I am inconsolable. He takes me into his arms, carrying me toward the pool where he knows they cannot pester me.

He wades in and releases me as he swims to the pool’s floor and lets me surf on his back, my adrenaline fading. As I grow calmer with the callouses of my feet balancing between the valley of his muscles, I relax my legs and drift onto my back. When he notices I am tranquil, he begins swimming laps until his cell phone rings, and he leaves the pool for what I intuit is a call from a client.

I push myself away from the pool’s edge toward the center and float as I have seen Baloo do in Disney’s® The Jungle Book™. I stare up at the invisible stars behind the skyscrapers of white and yellow lights and the moon’s crescent smirk. Taking a deep breath, I kick along lightly, increasingly eased by the rhythm of my father’s voice as he carries on with business as usual.

Lulled by the gentle movement, I turn over in spirals until my hand catches what feels like a tiny shred of lace—but I recoil when I realize it is the waterlogged wings of a mosquito. Ripples from where my hand has touched the water’s surface slowly ebb, revealing more of the drowned fliers within arm’s reach.

Feeling my nerves return, I call out to my father, who gestures for me to get out of the water if I am so bothered. I kick toward the edge of the pool and am about to amble toward our lounge chairs when another roach darts across my intended path.

I throw myself over the pool’s edge and run, shrieking to my father, who drifts away from me so that my outbursts will not interfere with the call. Obstinately, I cling to him. desperate to not feel the antennae of another greeting, alternating the leg that supported me on as if I stood over hot coals,

With my now hysterical clamor, my father relents as he sees several more roaches approaching. Excusing himself from his phone call, he picks me up and carries me on his shoulders to the car and drives me to McDonald’s® for a Happy Meal™.

High school isn’t at all what people said it would be like. I never see my friends from 8th grade. I’d take 8th grade any day. Right now I feel a lot of pressure to do well and make myself more competitive for college. I didn’t have to try in 8th grade. I’d wake up at about 6:30, drink coffee, even though my aunt doesn’t like it when I do, take some asprin, then ride my bike to Safeway® and get some gum. Then I’d just do a half-ass job on math homework and head to school with a headache. It was that easy.

Middle school was small and isolated. I get really sad when little worlds get breached. I felt like I had a niche there. High school is so big you feel insignificant and unknown. Part of me doesn’t want to care about everything that my aunt and my teachers tell me I should.

The patriarchs of my family already lived the American Dream for me. I can see myself growing up with an okay job, in a small apartment, smoking a lot of cigarettes. Kurt Cobain once sang, “I miss the comfort of being sad.” When you’re sad, it’s easier to not care about anything else and just do what you feel like. Not feeling like shit all the time means you have to live up to something. Thank God I still feel terrible.

I have an older sister who is glamorous and beautiful, and a younger brother whose brilliance would outshine my sister and me if he weren’t such an obvious little fairy.

As my father died, my sister was lucky to have the seemingly endless love of her boyfriend, while my brother coped with monomania. Even though I always grew up using a computer, my brother understands things about technology that are far beyond whatever ability my friends and I posses.

Even though he’s really smart, he gets made fun of a lot at school. He doesn’t really understand how to cover, and I’m not sure he’d even be able to if he could. I’ve tried to get him to tone himself down around other people, but it’s like the concept of compartmentalizing his identity makes no sense to him. Luckily there are almost never physical fights in our school system, so it’s not like he comes home with a broken nose or rib. But sometimes I can tell that what’s been said to him in a day has taken its toll.

I can tell that sometimes his mannerisms make my aunt nervous, but at the same time she’s so thrilled with his intelligence that she normally lets him be. If anything she probably coddles him.

Like, one time he was talking about how he thinks people should stop calling colors things like violet and instead just refer to hexcodes.

Explain what a hex code is.

“There are 147 color names, only 16 of which are standardly recognized. With hexcodes there are over 16 million different colors.”

“No one is going to say ‘hashtag—whatever you just said.’ That sounds terrible,” I said.

“But how can we even know that we’re talking about the same thing when we say violet—the color that’s in my mind might be different from what you’re thinking of.”

“Refering to a color by a number wouldn’t change that.”

“Yeah, we might perceive the hue of a hexcode differently, but if we standardized the way we talk about color, we could each know the exact shade of our subjective violets when we talk about that specific color, without assuming the color I think of when I say violet means the same thing to everyone. It would allow us at least to acknowledge our different perceptions instead of confusing ourselves with the assumption that we’re perceiving the same thing.” I couldn’t bother to pay attention any longer. He doesn’t understand anything about people or beauty. Some colors are beautiful simply because of their names.

In my mind, I’m the most feminine, glamorous person I know.

My exquisite sensitivity.

The flowers are opening.

The art of programming is the art of organizing complexity, of mastering multitude and avoiding its bastard chaos as effectively as possible.

-Edsger Dijkstra

The accretion of our romance.

“Are you there?”

“Yes.”

He’s using his arms like nunchucks.

The cashier calls him buddy, and I don’t say anything.

The overuse of the word beautiful.

Breaking my nose playing soccer.

My aunt over Maine lobster: “The amount of butter they used made me feel sick.”

Thomas’s Aunt is a Californian health nut. With white bourgeoisie. His mother is the new age spiritual.

Stroking the diamond on her ring.

I’m an artist who doesn’t make art. I’m like sooo smart. But I’m also so stupid.

The study of beauty is a duel in which the artist shrieks with terror before being overcome. –Charles Bauldelaire

The light of a fire versus an electric bulb or LED.

What does a merciful society look like? The revolution needs celebrities and the power of fame.

“If you’re something you don’t need, then that’s not generosity.

“But feeling generous is what compels people to give.”

I can hear those runes of subtext embedded in every verse.

“How can I find romance in the past?”

I have the feeling all the time that if I am to sneeze someone will say “Bless you.”

To know your partner’s rhythms and vices.

Her tattered veil of youth.

The story he chooses to tell himself.

The distance between taking a substance and actually feeling something.

Reveling in the structure of my routines and then indulging myself in lambasting them.

I can sense that we both feel my weakness.

My gentle vice.

I’m watching *Survivor* and all of these people just ran into this muddy water because Jeff Probst said there was a hidden medallion of power.

Amanda character that resists indulging their youth—plans what kind of old woman she wants to become, which retirement home she wants to live in. She is a lesbian.

I find this scrawling of hers inside her notebook: Monica is obsessed with finding out the history of the land Coronado occupies:

Leave this small accretion.

The feeling of alienation that comes from not wanting to act out models of behavior popular culture archetypes.

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What is your fantasy?

My adolescent sigh.

Our wicked

“This pathetic love of nostalgia,” I think.

Mistress of my domain.

June 14 1846, California annexed at Monterey from Mexico.

My eryuethra and my anus are tired.

California settler colonialism. Integrate information from Bad Indians to describe Coronado history before it was commodified into a resort destination and all history of it ever being anything else was suppressed.

• Loss of Dad and memories/ how I got to be who I am

The grand Chinese marble dwelling with a fountain

Black marble obelisks

My father trained me to pee at a toilet by pretending with me that our streams were swords and that each time we crossed them was a duel.

Despite my anger, I can empathize with their inability to empathize. Even now death has begun to sink back into abstraction for me.

Thomas feels like he’s constantly seeking the safety of darkness under a blinding white light.

Everything in my room feels cold. I shiver as I get into bed, my wrists recoiling from the temperature of my keyboard. I’m home from school, sick. My stomach feels awful. I’m watching *The Little Mermaid*. The song she sings in her little cave is beautiful. I’m not high. I actually think I’m sick from smoking so much. I’ve raged for the past 3 days, smoking at least 4 times every day. Last night I hid a joint in my sock and a lighter in my shoe so I could smoke while out on my run. I hope I feel better tomorrow. See, the thing is I say I’m sick from smoking but I probably will again tomorrow after school. I like living in a haze more than sunshine.

I feel like I make everyone who’s ever known me a little sadder. It’s like there’s this scent to me, and at first it draws people in, but once they get too close and can smell it on themselves, they try to get rid of it by leaving me. I always thought that high school would feel like the gradual reddening of an apple, three hours before the zenith of its ripeness, three ticks before it couldn’t be more ripe, only less. But now as I watch others bask in carefree sunshine, I know am one of those spoiling on its branch.

There are at least two types of hidden knowledge: knowledge of which people know they’re missing a piece of information and therefore they know the knowledge exists, and another type, which, in my opinion, is a type of knowledge far more potent, the kind of hidden knowledge that people don’t even know exists.

My father always tread the line between being loved by many and being honest. Once a friend of mine stayed with my family while his parents were out of town. Bow and arrow, almost hitting Jessica and Sophie.

My father began punishing me with his absence.

Thomas’s first taste of fame is having his name written on the board for misbehaving in 1st grade class.

Disrupts class during standardized testing.

She wrote my name on the board, and I felt famous.

American Exceptionalism.

The glamorization of smoking cigarettes: the disparity between the romance of the myth, and the gritty, stinking reality. Drinking at 5pm to eased the transition from light to dark.

“Stupid, stupid.”

“Yes, Aaron, very stupid.”

When I walk the streets at night, men often stare. They walk slower when I walk behind them and sometimes move in my way. There’s normally a warm wind. Sometimes I’ll wear shorts. I try to find the moon—sometimes it’s full.

(When little brother does something faggy and embarrassing.)

I turn and glare at him.

I’ve always believed that there were more people to meet, and there always has been.

A character who wants Thomas to be more present when he’s high.

The military theater where they played Whitney Houston singing the National Anthem before every movie.

Stefan telling me he believes in monsters. Me saying I think I’m an alien.

My friend once lied to me about a video game that didn’t exist. He said a game was being developed called *I Can Do Anything,* which exactly described the premise—players could do anything they want. This was after 9/11, so I asked, “Could I hijack an airplane?”

“Yup”

“Could I run over people in a Hummer®?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Can I have limitless money?”

“Duh.”

I eventually realized that he was lying, but the promise of the lie was so good that I wanted us both to keep talking about how true it was.

Abusing Wyatt/Evan/Crag friend/Stefan:

Thomas’ target for critiques of insecure heteronormative masculinity.

Still, more socially conscious than Thomas in some ways.

Throughly Seattle, whereas Thomas is thoroughly Southern California.

Watches the same, sad movies over and over.

Fucked around with Thomas when they were just beginning puberty.

Glorifying hard work because you never work hard

(friend that valorizes blue collar work—delusion that his twin lives and occupies the space he wishes he did allows him to relegate himself to a masochistic space of less privilege.

Having never experienced death, I’m mystified by the untouchable emotions surging across his face.

So I provoked him by mocking the name of his dead dog over and over until he started to cry. Embarrassed, he walked into the bathroom to dry his eyes. When he came out I apologized, partially out of the fear that he would run and complain about my cruelty to his parents, and also out of genuine remorse, for my ignorance had not prepared me for the gravity of his loss.

Imagery of Catalina

“Right now, I don’t want to have a conversation about it.”

[my aunt has dad’s preoccupation with our community image]

I open the front door and my aunt tells me to get in the kitchen. When I step through the threshold I see her taking apart an arrangement off callilies whose water has spoiled. As she opens the compartment to the trashcan , she snaps their necks.

“Why were you so silent at mass?”

“Because I don’t believe in God.”

“Do you think no one else in that congregation struggles with faith,” she counters with an added softness that suggests she was prepared to have this conversation eventually.

“I’m not struggling. I just don’t feel like there is any meaning for me in all of the ceremonies and readings.”

Americans like characters more than people.

The Arthurian book about the dueling knights—one wearing black armor the other wearing white, the erotic quality of the duel for me. Me hiding it in my cubby at school until my parents had to keep the book so as to insure my innocence and possession of the book.

Jack and I tying silk scarves around our necks pretending they were capes.

I watch the sweat fall from my forehead as the rain poured outside.

My Kamehameha Wave.

“Everyone ran for cover.”

Are there days when you can feel the pulse of people spending money.

The water is steely and the sky has a powdered face of clouds.

We never talk about or express bodily functions in front of each other.

Feeling that even though he was talking to me, he was talking to himself. My presence provided the proxy through which he could experiment with his identity.

We are seeing a greater convergence of developers and designers, actors and politicians.

“Because I can.” A critique of this flagrant exercise of privilege in the name of 1st amendment exercise.

I think you need to know how to spend money to be an American.

In America, poor people are always allowed to be the butt of the joke.

“You can do anything if you have white teeth.

When putting together an outfit becomes about selecting a disguise.

Meditating on Kurt Cobain and glamorizing his vulnerability and presentation of unkept whiteness.

Study other coming of age novels and take cues from the plot structure.

How many of us want to be professional sluts?

I’m speaking to all of America.

It’s September 11th and my father is angry with me because I’m not wearing anything patriotic. He bought a small American flag pin to attach to his left lapel, but the only thing I have to wear is this Old Navy shirt with an American Flag, but the shirt is about three years old and much too small. I don’t even know why I have it. But it’s the only thing I have that’s patriotic and that’s not olive green or black.

We don’t know how to listen to the truths in fiction. Postmodern anxieties relinquish most of us from changing what we see as bad.

Those vulnerable angles from which I can see his fatigue.

Tension between my family’s new money and an old money ex boyfriend.

I turn to him and blow my smoke out in his face.

Fascination with swords—fethistic/phallocentricism.

My allocation of love of God for Levi.

Bulma is an inspiration for a character. For the Amanda character.

The Janna character transitions.

(About getting someone a gift)

“I think I’ll just phone it in with a tiny cactus.”

If they’d only let me take the medicine.

“They were Fruit of the Loom!”

My mother born into a Californian cultural identity.

1000 banal sunsets.

Seeing products on commercials and wanting to recreate those fantasies through buying the products only to have my hopes of fulfillment dinged by reality and disillusionment.

The high dive where you could see people under water through a window on one side of the pool.

Thomas trying to relate to the cowboy and Indian ideology.

Feeling uncomfortable and stiff in his clothes, wanting to be like Aladdin, who walks around without a shirt.

The coach announces that we’re going to play shirts versus skins, and I feel that familiar sense of dread bubbling inside of me. Our group of boys is slowly parted in half, with some of the “skins” tossing their jerseys over their heads and tucking them into their waistbands like tails, or otherwise flinging them to the sidelines. I stare with envy draped in bafflement, not understanding how the other boys move so comfortably with their stomachs, arms, and chests uncovered. I feel strange bearing my torso so casually in public, so much that I even wear a rash guard at the beach. So when the coach comes to me, I do that thing where I talk to God, even though I don’t believe in God, and I pray that I won’t be on the skins team, because I don’t know how to explain that if I take off my shirt I will be naked.

Thomas is afraid to take off his shirt. Feels strange exposing his chest. Sees Beloved shirtless at soccer practice.

He’s one of those idiots who blunderingly capitalize words in juvenile attempts to produce emphasis.

• Smoking weed to mitigate depression

The first time I tried smoking pot was this year. A girl I sat next to in Geometry came in high after lunch every Tuesday. “Special Tuesday” was when her mom wasn’t home, so she and her best friend would smoke before going back to class. I had been fascinated with marijuana since I had first heard about it and persuaded the girl to take me home with her and her friend at lunch. She asked for five dollars, and I gave the five dollars my aunt had given me for lunch; this set a precedent that on Tuesdays, I never ate lunch. Eventually, I wouldn’t eat lunch on Wednesdays or Thursdays either.

Splitting an 8th with a friend.

“We’re out here smoking, because that’s the mood: fifteen year olds in alleyways with cigarettes.

Not even my medicine can put me to sleep.

“Don’t contaminate this moment with your nostalgia,” I say to him as his face droops and he turns away.

My aunt tells me that my thoughts have the power to attract what I think of. I am terrified that this may be true. If I worry that about finding cockroaches in the house enough, will I therefore find one day when I unwittingly turn one on the light in my bedroom, waiting for me in my bed?

Little brother: “I can’t imagine the complexity of the outer world.” What event compromises his established identity of precociously congenial?

Little brother is fixated with swords when he’s young (phallocentrism).

I really hope my aunt grounds me this week. I haven’t done anything yet to make her do that yet, but the thought of having to make sure I have plans and am hanging out with people gives me so much anxiety that I’d rather just be housebound.

Growing accustomed to the idea that some entity is always watching me and knows what I’m doing.

“But that’s the American Dream!”

“My father lived the American Dream for me.”

My the early part of my novel explores Thomas’ relationship with alcohol.

Filtered through time.

I don’t know how to describe the taste without mixing metaphors. I will say that the taste makes me explicitly aware that what I’m doing something I have been told by my parents, my community, and the state is wrong; I am aware that it would lead to sensations I had never felt and would not have access to otherwise; and I was aware that I would get away with trying it and would try it again.

I thought, I know what I’ve just done, what I wasn’t supposed to do, and this excites me. I also felt exclusive. I would be high, actually enjoying class, but no one else would know. Well, that wasn’t entirely true. I have a habit of doodling when I’m high, and the stoner who sat in the assigned seat next to me on his right side knew where I acquired his inspiration.

The young woman’s face with a nose that arches upwards is starting to melt, and her face is slowly melting into the face of Piglett from *Winne the Pooh™.* She asks me a question, but I can’t understand the sounds she’s making. I grin and decide to adjust my attention back to my drawing. I’ve drawn the face of an anonymous man with a very suggestive tongue. In the sky above the portrait is a sun with a Hitler mustache, smoking a cigar.

I pack small bowls so I get greens more often. If I were really smart, not just kind of smart and really lazy, I’d calculate how much marijuana I consume per hit, and put only that in each bowl.

Smoking weed as a means to commune with pets and nature/backyard animals

-depression (losing Dad) –describe the bridge, the insular feeling of Coronado

-Stoner life

Novel is more concerned with the end of friendships than break ups

Describe Thomas’ grunge decadence before hospitalization and his subsequent indoctrination by Mesa Vista (number system with how are you feeling)—what becomes a subversive indoctrination in how he eventually flouts designer wear for women.

Thomas is defined by inaction.

Explore aestheticism, epicurean philosophy, the decadent movement

It’s like the story that tells himself has been lived to its fullest over and over, and maybe he finds some sort miserable comfort in that accepted narrative, but to me the idea of living out an archetype—if that were my life I think I would kill myself.

I have on Lana del Rey on in the background as I talk with Jessica about Monica. How Monica is this familiar, warm, comforting love that she will leave for James and then return.

Beside the Baroque wall, our knives flash under the morning sunlight. Looking at him, *You repulse me because of what I hate in myself*, I think and try to remember.

Leave me unmolested by your bureaucratic tentacles.

The clash between hipster irony and the New Sincerity movement.

As the hardwood floors groan at her footsteps.

The stupid fetishization of progeny

Thomas sees himself as liberal within his family structure.

*You coward,* I accuse as I sink into sleep.

Two strangers passing each other in life’s dark corridor.

“Do you know where the box with my books is? There’s a cigarette in one of the books.”

The exquisite packaging of his pain.

Andrea Anrendsey’s mom talking about how the cashier at Safeway made her feel uncomfortable about crossing the picket line to get some last minute provisions for a party later that afternoon.

I have this very masculine self and this very feminine self, and I think they’re in love with each other.

Southern Californian dialect of English has a long of “you know” appendages.

Little brother playing *The Sims*

Video games. A game as a mundane reality to escape the mundane reality of real life. Someone playing *The Sims* obsessively. Child in school who makes the argument that we don’t need books because we have the internet

A character who additively plays pokemon like a junkie. Rehearsing the same “walk, battle, exp” pattern for hours.

The cheap toilet paper rasps as I tear off a single square.

The sheer IKEA curtains lit up by the moon.

Noting their reaction, I vow every word will only bring beauty into the world before them.

We play this game of trading dirty reflections of each other, painful truths revealed with humor, until the truth becomes too real and one of us gets hurt.

“Just don’t break his arm, because that’s expensive.”

I walk by an apartment and see Disney’s Alice in Wonderland playing on a giant mounted flatscreen.

The feeling of being accepted by your family and imprisoned by that acceptance.

Mousy girl from Connecticut.

The ash of tiny singed leaves singed at their edges and rolled into white linen sheets.

The shadows of midtown.

Have high school students in my classrooms debating. No form of violence is morally justified: debate. (A teacher writes on the board).

Our teacher is a sixty-year old white lesbian.

My little brother spends all his time playing Civilization.

Scribbling myself into existence.

I used to tell people that my family is old money.

The stupid stories we need to keep telling each other about ourselves.

The morning glory. Thomas as Lucifer, falling out of religion and esteem. The flower. The face.

I can spot faggots a mile away, purely because I’m so much gayer than they could ever hope to be, so their mannerisms are highlighted as if with strobe lights, and every pretension toward heterosexuality becomes a farce.

I tell him it’s okay, but as soon as he walks out the door my interest in maintaining any semblance of our closeness follows him out. How coyly I’ll reveal my ruthlessness, I think to myself.

For every gay man there is an aphorism.

Gay men and aphorisms.

For us all to have a revolution we need media that tells us we are waking up.

Who says when a revolution starts and when it’s over?

“I can feel it all around me, buzzing at night so loud I can’t sleep. The flowers are opening, and it feels like we’re all waking up.”

Thomas uses purple prose. When he speaks. He uses a lot of cliches in “revelatory” moments.

“I’d say indigo.”

Thomas isn’t out until he tries to kill himself.

His little brother is obviously gay.

“I’m gay, too.”

“We all know.”

“Oh.”

Thomas and a character talking about how their parents feel about smoking weed.

Liminality: how the visual experience of seeing the fallen jacaranda petals in the street felt like hearing the colors scream.

Those passions of petty narcissism that grips the crowd as the plane descends.

“As if you’re significant enough for a death like this,” I sneer silently as their hands clutch themselves together.

Thomas is terrified of the revolution.

Thomas is such a bitter queen.

“I don’t understand why the word ‘discreet’ gets people off so much.”

I feel their glances like sunlight over a mirror.

The drag of age and how people wear age to their advantage.

Thomas has opinions about realtors.

There are some guys that I know that have bigger boobs than some girls I know.

And I like their boobs.

But for some reason I’m not attracted to the boobs attached to women in general.

“I mean, who doesn’t like a nice ombre?”

“Shut up, you little faggot,” I say.

“Have you ever heard that for every gay man there is an aphorism?”

“No, did you just make that up?”

He looked in me the eyes: “Yes.”

“What’s mine then?” I challenge.

2.16.16

Simile studies:

“I am in danger of becoming like Gertrude, who resembled, in her last days, a spoiled pear.”

--Gore Vidal, *Myra Breckinridge*

All addicts are narcissists.

He whispered in my ear, “Fuck.” (Stefan telling me the worst swear word.)

The theme I need to be outlining is dominance and guilt. The connections between the two in contemporary ideologies.

I watch my peers distinguish themselves with what brands they consume.

I keep listening to the same sad songs, over and over, and I know they’re only making me more sad, but it’s as if they’re these toxic friendships, and I don’t want to be alone. I can feel myself decaying from these poisonous thoughts.

Sitting in the dark wearing my father’s clothes.

Why do I need him to hear what I have to say if I don’t require a response? What do I gain from these words that cannot be gained if said to myself?

Wishing I were in the world of my reflection.

“Why am I not good enough for you?” Chris asks me. And I have to ask myself why indeed. Is it because I see too much of myself in him?

“I’ve never had to be subtle,” I lie.

What do you call people attracted to Piccolo?

Racist.

Just say you like Black people and go.

I am a nihilist, of sorts.

I’m making this list because people always ask me, “Scott, what the hell do you like?” especially when I’m in a negative mood.

Thomas likes mixing the filthy with the pristine.

English doesn’t allow for the type of conventions with nouns that languages like Spanish do.

They’re not thinking about those questions. They just move and do things and that’s why they can keep going.

Last night I had a vision: there was a sniper on campus and my father was hurt and disappointed in me—hurt emotionally. And campus was a massive floating barge, an oversized aircraft carrier. To avoid the sniper and screaming crowds I jumped into the water and floated beside leviathans, tidal waves bringing us closer to the ship.

A character that is obsessed with pop culture.

“Ozzy from Survivor is the Goku of Dragon Ball Z.”

When I was younger I had a stutter for which I was placed in “speech” class. While other children were supposed to be reading, several others (including the children of Mexican expatriates whose parents and teachers wanted to sanitize their accents) were taken to a room where our speech therapist would ask us to repeat words over and over like, “femininity.”

• Depressive Pattern of self-medication and living in memories of my father

The flotsam of my memories.

As I walked leaves rustle in the wind behind me. I would stop to turn around and say hello. Later as I walked along the path, never veering off the asphalt, out of either sentimentality or respect, I encountered a Chinese man in his early sixties walking toward me. To not acknowledge him might convey disrespect, yet as an outsider with no ancestors present, I did not want to impose a greeting upon him that might disturb his contemplation of the dead. Choosing to acknowledge our passing, I bowed my head deeper than a nod but did not bend my spine, and he returned the gesture.

Later I thought of the possibility that he might have either been an image of my imagination or a spirit incarnate.

sculpted shrubbery with Ombres of grass that grow from yellow to green

Confederate moratoriums

Visiting the green house and then the cemetery. Noticing the playground next to the graveyard. Life and death dualisms.

Howling alone to resurrect the dormant grief of someone else.

My room is my own asylum.

Consume might be my favorite word.

But they don’t know that I have my secret spell.

A boulevard polka-dotted by strip joints and sex shops, the vices of perverse sailors, as my aunt once judged.

draw freudian connections to my father’s girlfriends and my resentment toward him

Thomas is pretentious.

In the beginning he uses marijuana to relive his nostalgia for his father.

I’ll tell you something: I’m a magician: I know this one spell that makes me high.

Being a millennial and wanting to pause and rewind things.

Perhaps only someone with whom I can stare at the fire.

I saw ash smeared above the bow of my lip and quickly wiped it away.

“That’s where the sailors go,” my aunt says with a grin and a raised eyebrow.

Something I plan to work on is my anxiety. I feel like, in some part, my mother has been encouraging me to get on antidepressants to rationalize her own choice to do so. I do not believe that I need antidepressants in my life right now, nor do I want them.

I scream, “Georgette!”

I was in Japan during a war time and taking a literature class. We were supposed to discuss a Yukio Mishima book, and the teacher told me to pick my group, and so I picked people I liked. We left the classroom to go have our discussion in another building, and as we were walking my attention was called back to a wall where one of my friends stood with a spotlight on him. He began talking about how ever since he met me his shadow looked like me, and he was tired of never being able to be without it. He said something to the effect that he thought others felt the same way. Then he made a complicated but elegant gesture, touching his body with quick jabs, and disemboweled himself. The spotlight intensified, and as his shadow disappeared, he smiled and died.

“Did your father graduate?”

“Yes.”

I had to honestly ask myself whether I hated him because he fucked my mother and wasn’t my father. And what did that say about me if I did hate him because of that. Was I succumbing to some patriarchal Oedipus bullshit?

I looked at his swollen face, loosened by excessive alcohol consumption and then bloated with poor diet, imbibed over decades, no doubt—looked at black marbles of eyes that seemed to be capable of communicating little else than hunger, and I wondered if I would have been attracted to him if he had been my age.

While I stare down at my slice of cake, I see his cracked hand interlope into my vision. It contorts itself into a wave, but I won’t acknowledge the clumsy gesture until he addresses me with words.

“What’s that?” He points to what is obviously a slice of chocolate cake.

“Oh, there’s chocolate, too, but you didn’t get to choose,” my mother teases to my left.

He looks back at his slice, a homemade experiment of pistachio and what I guess is strawberry from the slash of pink.

“Do you want to try a slice of mine?” he asks my mother.

“No—it’s too much, too rich,” she blushes.

2

Burning in my dark corner while I hope that their exuberance outshines my contempt.

Play to the tropes of Coronado as “a gilded cage” and having “golden handcuffs.” Make a joke about it. Thomas seeing himself as a fat canary in a gilded cage with golden handcuffs and organic pellets and lots of stimulation.

Describe drawing war scenes in church, how cartoons and action figures influenced my will to replicate them to entertain myself when I couldn’t understand Latin. Dad telling me to draw Angels, and then me drawing opulently beautiful, ones, he giving me a quizzical look and then redirecting his attention to the mass.

“Doesn’t a Coke® sound good?” my aunt asks.

“Poison does not sound good,” I snub.

“Some choose alcohol,” she justifies, a subtle dig at my father that doesn’t escape my notice.

“Men are like mussels—many have deceptively hard exteriors, but as soon as you get them to open up, they’re squishy, sensitive goo.”

“No, I can just do that when I’m old and cancerous.”

On British People: “Bad food, worse teeth.”

“Whether you choose to straighten or whiten your teeth has nothing to do with actual health.”

(Probably just British white people)

I’m watching *Friends* and for some reason, maybe it’s because I’ve seen this episode at least twenty times, for some reason the only sounds I can pay attention to is the laugh track of the invisible audience. There’s a steady cadence—never is one person laughing much longer than the others, neither is their laughter registering at a different pitch. When I close my eyes and feel myself drifting to sleep, the steady rhythm is almost like the sound of waves.

He has a bag that says “San Diego Caviar Company,” and I think, “That is so tacky.”

I cringe as her speech careens from pragmatism to melodrama.

One of my earliest memories is staring at a Windows desktop. In a Parisian hotel I lie on the couch that also functions as my bed. The emerald velvet cushions underneath me are upholstered tightly so that my stomach is firmly supported. Slowly, I kick my legs, back and forth.

My mother and sister went to the Louvre while I have decided in the hotel room to play computer games on the Dell®™ laptop my father had bought me for school the next year.

I open it, and the dull blue screen brightens. Absorbed, I allow my vision to sink into the dimensions of the pixels. With my index finger, I stroke the silver plane and log in.

I have dragged all superfluous icons into the Trash so that my desktop is a background of rolling green hills, save the wastebasket in the corner. No birds, no bugs, no irregularities between the uniform pixels of blades of grass, each brought to ideal lighting under the omnipotent reach of a panoptic sun, a tranquility curated by sterility.

The monster of beauty that consumes me.

Staying in the nicest hotels in places where I know there were once Indians.

Wyatt or whoever saying that they saw bisexuality as a natural path once straight people were coupled so as not to overpopulate.

Conversations with white feminists. Moving in spaces as a white feminist.

After a monologue from a Mexican American man about how Latin America does not look at the United States as a benevolent, free society. They see a place that took their land and paid dictators.

“It’s still where you want to be, though.”

Code is magic. JavaScript is like writing runes into the internet and then stuff happening.

Part of me wants to give away some of dads clothes. I feel strange not keeping them, but I will not wear them, and part of me feels like I carry an emotional weight by keeping shoes of his that I will never wear. I will keep belts of his, because I love them and think of him each time I wear them. I will keep some of his ties. But shoes? I’m not so sure

The tension between explaining something to myself and explaining something to some one else.

“It’s as if they’ve starched the towels and dipped the linens in oil.” (My aunt)

“What’s the difference between being smart with your money and exploiting other people?”

“Why the fuck do we care about Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt? Because they’re part of our contemporary pantheon of media idols.”

Art is over. The only stuff that people consider art has been commodified or produced within a supposed elite class and sanctified by various institutions that are themselves instruments of a supposed elite class.

Military planes flying over the beach.

The feeling of not being able to stop yourself from going too far.

Staring at his death certificate: I can’t believe it’s been five years.

Thomas does a lot of drugs.

“I think my nose is broken!” I scream at the referee.

My aunt knows I don’t sleep well. She says she can see it in my eyes, and I guess it provides an explanation for her of why I’m so moody all the time. When I came home from school today I walked up to my room as usual, thinking I would try to nap, when I realized my bed was made differently. When I asked her about it, she said she bought me new silk sheets, thinking it might help me sleep better tonight. I thanked her and walked back to my room, pushing aside the comforter to run my hand over this new luxury.

I hear her call out that she’s going to meet a friend of hers for dinner, and I say goodbye as I retreat again and close my door. I take off all my clothes and grope my ribs, glamorizing my thinness in front of my mirror. I cover the mirror to stop staring at myself, confused by a feeling of both pride and revulsion.

I turn toward the bed and slide into a what feels like a liquid embrace. I twist from side to side, allowing the sheets to rub between my legs and across my back. Standing up, but keeping my lower half wrapped in the silk, I cross the room to where I’ve hung my backpack.

Lately I’ve started carrying a pocket knife, just in case, which is ridiculous because the crime rate on this island is so low that I’m more likely to get in trouble for carrying a knife than I will ever be in a situation where I have to use it to defend myself. But I have this knife with me now, a standard red Swiss Army® model, and I’m holding it wondering what Annie and Wyatt feel when they cut themselves.

Crawling back into bed, the silk fondles my chest as I press the blade of the knife against my wrist. Annie once told me that she gets this itch only a razor can scratch, that as soon as she can break her skin she feels this release of pain, which doesn’t make sense to me, because cutting yourself should only cause you pain.

I’m not trying to kill myself, I figure, so it doesn’t make sense to cut my wrists. Wyatt cut his foot, I think because he didn’t want people to know he was doing it, but when he left Harley a note with his blood pushed into little brown hearts that kind of defeated the point. Maybe it was just so that his parents wouldn’t see the cuts and ask. But anyway, people know he cuts himself now, and I’m curious enough to see what it feels like.

The knife I have is sharp enough, I guess, since I never use it, so I flick it open and place its edge on the upper segment of my thumb, right in the middle. I pull diagonally across and feel the sting as my skin opens, but that is all I feel, and I don’t want the blood to get on my new sheets so I start sucking the wound. And now I’m really just irritated that I don’t understand why people cut themselves when all I can feel is the sting, so I get dressed and walk to a CVS® to buy some BandAids®, because I feel childish sitting here, sucking my thumb.

When I get back I decide to comfort myself with a cloud of smoke. I contracted my abdominals and erect himself. I took a deep breath and walk over to the wraparound desk in front of my wall of windows. I pull out the pipe shaped like an elephant from Hawaii friend gave him, as a chill of guilt drags itself from my stomach into my lungs. Uncomfortably, I feel a sticking sweat at the top of my underarms. From the same drawer, which also contained *Visine*, incense, and a blue *Bic* lighter, I summon a box of 300 matches, preferring them to the butane.

With said accouterments in hand, I lay the pipe and matches on a small, pullout table that was at my bedside. And find In a VHS box of *Disney’s Alice in Wonderland™,* a sandwich-sized *Zip-*loc™ bag that contains twenty dollar’s worth of weed, and set it on the pullout table. I slither back into bed and prop myself up with five pillows I have just bought at *Target®*.

I pull out a cluster of bud about the size of a dime and pick up the elephant pipe and turn it over on its back. Where one would expect a stomach or just smooth glass was tiny pothole, where I break the bud apart and compressed it together so that the elephant’s stomach is filled. He briefly set the pipe down on the table, and picked up the box of matches. Like a samurai unsheathing his killing sword, Thomas slashed the match across the course side of the box. Excited and flamboyant, the match dazzled in first blue then yellow. Holding fire in his right hand, and glass in his left, he brought his hands within inches of each other, the right hovering over the left with the flame of the match ravishing the weed. He put his lips to the trunk of the elephant and drew the smoke inside him.

[Expand] Tenderly, he nurtured himself, suckling at the elephant’s trunk. As he took a deep, semi-meditative breath, he could feel his senses escalated. He imagined (without truly empathizing) that he felt as if he were a deaf person standing next to a roaring airplane engine. His sclera ruptured with veins and tinged pink. He spewed a gray torrent of exhaust and let his lungs shrivel for a few seconds. As his heart started to ricochet inside his ribs, he conceded and drew in a begrudging but desperate wind.

I scratch at the rash on my wrist and watch the flakes of skin dance off in the sunlight.

Thomas is really concerned about his weight.

My life is a series of inspired intentions, only some of which were followed.

Thomas finished reading the self-help book his professor had prescribed him. He opened the back cover to see the author photo and then thought to himself, “What a very old man with a very young soul.”

Thomas let himself cycle air in and out several times and then repeated his ritual until the elephant’s stomach was vacant with the exception of some black, white, and gray dust. Half-mindedly, he clattered the pipe onto the table and dismissed the bag of weed back into its plastic white coffin. As he glided into bed for the last time that night, his blankets felt especially congenial, and the silk of his pajamas fondled the linen of his sheets. Thomas’s heavy eyes acquiesced to close themselves that night, and he descended upon a sound and complacent sleep.

I’m cleaning out the ash and resin from under my claws, when I hear the rev of my sister’s boyfriend’s Mustang®. From the shadows behind the window, I watch him examine different angles of his face in Rayban® aviators as he pushes back his hair, hair that I envy for its thickness and sheen. Yet my envy does sting so much as dully pulse like a heartbeat.

Our front door slams and my sister walks out to meet him. She wears an oversized Kenzo® sweater that nearly eclipses her denim miniskirt skirt. Her is hair down and parades behind her with every step she takes in pointed black heels. She swings open the car door and tosses her counterfeit Prada® purse that she got in New York into his lap while she climbs into the passenger seat. His car’s tires screech against the asphalt as he revs the engine again, and they speed away with my sister’s laugher echoing up through the trees to me.

I reach for her Venus® razor and find the shaving cream under the sink. Staring at myself naked in the bathroom mirror, I’m surprised and somewhat impressed at the bushel of hair in my crotch I had unknowingly accumulated as I transgressed into late puberty. Bending over toward my ankles, I look toward the hair growing behind me in my asshole with equal surprise and more revulsion. Finicking with the temperature of the water till it was equal tepidity in both temperature and pressure, I stepped into the shower and contorted my back at an array of compromising and awkward angles, scraping blindly at the hair in the crack of my ass until a smoothness received every graze of my finger.

I was delicately straightening angles at which my beard hairs grew, fancying that if I were to get the angle perfectly right I could push them back in.

I can’t help but feel everywhere I walk in New York that the place is haunted by some era of importance that has passed. Decaying in the middle of a generation that hasn’t figured out who it is yet.

• Anger toward island’s culture of Christianity

I’m finding that I have to resist, to fight, even, the catchiness of the top 40 songs to imbibe more beautiful poetry—“pushing away the carefully selected garbage in order to perceive the more delicate perfume.” I’m reading Bauldelaire’s *Paris Spleen* and realize the banality of the rhyming top 40 song over the radio. I have the distinct feeling I’m the only person to have ever read Baudelaire in the exact space where I sit, a feeling that both gratifies and desolates me.

Luke has been asking me for awhile now to go to a Christian youth group with him and bunch of our friends. I just find it strange that while I’ve always known a lot of the people I go to school with are Christian, until we all started talking about sex no one ever seemed so devout. And yet it’s the people, like Luke, who are the most vocal about their faith that are also probably the most sexually active. And while I get irritated at his insistence that I attend these gatherings of like-minded folk, it’s honestly not the faith, but the hypocrisy that repels me. It just seems like the more they’re told that they sin, the more they need the church, but if they didn’t think they were sinning there would be no need to get together and talk about it.

Well so tonight we were on Facebook, and it’s Thursday, which means a lot of people went to one of those gatherings, and Luke and I just start chatting normally, you know, the whole “What’s up/nm, you?” when all of the sudden he tells me that he’s worried about me, and so I ask why. He responds with a question: “Would you rather burn in a lake of fire or enjoy a paradise with everyone you love?”

And maybe it’s unfair to hold this against him, but I’m remembering when my father died and Jessica heard from Monica that Luke’s mother had told Monica’s mom she didn’t know how we were getting by without our Faith, and in this moment I lose my patience and say, “You know, I have no problem if you want to believe whatever you want, but don’t push it on me.” And I guess he heard a real potent sermon tonight because he won’t take my abruptness for an indication that I don’t want to continue the conversation. He responds, “I know you struggle with faith, but I’m trying to help. I wouldn’t try if I didn’t care about you. Our friends want to see you in heaven.” And when I see the word “heaven” I sense the venom in my blood rushing to my fingertips. “I stopped believing in fairy-tales when my father died,” I type.

The degree to which Thomas’ body is comparatively safe from violence.

I know their parents talk about me, but I don’t care.

An environmental science class where Thomas makes the argument against recycling.

\*A little side not about Leo\*

He’s a fucking cunt. He’s a backstabber and a user. His feelings for Harley I bet aren’t even entirely genuine. He just wants to get into her pants, the little pervert. How do you cheat on someone, then stay together with them for a year, then “love” their best friend, and then your best friend’s ex. I use to hate him so much more. He kind of destroyed me for awhile. The sad part is he didn’t give it a ton of effort either. I got really sad about that whole situation and started taking pain killers everyday.

Harley’s a hypocrite, though, which is sad to say: true, though. Its against everything she use to stand for to be with Leo but she still is, whatever. I can return to

that quiet darkness in which I have grown to know myself.

\*Seth\*

Seth//Justin character tries to convince others his lies are reality.

-Seth is my bisexual friend even though he will adamantly deny this. He drinks too much and takes too many pills, and it’s really hard to be weak around him because as he looks to me for strength. He also analyzes and will pick at you if he gets a chance. He’s really loyal though, I guess surprisingly? I’m not really gonna have to worry about getting my ass kicked as long as he’s my best friend because no one wants to fight him. He tells me everything, and anything I ask about other people. Half of all his musical taste was acquired from me. He will adamantly deny this. He’s really unstable and thinks he’s smarter than he is and is really obnoxious when he’s drunk/high, but he’s good at making me laugh. He’s obsessed with sex and is an idiot when it comes to girls. Sometimes he fakes it when he’s drunk and His girlfriend is a lying whore. He’s been cheated on about 5 times.

I haven’t written in here for a while. Anyway, the war is on. Leo and his bitches found these gnomes for Craig’s basement, so Ryan and Seth smashed them, then Eddie and Leo and them TP’d Seth’s house, so we got Leo’s favorite gnome, “Metal Mario,” and beat the living shit out of it. First seth hit it, then Ryan, then Levi. Then we poured nail polish remover into what was left of it, and lit it on fire, covered it with ketchup and mustard, then put it on Leo’s driveway. Pretty funny stuff. Craig called me and told me that Leo had called him sounding really upset. How sad : ( NOT. Fucking Cunt. He deserves it. I couldn’t help smiling when I found out about it. Well I didn’t get to hang out with Katlin this weekend so no action for me. Too bad. Hopefully we’ll have fun at the costume party though. Levi’s pretty cool. I think I will get to be good friends with him. His mom is an alcoholic I think, just like mine. I don’t think he’s gay either. Whatever. I can’t wait for tomorrow. Leo will be so mad ☺

My little brother and I like to play Pokemon® on vintage Gameboy Colors. ® And so while we’re playing on Facebook and I get this message from Ryan:

He says: “I don’t like when you hug her,” and I shoot back: we’re friends.

He says: I’m telling you: I don’t like it.

And I guess I’m surprised he doesn’t understand that I’m not attracted to her, or maybe he does understand and that’s part of the reason. Either way I’m taken aback, and so I start to get defensive: “I hug all of my friends. I don’t understand what your problem is.”

“I just don’t like when you do it,” is all I get from him.   
“Whatever. You can’t control her or me,” I threaten as I sign off.

Considering if I should just try to blow Seth.

I was watching a documentary about Malcolm X with my aunt but she fell asleep.

• Ryan vs. Amanda’s party

Thomas doesn’t know he’s trans.

They can see some spot on the back of my head that marks me.

He passed out home-printed invitations today, and everyone is laughing at his typos. I saw one. It was just a white piece of paper with 24pt black Times New Roman saying to meet at the beach at six with blankets, food, and “gitars.” When I thought it might have been a mistake that he hadn’t given me an invitation yet, I asked him to sign my yearbook, and all he wrote was HAGS… (have a good summer).

Visiting hypnosis doctor like visiting an Ancient Greek oracle.

A character who practices throwing things away and decluttering.

One of the terrifying things for me about being in a public space is that I am forced into subjectivity. It isn’t possible to not have a point of view or social vantage point to be accountable for.

I glide down a promenade of jacaranda trees, whose fallen purple-blue petals scream against fresh asphalt. Moving my legs in slow circles, I am careful not to let the shredded hems of my jeans catch in the chain. A bay breeze cools the sweat under my arms.

I have the option of several paths, and I choose the one of which I am least familiar, to reduce to the likelihood that I will pass the home of someone I know. But like the trail of slime a snail leaves, every street is coated in memory, and the decision then becomes which past I will choose to relive.

Unconsciously, I appraise the houses that catch my eye, from desert-rendered bungalows to South-Asian “inspired” mansions, wondering at the gaps of wealth between the rich and the super-rich.

Finding my way through notoriety rather than the brilliant happiness that radiated from those of unquestioned belonging.

The world feels like such a horrible place.

After chaining my bike to an iron coil on the sidewalk, I walk along a wall of boulders until I reach an opening where a cement path cuts down across the dunes. Amanda’s invitation had said her party would be to the left, but I see earliest arrivals of Clifford’s already around a bonfire to the right. I start down the path, feeling like Moses as if instead between the giant stretches of sand I walk between walls of water.

Diverting from the path, I start across the sand, stepping between dead plant plants that look as if they’ve burned in the sun. I aim toward the voices I hear on the other side of the dune, until after climbing a sandy crest I see the moving silhouettes of the party.

The feeling I have approaching Amanda’s party is both resignation and relief. While I’m grateful to be at *a* party this Friday night, I know this is not *the* party to be at this Friday night. The comforting acceptance I’ll find within this circle will be laced a longing to discard it, a longing to see myself as socially superior, which, tonight has proven I am not. I am both gratified and desolated.

As the silhouettes begin to gain more three-dimensional form, I smell the smoke of the bonfire in the background. I hear Monica’s laugh as I begin my descent down the dune and see a red party cup in hand.

• Burning a Bible

I tear the wrapping paper off and am both amused and disappointed—amused because I know he wants to go through with our plan—but disappointed because what I uncover is some watered-down, Presbyterian abridgment, something I guess his parents had given him on a religious impulse they never pursued. My vision had expressly called for the Holy Roman Bible, which would have resonated much more with my larger “artistic statement,” of which I seemed to be the only one to fully appreciate. Recovering from my frustration with his lack of attention to nuance, I smile deviously.

Anyway, he doesn’t know the meaning behind any of this besides the adrenaline rush of destroying something. And it doesn’t matter as long as I have both an accomplice and an audience to legitimize that this happens. And I know there can be meaning in which book burns first. Genesis or Revelation—the origin or the prophecy, well, some think of it as an historical allegory, but never mind that. Oh and that Jesus is in one and not the other. Maybe we should condemn the book of condemnations, Leviticus? I have so much anger toward what I feel is between its pages I’m grateful that no matter where we start the rest will burn soon after.

We try burning the cover with a Bic® lighter from my pocket, but the density of the pages are too much for our presumptive embers, and the tediousness of enflaming smaller sections at a time only compromises the thrill of our obscenity. We decide to go to Rite Aid® and return to our spot in the alley with a bottle of generic nail polish remover and a box of Diamond® matches.

Seth yanks the top off the bottle and douses the whole text. Then we step back several paces to take turns throwing lit matches onto the pile as it lays wet and open under the sun.

I have the luck of throwing the match that keeps its flame as it lands. Blue fire spins over the cover, wandering down the spine before erupting into a yellow and red heresy.

We explode with hoots and cackles, growing delirious in an uncontrollable fit of hilarity. As swirls of smoke tentatively rise, Seth delivers a practiced kick that sends the remains ricocheting off a pair of tin trashcans as several charred pages flutter loosely into the dirt.

“I heard something about you, and I hope it’s not true.”

“It probably is,” I offer.

“Did you burn a bible?”

“I didn’t not burn a bible.”

“I hope you’re joking.”

“Everything is a joke.”

“Burning a bible isn’t a joke. It’s not funny, and I can’t believe you did that. Even if you don’t believe in God, out of respect for people in your life that do, you shouldn’t have done that.”

“I’m no longer interested in respecting people who don’t respect me,” I say hoping he receives it as a dismissal.

“So it was some act of revenge?”

“You’re going to hell.”

Good, I don’t need any more of his blue-light preaching.

I sign off and text Seth. “Luke is pissed.”

He texts back, “Who cares?” They’ve been interested in dating the same girl and so his apathy doesn’t surprise me. Do I care? I don’t think so.

She was wearing the cheapest Prada bag money can buy, the kind that’s mostly canvas, something you’d expect to find at REI until you saw the label and then were just sort of confused.

Gradual increased surveillance with evolving technology, i.e. first cell phone, Playstation Eyetoy

My poise is rigid and sore, overly composed Neo-Victorian guilt.

“They are our industrialists.”"

I have always sacrificed Genius for Beauty and Beauty for Genius.

Staring at my father’s death certificate.

being unable to avoid the sun, both its beauty and ubiquity

My first experience of the sublime: dreams of standing above pools of behemoth sea animals. Surrealism embedded in Thomas’s dreams.

I’ve been thinking recently about how because of memory none of us experience time linearly. However, I’ve noticed mixed results of non-linear plots, and so I hope you’ll forgive me for telling things as they are from beginning to end.

Always wanting to feel like I had my own reality show (Amanda’s sentiment)

For better or for worse, I’ve often run when opportunity presented itself.

Talking about how beer and weed become this way to create novelty or the illusion of some sense of freedom or achievement.

To outlive one’s maker: is that not the goal behind any creation? One of my maker’s has achieve this prematurely. Tonight my father has shown me the best of everything he’s seen. Our dinner took place in a private room in a restaurant with only private rooms. 9 courses and 150,000 yen later, I found myself concealing tears in a taxi. Tokyo is my father: hard work, indulgence, and exclusivity with only the the impost important people. Tokyo is stratified; Tokyo is moonlight outshined with neon/ Tonight I felt the sublime of my father’s love for me, something maturity and experience was required to fathom. As I stared at blurred streets through the window of our cab, I felt myself cross an emotional threshold, on my father’s side: an ultimate demonstration of love lacquered with glamour and discretion.

Thomas is disgusted by men and afraid of dominating women.

“I’m like a very mature petunia.”

I can feel my grandmother’s neuroses speaking through me.

And yet cowardice remains my greatest asset.

Abstracting life through code. Ordering delivery through your phone abstracts the labor of producing a meal.

Read about how the different JavaScript frameworks initiate and render their global objects.

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“If you have a choice, I don’t know why anyone wouldn’t want to make something pretty. It’s as easy as picking a flower and putting it in a bowl of water—or lighting some incense. It’s so easy, and it changes the energy of the room,” She said.

Older divorced/widowed white women discussing property together, and whether one should buy a gas or electric stove for a rental investment

The threat of an earthquake that never comes

A character turned on by the sound of a public radio newscaster.

Addictions must always be replaced.

Replacing the addition of drinking with the addiction of talking about not drinking

The different feelings that marinate in a person from lounging in different ambiances.

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The background of my cellphone is blank white wall so I can use it as a flashlight. I am terrified of cockroaches.

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Elocution lessons that mandate students repeat “femininity, femininity, femininity.”

I resent him [Christopher] for voicing my own private platitudes. Thomas hates the boy next door for being banal.

It’s a cruel lesson to have to learn.

Where is the evil?

And my parliament is smoking.

The pathetic vicariousness through which men articulate their virtues and character through watching and commenting on sports.

I don’t want to be his foil.

Burdening my gorgeous waiter with their filthy logistics.

I will allow him to admire my beautify from a distance.

We live in an age when we can’t often look to our elders for wisdom.

And it’s like, can he just shut the fuck up?

Smirking, sneering, scowling.

Thomas skewers the gay who seeks acceptance through his banally outlandish humor.

I hate Chris for what I am.

“The Dog and the Scent Bottle” by Baudelaire

My sister has been friends with this one girl since she was five years old. Even though her friend isn’t as pretty or popular as Jessica, and even though she doesn’t party or even go out, they’ve stayed pretty close. Monica probably comes over once a week. I’ve always gotten along with her fairly well. I think it’s because we can both sense that we’re different. Monica surfs a lot. She wears True Religions with white stitching on the back pocket and never styles her hair—just pulls it into a top bun that relaxes on her head everywhere she goes.

She came over today to do her homework, and so like I do sometimes, I stayed really quiet in my room with my window open so that I could hear them talking.

Religion is a sacred fiction people agree to place value in.

It will be up to the children of today’s 1% to reject their inheritances. We know who they are and will wait and watch them to see how long it takes.

Everything in my studio feels cold. I shivered as I got into bed. My wrists are noticing the temperature of my keyboard.

Littering for fun

Write about being told to roll over one another at SU

While my envy festers, I will relish in all that she cannot allow herself. I burp in response.

Ripping leaves as I wallow.

My faded black shirt is streaked with orange bleach stains from a recent experiment.

Spray painting the logo off of my Etnies*®* shoes.

Thomas closed his copy of Dress your Family in Denim and Corduroy, thinking, “Well, David Sedaris, you’ve somehow managed to bore me to sleep.”

Rejecting of status quo, white gay culture.

He pitched the book behind himself like he’d seen in cartoons.

Thomas was in Paris.

Only since the digital age has the Catholic fantasy of a purge been fully realized— the act of deletion, smiting something from existence absolutely is a testament of how Catholicism has informed technology.

This was before my father would keep me on the club soccer team by paying the tuitions of five other boys with black hair who lived across that Bridge.

Most of the other boys wore black, myself included. I wore a black sweater with black shorts.

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When Thomas was young, he didn’t see how anyone could interpret the epithet, “pretty boy” in any way other than a compliment, even when it was supplemented by, “with a big nose.”

Write about an aunt who won’t witness or acknowledge black struggles, who falls asleep during documentaries etc.

My sister likes to listen to Lana del Rey and smoke weed.

Weed as something I always grew up around. Uncles smoking weed when I was a kid.

As the technocrats.

Screen name conversations on AIM. People using fake screen names

Headphones are a symbol.

John and Peter came over today.

Christian boy hypocrite stoners. Bumming off my weed and preaching to me the year before.

Being compared to Jessica and told I don’t look nice enough by conventional preppy standards. Told by my father when he takes me out to dinner he expects me to shave and look nicer. Before head injury I’ve resisted internalizing expectations of my community. Afterward I’ve internalized those expectations and fully subscribed to them.

Looking at myself in the mirror within the soft darkness.

Not washing his hair for weeks.

Thomas’s fascination with Kurt Cobain.

My aunt tells me that my “preoccupation” with Kurt Cobain makes her nervous. She’s worried that I’ll glorify suicide or try to kill myself to be like him. But I wanted to die before I ever heard of him. Now I just have someone who understands why without me having to explain.

The comfort of being sad. A type of forbidden fruit for privileged preteen ideologies.

Experimenting with cutting himself when witnessing friends do the same.

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“You need to tone yourself down like 10%.” he told me. “You’re just a little too much.”

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I Google®-ed tips for how to tell a lie over the phone, but the only results that came up were how to tell if someone else were telling a lie over the phone. I looked through a *Psychology Today* article that explained deviations in intonation from a person’s baseline, a baseline being the most stable pitch of their voice, are a quick indicator. Response time and word fillers like “Uh…” were a close second. Lastly, bad liars use evasive answers. I then wrote myself a script and took deep breaths for a minute to insure my voice would not waver.

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Every shot we take together we trespass the threshold of another homoerotic inhibition.

I slept well. I can’t remember any of my dreams, though. The night before, I dreamt that I was on the coast with my mother and sister. For some reason my father wasn’t there. There was panic on a beach. In the distance we could see the landscape becoming consumed in myriad of spires of white smoke. It was very loud. People started running, although the only place to go was through the dunes and into the semitropical forestry. I remember worrying about where my mother and sister were going. I wanted to tell them to follow me so we wouldn’t get lost. I was afraid.

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I’ll score more weed later today. My friends are coming over and I only have $25 worth, so they’ll probably go through that and I’ll be unmedicated. I hate Facebook/Myspace when I’m high.

Occasionally I think of the hard water and the silverfish at my dad’s house. I hated the silverfish even more once I learned what they were called. Things never felt like they got clean at his house. After two months of cleaning all the time, the permafilm of dirt, and what honestly must have been decay, was even more than it had been before I started cleaning. My father’s house was a manifestation of his darker sides. It was unkempt and secretive. More than once, when I had imbibed a little too much THC, and my extrasensory perception was even more sensitive and perceptive, I felt like the house had cancer.

Testing my health and my invincibility with drugs.

I use journals people give me. I still smoke daily. I love it. I have taken to hoarding up early childhood movies (Disney® especially) and Square Enix material.

There are those I get along with but I don’t try.

There are those I don’t get along with but I try.

There are those I don’t get along with but I don’t try.

There are those I get along with but I try.

I just found $100 in my pocket. I have lots of money from work.

Thomas is a crust punk, grungy hoodlum before his head injury. Afterward he is a glamorized brand whore.

I’m sitting in my room. There’s a Nordstrom bag, an American Apparel bag, and 7 for All Mankind bag. I have the newest Mac laptop infronto f me and I just smoked a bowl. I have every Disney animated film I could ever find, mask hanging on my wall from all over the world. I like talking about money. I’m stoned. I’ve been down lately. What’s new?

Sometimes life was defined by when I had weed, and by when I didn’t have weed.

Was the American Revolution just a contested transfer of power from British Government to Colonial Aristocrats like John Hancock, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson?

What did Samuel Adams have to gain from pushing propaganda?

What about John Adams?

I remember what it feels like for me to be in love.

Fear and daring twist together as I contort my life to align with any space his might have for me. I watch myself forsake all those whose company sustained me before him, watch them recede away like weeds doused in Roundup®.

That this emotion experiences no reciprocity from my beloved only fortifies its sustainability. For as long as I can savor this longing, I am completely his, whether he wants me or not. I am not even sure I could love him if he loved me back.

We’ve been learning about other religions in the world besides Christianity. Every time I see a bug now I get even more freaked out than before because I start thinking about how cockroaches and silverfish could have been child molesters and rapists in their past lives.

Twisting the stems of calla lilies as if breaking their necks before throwing them into the trash.

Geronimo of the Southwest, Tousaint of Haiti, Osceola the Seminole, lured by truce and jailed.

BDSM witch.

The delicate ways those beautiful boys speak to one another.

I hate birds.

^

(residential)

I’ve been high all day, but it’s to the point where it’s not that easy to differentiate between high and sober.

If all else fails I can trust Sidney. I may not be protected from her judgment but I am granted certainty.

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That inarticulate passive aggression for which most cis men of this century will be known for by their family and lovers.

[Michael/wyatt/evan/)

Character who wears his dead father’s clothes (not :

“You have no respect for legacy.”

“No, I don’t have respect for sentimentalism, especially toward objects.”

I’m awake at midnight with no bud : (

I feel like I’m surrounded by mooches. I’ve decided I hate parties. I really don’t like a lot of people at school. I can’t deal with that shit sober. I need to be rejuvenated, revived, rekindled, resurrected.

The giant moth that came into my room when I was smoking weed.

The mouse I stamped to death. Doing so after ecocritical conversations have happened.

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Body-building as anti-environmental

Mom has a new boyfriend. His name is Jamie. She told me she loves him and would marry him. Awkward. I can’t sleep again. I hate this. I love marijuana.

I really need to get stronger meds. I still feel down. I don’t feel like I can call my friends, and I don’t like most of them. I sleep awfully and am pessimistic about the future. The only reason I want to leave the house is to go get fucked up. It isn’t like I even want to see anyone. Even Levi. I feel so sad and so lonely. I am just not happy with a lot right now. Not my friends, not my romantic life, or even myself. I just feel like everything will just suck forever. I don’t like mornings because it means I have a whole day in front of me to not participate in. I wish I could go back to when I was younger. Even though things weren’t perfect there was a beautiful innocence and ignorance about it. These days I don’t like doing anything. I don’t like getting up, hanging out with most of my friends, exercising, being outside, or most other things. I do not know what to do to make this wave of sadness pass.

I take my headphones off because I see that his lips are moving.

I just smelt the perfume Guilty by Gucci. It kind of smells like Dolce and Gabanna Red.. My sister wears Guilty,

I learned at seven years old I can’t be trusted with power over other people.

Thomas’ obsession with literature relating to drug use: *Go Ask Allice,* *A Million Little Pieces,* *Dry,* *Scar Tissue.* The fixation on the process of overindulgence and then penance.

Littering.

I don’t worry about what everyone says about smoking because by the time I get cancer there will be a cure for it anyway. I’m in the alley and stare up at the sky, feeling myself trying to crawl toward the clouds out of the cavern between the buildings. Walk toward school.

I sat in the courtyard waiting for someone. I didn’t know who. As I stared blankly at the fountain, the condensation rom my breath clung to my glasses, and through the fogged lenses each light I saw was haloed in concentric rainbows. The more I breathed the more clearly I saw the lights not as white or yellow bulbs but as the depth of colors that created their composites.

I stopped before a white sculpture of mother Mary standing over a snake whose tongue hung languidly outside its mouth.

I got home and my little brother was playing the Sims. Look! I recreated our house he said. Only my room is redone completely in artdeco! Cool, I say, and close the door to my room. I light another joint and pick a pad of paper to draw on while I space out for the next hour. When I hear the front door slam I shake myself conscious and realize I have been rewriting the phrase,“My horns are heavy,” over and over.

2) Decadence -meeting Levi

• Meeting Levi (where do I meet Levi?) Health class

Class consciousness begins when Thomas meets Levi.

Who do I want Levi’s character to be? At the moment he’s a bit of a blank slate… Use traits of myself that I like to fill Levi’s character with. Fantasize about Levi as if he is Jesus—he replaces Jesus and God. He is the twisted romantcization gay men experience toward straight men.

Levi lives on the strand

The one thing I know I can do is wait.

Levi not understanding my family’s delicate social decorums.

To not accept his repayment would emasculate him.

I watch the golden boy shining across the field while the pasty and freckled tear at his legs with cleated slide tackles. The curves of his biceps and buttocks weave between groups of them, and when his agility isn’t enough to evade their advances, his brawny confidence shoulders through. His mother cheers him on as our coach roars commands that he effortlessly obeys.

He smells like Dove Men + Care®.

Loving archetypal whiteness leading to self-destruction.

Loving the Beloved and subscribing to hegemonic beauty ideals leading to my institutionalization.

The Beloved as other—bronze skin, no freckles, curly hair. He looks golden.

A pushup is the most masculine thing I can think of.

To live one’s life with the most nuanced expressions of culture so as to live as an expression of entropy.

“Cease burdening me with your petty environmentalism,” I wave away.

Thomas’s aunt is a petty environmentalist.

To me it’s more important that the corporations change how they consume our resources and administer them to individuals than for individual’s to limit their uses based on an what’s presented to be a limitless supply.

He’s one of the few white boys I’ve ever seen on this island with a top lip. He’s a white person with a top lip. Anyways, he uses pretentious words like ‘esoteric.’”

Of Levi: “He wasn’t “boy-next-door” because his family couldn’t afford the house next door. They drifted and remade their lives in each new state and as so, he was never burdened with the weight of a reputation.

He asked me what was wrong with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (less desirable brand). That he did not understand yet made me realize that I could love him.

He’s telling me the difference between Night Elves and Blood Elves, and the fact that the difference will never be of any consequence to me whatsoever can’t change my happiness that his attention at this one moment is focused on me.

Comingling of virtual realities and physical realities. Describing the 64-bit worlds and interactions within those contexts as an avatar.

When I beat one of my friends as {insert rare moments in which the world sees me as I see myself.

Why do you always like to play the girl characters?

Jessica asking about me playing video games.

Glamorizing female characters in video games.

I picked Zelda™. He picked Link™.

{edit this section so that the current paragraph below resembles Zelda’s moves, not Kirby’s.}

I did that thing where you jump above your opponent then turn into a box and free fall on top of them. He flew across the screen. I pressed B to turn normal again and then chased him across the surface of the plane. He slashed me across the face with his sword, and I fell away. A passing fighter jet rained lasers down in between us, and we both stood still as they exploded on the surface of the plane. I ran back toward him, and then he spun around and slashed me in the face again, and I sailed across the screen in the other direction.

I jumped down toward him, but then he threw a bomb in my face, and I couldn’t move for a couple seconds. He hooked me in with the chain he kicked me off the screen. KO.

We had a school assembly today, and so we all had to sit in the auditorium while this guy with unnaturally messy hair and some silly blond highlights talked to us about abstinence. He had , the kind of hair you can tell he paid his hairdresser (who’s probably a faggot) to make look effortless. He looked like he was part of a Christian rock band. Anyway, he told this story about how he always felt self-conscious in the locker room because his teammates would talk about sex, and so he felt pressured to have sex before marriage. So one day he ran through hallway, screaming, “Virgin!!!” and I guess ever since then he became some sort of abstinence hero who goes around telling other teenagers to scream “Virgin!” in the hallway instead of fucking with protection.

Anyway, this group of boys some of my friends are friends with thought the story was so funny they started calling themselves V-Crew, short for Virgin Crew, which doesn’t make sense because I know that at least two have them have already had sex since one of their girlfriends had to have an abortion because they didn’t use a condom and her parents wouldn’t let her take birth control. The other had gotten crabs from random woman he had met through his cousin. Well most of their group is in my health class, and they recently took a liking to Levi, probably because he’s good-looking and impressionable. They started talking to him about some sort of initiation process so that he can call himself a member of V-Crew, and even though I know it’s a joke jealousy flared inside me, which is different from envy, because envy is wanting what someone else has, and jealousy is a feeling people experience when they’re afraid to lose what they have to someone else, and it makes sense that I’m feeling jealous, because even though they’re joking about the initiation, they’re not joking—the joke is the initiation. And I know I can’t be his only friend, but I don’t want him to have more fun with them, and I just want him to want to spend time with me.

Choosing passwords AND screen names: the significance of secret words and numbers.

Every night I stay up late. I bathe in the blue light of my computer while the stinging beneath my nails nags me to close-read every AIM® conversation I’ve had that evening. I search for clues about the next day because pretending to be able to anticipate the tectonic shifts beneath my school’s social landscape sometimes quells my anxiety—anxiety that always melts into perceptibly wet underarms by lunchtime—a reason I’ve learned to carry a combination deodorant/antiperspirant in my backpack. The chalky, scented powder sometimes clumps in the irregular hairs of my underarms, and I would shave them but am worried about what my friends would say in the locker room while we examine one another (what for them is adolescent posturing but for me is a fragile pretense for voyeurism). I usually buy AXE® because Old Spice® commercials, however pseudo-self-effacing, seem to suggest I should want to smell like my father, which I don’t.

Tonight I start out with the most important conversation. He signed on when I was at dinner—I know because I’m always signed on and always keep his chat window open. When I came back at 8 he had posted an away message that said “Eating.” That casual disclosure—the complete indifference for the possible need to write anything else—the guttural, straightforward articulation of his needs, it reaffirmed everything I find captivating in him and revolting in all other men.

Sometimes he keeps his away message up longer than he’s physically away because he’s playing World of Warcraft®. I know for two reasons: 1) I tend to message him regardless of whether his status says he’s available, and 2) I’ve laid on his bed while watching him do the same to others. So I ventured, “You’re not eating.”

I wait for five minutes. I try to distract myself with a Wikipedia® entry about Yukio Mishima when he finally decides to respond.

His\_screen\_name: Actually I am.

I guess I’ll admit that his family culture seems at once anarchistic and self-determining. Whereas, every night, my family had sat down to dinner at approximately an hour and a half after my father had come home and drank his first-and-a-half glass of wine, red in the fall and winter, white in the spring and summer, his family dinners happen spontaneously and sporadically. He makes himself meals with things I’ve never found in my family’s pantry: Chef Boyardee®, SpaghettiOs®, all types of canned goods that spill into mixtures of yellow and red. Other times his mother comes home with tacos from a stand she has driven by on the way back from a bar, and whichever children are home at the moment have dinner prepared by someone else. I assumed tonight had been one of the former.

My\_screen\_name: Why weren’t you in class today?

The only class we had together, Health, had been ruined for me when he hadn’t shown up after the first half hour. He was often late and so I never worried until after then.

His\_screen\_name: My mom didn’t drive us today.

At this point he still lived on the Naval Base to the south along an artificial strip of land the military had constructed to render the Island a peninsula. (I figure everyone still calls it the Island out of some sort of pathetic brand of resort-community nostalgia.) Because this strip of land called the Strand was about 9 miles away from the school, his family relies on his mother to carpool the children to the Village.

He comes over and remains looking at his phone.

• Introducing him to smoking weed and drinking

Watching a youtube video with an advertisement for a Hawaiian resort I will be staying at within the next week where a celebrity stayed.

After lying to Justin about the sound of his voice on camera.

“Does my voice really sound like that?”

“Yeah.”

Making a point to retaliate at some point.

Lunch at the Proud Peacock while our family takes pictures of the peacock and the next table collects its feathers.

I tell him that I kiss people when I’m high so that later when do kiss him he might still think it’s weird but will have some sort of explanation, however unsatisfactory.

I’ve decided to corrupt him.

Corrupt Levi.

I am content to wait, knowing that the inevitable passing of time is the only thing that separates me from what I want.

Today, well, yesterday now, I guess, Levi and I sat next to each other in gym. I had watched him change fifteen minutes before, as I always do when I can. Sometimes I’m not even careful to see if anyone else is watching me watch him because I love him so much that in those moments I don’t care what happens. But then I snap out of it and realize we’re two teenage boys in a locker room and that there are rules, a sort of code of conduct for how I’m supposed to behave to preserve myself. And so then I look away at some hideous creature, sometimes my friend Seth who I swear comes onto me but for the life of me I can’t seem to find attractive. Maybe it’s because he was the first guy I knew to admit that he shaved his pubes. You know, sometimes his face looks like a Cabbage Patch Kid® or American Girl Doll® (I mean, they all look the same) but for some reason the girls we hang out with all end up hooking up with him. He says he has a big dick (named it Pumba®, like the warthog) but I don’t really care about that if I can’t even get past his face.

Well, so Levi and I were sitting next to each other and I could feel him breathe in that kind of unselfconscious way that inarticulate babes of men sometimes do. That’s half the reason I’m so in love with him is that he represents an alternative to my over-articulate, anxiety-ridden hysteria. He was holding one of those tiny pencils between his two fingers with his chest thrown over the desk so that most of his weight was on his right shoulder facing me and his elbow balancing his limp wrist when he asked, “Why isn’t this a cigarette?”

Lately we’ve been sneaking out on weekends (although he and Seth snuck out the other night and called me to come meet them, but I was just getting back from a trip to Hawaii and was in the airport with my family) and now when I buy weed I always ask the skinny, pale kid with crazy black hair to pick up a pack of *Camels: Turkish Delights.* I don’t really like *Camels* but they were the first cigarettes I ever tried, and I’m prone to nostalgia.

So he asks me why the pencil isn’t a cigarette, and I wish it were a cigarette, too, so that I could watch him smoke, which would be much better than listening to our PE teacher explain this project in which we have to write letters to famous athletes. I don’t even know why we’re writing in PE class, and I don’t know why we’re writing to famous athletes. I just watch Levi stare at his pencil and think how beautiful he is.

Being with Seth and dabbling in drugs, then abandoning him for Levi and seducing Levi with the fun I knew in Coronado.

“A third of the land on the planet is desert,” the narrator stated.

“For now,” I quip.

“These are subordinate ibexes, but their fights are nonetheless serious. Losing one may mean never having the chance to breed, ever.”

“There is so much at stake that not all play fair.”

“If you don’t think teenagers today talk to each other like that then you obviously aren’t around teenagers very much.”

-Desert, *Planet Earth.*

*Planet Earth*, the nature documentary, offers a lot of material to critique. Such as the voice of God narration, etc. This is a fabulous opportunity to use ecocriticism in the classroom in a high school context.

These situations, watching a movie in class, can be the backdrop for situations when Thomas is waiting for Levi/Jose to come to class.

And every Hollywood romance becomes a new casting from the shape-shifting mold of my love for him.

Levi was swarthy. My hope to recreate Levi out of my fantasies for dark-skinned Disney men. Ultiamtley fails, because, like my recreation of commercials, these hopes are based in fantasy (not to mention imperialistic commercialism) not a reality grounded by peoples’ stories.

My sister and her friends just got home. They were out shopping. They do this thing where they wear sweatpants to Nordstrom® during the busiest times while the sales people are overwhelmed, and they grab like nine pairs of Citizens for Humanity® or Seven for All Mankind® jeans at once to try on in the dressing rooms. Then they pick one pair to buy and cut off the tags of another pair that they walk out with under their sweatpants. They’re downstairs trying on each other’s finds.

When they could smell the joint I’d lit they made me smoke them out. They smoked almost the whole thing while they made fun of my hair because I haven’t washed it for like a month. Then they left to go sneak into the pool at the Hotel Del.

I fell back into my bed and leaned over the edge to push *Alice in Wonderland* into the VCR. I do this thing where I like to be high at three pm just as the flowers begin singing “The Golden Afternoon.” As I’m waiting for Alice to choke on her words and ruin the song, he texts me.

• Our grade starting to host parties and drink on the golf course/beach

Evoke the wraiths when describing how I snuck out

Suddenly all the world is a blistering light except for the soft darkness where he walks. I find myself exhausted by any conversation other than that which concerns him, yet I bristle at any mention of his name that doesn’t include mine.

My aunt said it’s okay to stay at his house tonight. I was texting with Seth earlier and it sounds like V-Crew is going to steal some beer from Safeway because Safeway has a rule where employees don’t chase customers who steal. So it’s late in the afternoon, my favorite time of day, before sunset, and as the last rays pour in through his bedroom window I’m laying on his bed while I watch him play World of Warcraft.

His hair has started to grow out a little more, and it’s right in between the stage of when it’s nice and short and then about to be too long, but because it’s not quite there yet, it just looks carefree.

His phone rings and Chris calls saying that they have beer and are storing it at Andrea’s house because her father is out of town, so he hangs up and says let’s go. He takes off his shirt and pulls on a heather gray zip-up hoodie that imitates the ones from American apparel, but I know that it’s from Urban Outfitters because of its plastic white zipper. So I put on my black hoodie, which *is* from American Apparel, and we both leave his room. In the hall we run into his sister who’s playing Neopets and also walk by his brother’s room. Clay is just lying on his back staring at the ceiling. We say bye to them both and walk outside to the backyard to get the bikes. Most people on the island only have beach cruisers, but his family has a couple of trick bikes, for him and Clay, I’m guessing, one racing bike, and then one beach cruiser. He lets me ride the beach cruiser because I’ve never ridden anything else, while he grabs one of the trick bikes.

We’re going to this part of the beach that’s near these old ‘60s style apartments where we’ll wait for someone to bring alcohol. Levi has a water bottled filled with vodka, and Craig is bringing a few beers. It’s pretty warm out but there’s a mist that makes the air feel heavy as we ride.

The moonlight is strobing through the trees across the street, and the wind keeps parting my hair at different angles. I’m not sure what’s going to happen tonight after we get alcohol but I’ve heard people say we might sneak into the pool at the Hotel Del.

While I continue to give him what I cannot receive myself.

I sit down to pee as usual, enjoying the extra time to think.

Vomiting outside and the walking into the house and letting Bridgett kiss me, while her teeth looked green from the Pucker’s green apple vodka.

Able to read the unconscious code of my movements.

When every vision of romance I see for us must remain an unspoken fantasy lest my speech chain it to a dull reality.

Now each new bond will be molded in his cast.

• Drinking together, becoming increasingly reliant on him

He’s picking his nose, and I’m thinking how cute he is.

Ressurrected from my melancholy yet driven to manic desire.

Moonlight burning through the Venetian blinds.

I stare at a single sheet of toilet paper, swaying like a lion fish in the gentle jet of water as the bowl refills.

Glamorizing an eaten food plate/exacting beauty from the Beloved’s dirty plate.

I follow my shadow as it leads me toward his house.

He’s tearing the paper straw and letting the shreds fall on one another, and I think, “Post-structural origami.” And you might think I sound delusional, but I don’t care because it’s been so long since I’ve cared about something or someone other than how horrible I feel.

Levi living in The Shores. Hungover in bed. Ordering pizza. Aunt telling me to come home when his mother say she’s not coming back

The veil that hides the blades of human personality.

Thomas’s voice should be effeminate.

Thomas pays a lot of attention to fashion.

His every step sends tremors toward me, every breath a gust of summer air.

Culture is poison.

About Chris

He’s always trying to make these new catchphrases and slang happen. I’ve had so many, “Gretchen-fetch-isn’t-going-to-happen” moments with him that I’ve had to exercise my creative muscles to come up with crueler put downs.

My socks are soaked with Fantastik.

He drunk calls me and asks, “What are you doing?”

“Watching Snow White,” I say.

“Oooh, can I come over?” He asks.

(Brief history of Hawaii and its annexation)

“Well. I mean that’s one perspective.”

“No, this really happened. It’s not like it’s some point-of-view shit. It’s *the* reason there are Marriott’s on Oahu.”

• Us making out

We’re sitting in the pool. I try to keep my whole body in the water because I’m so white that my skin reflects the lights above us, so brightly that when I stand, gray moths drift down from the fluorescent lamps toward my bare shoulders.

Gerardo is in the pool with us. We’ve all been drinking Malibu® rum all night, and I’ve just returned from smoking a Camel@cigarette. I heard Gerardo say how skinny I look as I smoked off to the side, and I couldn’t decide whether I liked his tone or felt threatened by the way he said it to Levi.

• Me telling him I love him

I think I would be a lot less awkward if I could just say I’m attracted to you. I like when you look at me, when you talk to me, when you touch me. I don’t know why and I know we’re both in pain but I just know that some of my pain will go away if I can just tell you this and know that things will still be okay.

I tell him that I’m not trying to stop him from loving someone else. I say I’m in so much pain it won’t matter much whether he’s with someone else. I just want him in my life and I know that seeing him with other girls won’t matter as long as he’s my friend. He’s quiet, but he hasn’t gotten up and left me yet, so I go get the joint and light it up as we lay in bed and both stare at the ceiling.

• Levi taking distance, telling me we can still be friends

I got drunk last night and called Levi last night to tell him I love him. He wants to come over tomorrow to talk. When I told him he was a mess of things, he was at first happy, then started crying and was angry. I told him we can’t work because he is straight and I’m gay. It just is awful. It means we have no hope. Nothing can ever work because of something innate and unfixable. I love him so much. I just want it to be us. I want to kiss him. I want him to tell me that he loves me. I want him to want me sexually. I hate feeling ugly or inadequate around him because I know I’m not. I just can’t satisfy him.

As a gay man, to love someone more feminine than yourself brings you into a new sort of freedom. If you can love someone including all of his femininity, you give yourself permission to chip away at your own fragile prison of masculinity.

This is how I knew he is still bound by the brittle laws, how careful he is in moving with these chains of sand.

He says, “Hey Tommy, baby,” because the first time his brother got drunk, he came home when we were watching a movie on the couch, and when his brother saw me he said, “Hey Tommy, baby,” which Levi thought was hilarious. Levi’s brother is almost exactly like him, only proportionally larger and less articulate, which, of course, makes him proportionally more attractive. To be honest, if I had met his brother first and he weren’t two years older, and therefore a part of a different social strata, I might have fallen in love with him instead, which might sound shallow, because it is—my only justification, or excuse I should say, is that I would never want to fall in love with someone like myself—frail and overly articulate—so my love, which is very much conditional, is also the antithesis of narcissism, which, I find very romantic.

Trying to change myself to be everything for Levi—femme and masc in the right ways. Realizing there’s no way to do this.

Ditching Justin when he’s in town and feeling guilt over it, only to learn later that Justin sympathized with the alt-right.

• Continue as before, Levi experiments with Thomas, and they talk about becoming boyfriends.

He texts me things I know if I were to reciprocate would be unforgivable: “I miss you; I need you; I can’t concentrate without you.”

We slam the door and stumble into the alley. Orange and cream lights spin in the background as our legs carry us into plastic trashcans. I’m laughing and grabbing his hand, and I know we’re being too loud for how late it is, but I’m drunk and close to him, and so I feel invincible.

As we careen toward the center of the alley under the stars or streetlights, I can’t tell which, he says let’s not go to \_\_\_\_\_\_’s party [this person is significant], and I don’t care because I only go to parties so that I can be with him. And so I tell him “I don’t care what we do, I just want to be with you,” and he laughs and gives me a look like he wishes I wouldn’t be so upfront with how I feel, but I feel so good being able to say something so close to “I love you” that it won’t stop me from saying something similar again.

He asks me for a cigarette and I give him one even though if he were someone else and say, “I don’t have any.” But because it’s him I take out a Camel®, and he does that thing I’ve seen women do in movies where they hang the cigarette between their lips while they wait for the man to light it, and so I light it, and he says, “Thanks, baby,” just to mess with me because he knows I like it when he says stuff like that, but he also knows that I know he doesn’t mean it seriously.

We start walking again, and we make sure that we walk between the two red lines so that we don’t hit any more trashcans, but he’s walking super slow like he always does, and so I adjust my pace so that we shuffle together while he smokes. We pass a backyard with bougainvillea bursting past the white wooden gate that guards it, and I think it’s beautiful but don’t say anything because I want the focus of the moment to be on us walking together right now.

He finishes the cigarette and flicks it away from him like he learned from watching Chandler in *Friends*, and I think it’s cheesy but don’t say anything because I just want him to want to be here with me right now. For some reason he grabs my hand, and I don’t care that he’s probably messing with me again because I get to hold his hand, and so I let him grab it and press his fingers into my palm, one at a time from his pinky to his thumb. We pass a pink house where the lights from above us don’t reach, and I feel him lift my arm and swing me up against the wall, as the back of my head hits little bumps of the stucco.

He pushes his lips onto mine, and I’m so happy it’s happening again that I hold his lower lip between my teeth for a second so that he can’t move, but then I feel his tongue and so I let him practice kissing girls with my mouth. Then he wraps his forearm behind my neck while he pulls me in further for a second before pressing down on the top of my head. I get on my knees and kiss his stomach for a second before he unzips his pants and pulls out his dick.

I’m shocked and drunk and don’t know what I’m doing, but I put it in my mouth and try to be careful that my braces don’t hurt him, but his dick is stretching my mouth, and it’s a lot harder to do this than I’ve seen in movies and porn. I suck his dick for about two minutes until my jaw starts aching, and so I put it back in his pants and come up for a kiss and ask, “How as that?”

“Too much teeth,” he says.

We stand together beneath the bridge, and I have the distinct sensation that this moment has already ended, that our isolation on this island together is finished, the world outside arrived, our bodies parted, our minds disconnected, our futures apart.

• Levi says it won’t work, hooked up with Bridgett

Harley stopping by Marie Calendar’s on my birthday with Leo.

It was an emerald age. I always had two things: money and marijuana.

Considerations of partners and property.

Levi is projected to be my “inarticulate hero”—laboring on about the World of Warcraft.

Thomas’s dream:

Alcoholic sentimentalism

Technologies are associated with and code gender: establish dichotomies and then hierarchies that privilege masculinity.

Pay extra attention when describing the brands characters use—those brands must develop characterization.

Technology changes who we are by how we socially, physically, and intellectually function.

My poise is rigid and sore, overly composed Neo-Victorian guilt.

“They are our industrialists. Like 30 families control more than half the wealth in the country. 30 families. Why don’t we all just google them to see who they are?”

“Why don’t we just google them?” I ask.

“Why don’t we just google them.” she confirms.

Janna and Thomas send a letter to the person.

We’ve come to think that physically fighting for what you think is right is immoral.

The academic industrial complex has coopted and employed our strategists.

The aestheticisation of violence. The obsession with aestheticisizing violence.

Thomas burned the sage his mother brought him from where his family had hiked, out east in San Diego. He danced to the confusing rhythm of the jazz he had on in the background, twirling the burning dried leaves in effervescent spirals. He was happy to be home. He walked over to where he kept his incense, and enflamed a stick of rose. “I’m burning all kinds of things tonight*,*”he thought. Then, with the heat on 75 degrees and the temperature 40 degrees outside, he threw open the large windows that took up practically a whole wall. The window faced the hustling street, and for a moment he watched the impatient traffic.

Thomas stepped back from the window. He called his mother and she told him that his favorite cat had a kidney infection. He cried a little, then poured himself a glass of chardonnay, and settled into *Disco Bloodbath*. As he was reading, he bemused that he needed to find *his* Michael Alig- or was it that he *was* Michael Alig and needed to find *his* James St. James? He figured he was *much* more of a James St. James. But then upon further reflection, Thomas realized that we are all both Michael Alig *and* James St. James.

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The ultimate expression of my aestheticism.

“Altheticism?”

“No, aestheticism. Ther;lkaejrka.

Trying to see myself in the different characters of popular films, like *Star Wars* and *The Notebook.* Where was room for the love I felt to be expressed?

Down feather quill poking through pillows

I am my body’s harshest critic. I like the way I look, but I constantly criticize myself. I try to be tan and slender with a tone.

[draw connections or suggest imagery that connects Jessica and Alice. ]

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Thomas sat in his park, smoking, as usual. It was 8:34:34 PM, and Thomas leaned back to breathe deeply, listening to the noise of traffic steadily increase. Far off, the noise first sighed, then hissed, and then breathed out like a dragon, gradually building momentum like an ocean wave, until, unlike a wave, the cars streamed, and rolled, and bustled past the corner where Thomas observed.

People, also, syncing with the crescendo of the traffic, spoke louder, more urgently, more gregariously, each desperate to be heard.

I logged onto Facebook.

Sin was in his eyes, and I loved it.

Levi telling me if I had a 6-pack and looked like Anakin Skywalker he would be more attracted to me. Me articulating what I find attractive about myself and him nullifying it.

Hot pink clouds smeared across the electric blue sky.

I lift my head slightly and look at him through my bangs. *Why give people what they want?*

Cease burdening me with your petty environmentalism.

HIs particular mix of yessss and noes.

“Saying, Yes! To Life culture.

Levi and I drinking beer in my car and throwing the cans outside and not getting in trouble.

Smoking in the alley and lying about smoking Marlboro Lights ® and getting away fine.

I am so high right now. I have agreed to meet Levi tomorrow on my way to school. This way if Avi gets mad, it’s not like it looks like I am now making a huge effort, because Avi didn’t call me when he logged onto Facebook. But at the same token, I can hook up with Levi if I want.

Drawing of thoughts on next page.

8.8.08

[ make Ryan an important character—the way I behave toward Chris is how Ryan behaves toward me. ]

Dressing as a homeless person for Halloween. The most offensive Halloween party ever. Taking place on a party bus. Decadence, overindulgence, drunkness. Queer experiences.

Easily one of the most insane nights of my life. Wyatt’s party bus was so much fun. Before getting on the bus, Chloe and I took shots, then I smuggled two water bottles of vodka in my pants. I was already drunk by the time the music was going, and I had no problem dancing with girls. Levi couldn’t go because he was working, but it didn’t really matter. I made out with Xhesika, Kelly, and Ashley Young, which was funny, but I was sexually frustrated the whole night. I didn’t get one boner. At one point we stopped, and Chloe and I went and smoked a bowl, and then the whole bus smelt like weed. Ryan was being an asshole and Chloe started screaming at him, and then she poured her soda on him. I was laughing my ass off so Ryan turned to me and was like, “Shut up faggot,” but I just kept laughing at him. I’m pretty sure that through the night, a couple people had sex on the bus. We all know I wasn’t one of them. As we came to Coronado, the bus was trashed. Pizza boxes were everywhere and soda and empty water bottles that had been filled with vodka. Then Wyatt started throwing the remaining pizza into the crowd, and I honestly don’t think I have ever laughed so hard in my life. The people started throwing the pizza back, and one hit me, then I joined the fray, and it was just huge food fight. After the bus stopped we all bailed, but I gave Wyatt some money for clean up. Dad was on his way to pick me Andrea and Chloe up, so I smoked a little more, and by the time Dad got there I was baked. I barely remember the car ride except for Chloe singing along with some Led Zeppelin my dad was playing.

Hung out with Andrea the whole day today. It was nice. I didn’t’ want her to go. Saw Levi for a little bit. I’m really annoyed that I haven’t talked to Avi for eight weeks. It’s really annoying to have to just be available for him when he gets back.

My nasty, gutter, macabre self after nights excess and beauty

The sun is cruel this morning. Its rays wrap themselves under my armpits and between my legs, around my waist and over my his arms. Sweat stays hot and multiplies. I stagger into the parking lot. The ecstasy from the night before had apparently been cut with speed and still exerts a synthetic, mechanical rhythm within my brain, despite my best efforts to control it. My synapses form rapid and capricious connections, only to disconnect and stretch again elsewhere, frying any attempt of mine to form a developed thought.

I bend over and wretch. So absorbed am I in the catharsis that the blue powder in my bile that sprinkled the asphalt only achieved a passing notice from him. He only hoped that no one could see him so undignified. With 15 minutes until he absolutely had to clock in, Thomas walked over to the pier, expelling pellets of saliva every time he managed to collect enough with his tired, clumsy tongue.

As he hung over a rusted rail speckled with seagull shit, Thomas tried to wipe some of the hot sweat from his forehead, but his palms merely transplanted that from his hands to his brow. Suddenly, a hasty burp revolted and ushered out more blue bile, which fell into the water below. Staring at the oily rainbow that coated the surface of the water made Thomas feel sicker while an unpardonable noise erupted from him with bile now flecked with phlegm.

With the hair on the back of his hand, he mopped the solution of bile, spit, and phlegm from his lips. Sticking his tongue out, he scraped the front row of his teeth over its surface, which collected a bitter paste on the tips of his teeth. With a final muster, he summoned more spit and rid himself of what nastiness he could. Then he went into work.

The closer you are to the sun the less you can see.

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3) Train wreck/Fall from Heaven

Write about Levi the way you want to feel toward someone if in a relationship.

-Mesa Vista

(reference Paradise Lost)

He came over today. It was weird at first, so I told him I had alcohol, and I got him really drunk. We talked for a long time and kissed. I called him tonight and told him to come over again tomorrow. We’re not going to drink so I don’t know how it will go. I’m not expecting him to hook up with me. This will be a test to see if we can be friends. I wish I could sleep. It’s about 4am. Stupid melatonin. I have therapy tomorrow.

• Levi tells me he cannot love me, that it won’t work because he’s more attracted to women. Hooked up with Bridget

Dread bubbles in my stomach.

He starts folding up blankets, as if he has ever done that before. “Get out,” I say.

He looks at me dumbly, and for an indeterminate moment, I think he looks like Eyore from *Winnie the Pooh—*and in that moment, my love is nowhere. But then I feel my pain, which only exists because of love, and so I say, again, “Get out.”

I lay down on the bed as he slowly trudges from the room, and I listen as he steps lightly down the stairs before abjectly closing the front door so that it makes as little noise as possible.

• My anger, quick decision to try and kill myself

Then I hear a voice: “You’re not forced to be here.”

• Suicide attempt

• Destroying my image in the TV reflection

Basking in the fragility of the veil, of responsibility for my actions as I lived and how I could not be responsible for their consequences after I was gone. In a sweep of freedom I get up and move to the closet, where I unsheathe the wakizashi my father had given me when I was younger. I move toward my Samsung® big screen TV. I see my stringy hair, my beaked nose, my tiny arms and thin lips. I thrust the blade into my reflected stomach, disrupting the still gray surface—I leave the handle suspended in a web of cracked glass and move to the kitchen.

• Taking pills

I gobble up every pill I can find: Benadryls, exedrins, Simply Sleeps, Zyrtecs, antibiotics.

• Cutting my wrists

On my right wrist, veins spread like naked branches in snow. I clench my fist, crushing fingernails dirty with resin and ash into my palm, and the veins surge. With the kitchen knife hovering over the spot where I think it’s supposed to go, I slash at the veins—the lonely tree—but only I only feel a sting that brings a pink smear slightly beneath my first layer of skin. The knife is less sharp than I had thought. I drag the dull blade back and forth across my wrist, pushing and pulling at the sting, like cutting wood with a rusty saw, until blood creeps to the surface and scurries into the brown hairs of my arm.

I light a cigarette and watch myself release the smoke toward the ceiling, and though I’ve smoked weed countless times under that ceiling, the unreal novelty of smoking a cigarette indoors suddenly strikes me.

I lay on my bed while the smoke from the cherry-flavored Djarum® cigarettes crawl toward the ceiling. I close my eyes and lift my head higher onto the pillows and breath in deeply.

Pulling me back to the present, the smoke alarm goes off. I tear across the room and throw a swivel chair beneath the detector before wrenching it off the ceiling with grizzly abandon.

I realize I have transitioned past any point of return. I take several more drags but start to feel my stomach lurch. I can taste the grainy solution of wine and pills bubbling up my throat. Paralyzed, I let the vomit climb out of my mouth and crawl over my face. Pushing it out of my eyes into my hair, I sit up and stare at the burgundy film that covers my chest and spills onto my bed. Worried that my body is beginning to resist my attempt to destroy it, I think quickly and settle on the window.

• Jumping out of the window

I glide over to the window. I will need to remove the screen. Glancing over at the mess I’ve made at the TV, I figure the moment for subtlety has passed. I punch through the mesh and tear at the opening to easily swing my legs out the window and perch on the sill. I pause to recognize I’ve never seen our backyard from this particular angle. Bird shit speckles the sun-bleached cushions of our patio furniture. The garden hose coils in the corner where my aunt watered the irises this morning. For a moment I am nervous a neighbor will see me dangling over the edge of my death. More than the fear of being discovered, the idea of having an audience for this final ritual irritates me.

But then I resolve that, like all other things, witnesses will not matter to me when I am no longer here. Warily, I eye the plantain tree that creeps in the shadow of our house against the wall that leads to my window. Its splotched fruit look to me as if they have already spoiled on the branch. The swollen flower that dangles below blushes perversely in shades of magenta and violet. A sudden bay breeze beckons me from the edge.

With unceremonious abruptness, I jump. I hear the protesting leaves of the plantain tree as they attempt to cradle my body’s descent. I hit the ground and know that I am still alive because my elbows hurt. With my cheek pressed against the dirt, I roll my eyes at a trail of ants moving into the garden.

*What did I do wrong?* I wonder*. I must have places my arms in front of me, perhaps involuntarily, to shield myself from gravity*. Frustrated with my timeless lack of discipline, even before death, I try to hoist myself up from the ground, but my right arm curiously bends in an inconvenient direction to leverage my body’s weight. I shift my focus to my left arm, where my wrist is reluctant to behave as well.

With a smile, I twist from my side onto my stomach and find myself gazing at the roots of the plantain tree. I bring my legs under me, with each arm discarded idly in front, and pull my knees beneath my stomach. My forehead kisses the red concrete. With a stubborn trudge that ignores the pain, I cease bowing to my enemy and drag myself to the house, leaving a trail of stains from my bloody wrists on the plaster walls like a bleeding snail.

• My Aunt finding me, taking me to the hospital

• Alive in the hospital

On the edge of Oblivian, a new beginning from chaos, my father called my memory back to life when I wanted to forget. My subsequent grudge because he would into allow me to forget the earlier grudge.

Sitting in cold, antiseptic abstraction, my ego only made itself aware through physical pain. “I have such a fucking headache!” I scream.

They’re pumping charcoal into my stomach.

• Transferred to Mesa Vista

the white room

The nurses correcting us from calling Mesa Vista an asylum: “This is a mental hospital.”

The three stories shared between Me (about not standing up for georgette) Erik (about putting the rat in his friend’s bed) and Jeremy (about drug pushing)

I want to write down my thoughts, but I know they will be used against me.

• Trying to get out of Mesa Vista

Thomas’s voice needs to be something the reader can fall in love with.

Tonight they’re serving some variety of fried fish with what I assume are peas and carrots. I don’t trust the fish, because it’s sweating onto the Styrofoam® to-go container they served it in. I never grew up eating peas, and these aren’t a variety that entice me to acquire the taste. I eat the carrot sticks, even though I’m sure they’re GMOs. I’m realizing how relative my problems are. I just heard this kid say he likes the food here because his parents buy McDonald’s® every night. Food has never been something that I’ve had to worry about. And yet, this food is disgusting, and I will not eat it.

A boy sitting across the linoleum table has stitches curving up his head just like mine. He’s at least three years younger and is wearing a Life is Good® long sleeve T-shirt. I wonder whether we have matching scars on our wrists.

I try not to look around me because almost everyone here depresses me. There’s this guy to my left that looks like shark when he’s angry and a lizard when he’s happy who called me “Superman” the other day when he heard I jumped out of my window.

“Can I just ask you, what the Hell were you thinking?” he slobbers in my face with a wild look I don’t trust behind these bulletproof windows.

“I wasn’t thinking much of anything with all of the pills,” I half reason, half lie. The nursing aid interrupts us to say that trading war stories is against the rules, and so I turn my face away from him while noting how to get out of future conversations that he starts with me.

To my right is this Indian girl Rebecca who I’ve decided I like because she won’t play the game and showed me that their system isn’t absolutely in control. Every day when we’re supposed to give them a number for how we feel, I tell them a number based on a shaky incline I’ve mapped out for myself so they can watch my gradual improvement under their watchful care and proven therapies. The first day I was here I gave a 3, because with two broken arms, stitches in my head, and a clunky neck brace, I had to start somewhere believable. Since then I’ve been a 4, 5, 4, 6, 6, and so today I will say 7, because I am playing the game.

Rebecca, though, never says anything at first. She refuses to talk, and when they won’t continue with group therapy until she gives them a number, she says zero. But today they’ve told us to wish her “Happy Birthday.” She’s turning 18, and so she just so happens to be leaving in the next several days because they can only involuntarily hold minors, which she is no longer. Today she says she’s feeling an 8.

Next to her is another girl who is my friend. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The first day she got here she told me they took the staples out of her “welcome packet.” When I asked her why she rolled up her sleeves, and I saw that her arms were candy-striped with bright red scars against her pale, pale skin. I moved my hand over her wrist and felt the subtle rises in scar tissue as if it were a tragedy written in braille. I noted that she had placed her cuts over actual veins, whereas I had just slashed at my wrists without really considering how to bleed to death.

Then there are these boys who always sit next to each other. One’s real name is Alex but he changed it to Charlie. The other one is Daniel—his father is French and his mother is Japanese, and he’s probably the best looking person here. The first day I met Alex who is now Charlie, he said that he had fallen in love with this other guy who was in his last rehab place. Daniel looked at him real intently and said, “That’s cool,” and ever since they’ve always sat next to each other, so much so that some times the staff will separate them because they say they feed off each other’s energies, which sounds dangerous.

• The culture of Mesa Vista

Despite the numerous dirty looks I threw his way, he keeps tapping. I look down in frustration and notice my cuticles bleeding. I have a habit of tearing at the skin around my fingernails absent-mindedly. Then I realize he’s releasing the same nervous energy that I release by tearing my skin. His method just so happens to be at the expense of peace for everyone else. Why can’t he just tear his skin?

He asks me if he can help me with anything. I ask him if he could help me shave because the foam of the neck brace is chaffing my stubble. He says yes and calls a staff member to bring shaving cream, towels, and razors. I slide the plastic chair over with my toe—it’s made of extra-light plastic so that it can’t break a window. I sit down in the mirror and stare at the staples in my head that gleamed beneath the crusted blood. He asks me when they’ll take them out. I didn’t know. He stands behind me and releases me from the neck brace.

The cracked, dry skin spreading across the back of my hands like flattened spider webs.

“Just come out with it,” he tells me. I’m too afraid to say anything. I know he can see what I have shielded from others. My armor is glass. What can I say that he doesn’t already know—that he probably hasn’t already experienced himself? I stare into his eyes and suddenly feel serene in transparency, as if I had been waiting so long for someone who could delicately break me out of the mold within which I had bound myself, someone who could do it with honesty and care. He asks no questions, seeks not to appraise me under a speculative or measuring light. “Just do it, I’m telling you, you’ll feel better.” I turn away from him toward the bulletproof windows and cry as I hold his hand.

People from AA coming to talk to us.

“Now I have a group of friends who help support my sobriety. And we get our adrenaline fixes by putting together trips to amusement parks to ride coller coasters, or we go white water rafting.”

“That you’re still receiving care and rehabilitation is a demonstration of privilege.”

• Getting out of Mesa Vista

Duality of freedom in sneaking out and being institutionalized—capable of doing anything, capable of doing nothing.

I threw myself like an anchor to remain in a moment and an era that used to be the present.

They’re telling my father that I’m anorexic because I won’t eat most of what they serve so they’ve put me on Ensure®, and for the first time in forever I realized that he kind of gets me because he told them I’m not anorexic—the food they serve is just gross.

I guess they believe I’m making progress because yesterday they moved me to a double room, and now I have a roommate. He got transferred in around midnight last night, but I was tired and didn’t want to have to give him my story, because I knew he would have questions about my casts and neck brace. Well, we got to talking this morning and I actually feel pretty lucky that if I have to share my room with someone it’s going to be him because he’s much more relaxed than any of the other guys I’ve met in here and to be honest, even though he lives in East County, I think we share a lot of the same privileges.

His name is Justin. He’s about six feet tall and his hair is cut all crazy and uneven like Cloud™ from *Final Fantasy 7*. I could tell he was from East County before he told me because if you live in the same place all your life you can pick up on subtle regional accents, and his has this twang to it that almost sounds like he’s from the South. A while ago his boyfriend starting seeing someone else, and so he started sleeping as much as possible to avoid having to deal with it or seeing him at school. When he couldn’t fall asleep at night because he was napping so much during the day he started stealing his grandfather’s sleeping pills, and after a couple weeks or so of this his grandparents finally admitted to themselves what was going on and brought him here. I haven’t asked yet why he lives with his grandparents, but they brought him this big silly tiger-print fleece blanket, and I’m guessing it’s the same one he slept with at home because he was really happy to have it.

Kid from Coronado who looks like a seagull showing up.

In Mesa Vista, talking about my reputation in Coronado.

“Does all that shit really matter any more, Thomas?”

*Of course it matters, you idiot,* I think. *Why the fuck would I be here if it didn’t?*

“Yes,” I say. I had been told to illuminate my own darkness, to move toward light. And yet the fluorescents I found myself beneath sterilized any hope I had of finding answers to how I was going to move through this.

Anything dead coming back to life hurts. –Beloved, Toni Morrison

I’ve thought and talked a lot recently how essentially chaotic human life is. Any idea of control that we allow ourselves to think we have is an illusion. Our plans are *hopes*, and I finally recognize how we are not guaranteed *anything*.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A decadence of family love—suffocating, excessive of love.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“Americans love hospitals, cars, and reality television.”

When Thomas is in Mesa Vista he becomes increasingly class conscious that he’s going to have to make money.

4) Rebirth

Reborn under capitalism.

Long hair and vanity. Thinking I’m less narcissistic because I can’t spend as much time on my hair.

Thomas’s tone is a questioning earnestness.

-Attempting to reintegrate

I meant to write yesterday. It was the weirdest day of my life. Well, one of the weirdest. Chloe and I met some people at the golf course (Seth, Chris, Ryan, **Gerardo**) and Levi happened to be there. We didn’t really talk, but he called me later that night and told me he wanted to see me. I didn’t want to go out of my way to see him, so I told him he would have to get up at 7 and ride the ferry with me. He actually did get up and met me.

He started off by basically saying he wishes he would not have met me, and that I changed everything in his life. Which is good. It means I am not as powerless as I thought against him. Well we talked for a long time, and he ended up coming to summer school with me. It was so weird. We just acted like everything was normal. I mean, we were complete messes. I was still high, and he was hungover, but he just stayed with me the whole time. I was really horny so I tried to kiss him at break, but he didn’t let me. Then after summer school, he and I took the ferry back to Coronado. On the wayt here, I told him how that day reminded me of *Cloverfield.* The part where the main character spends his whoel day with his best friend who he loves, like it was no big deal, and they hook up. After I dropped Levi off, he called me later that day, and Jess and Mom weren’t home, so I let him come over, and we kissed. While we were hooking up he asked me if I was going to start liking him again. I told him that I wasn’t, and that I was just horny, which is true. I mean, I enjoy his company, but I know things just couldn’t work. He isn’t attracted enough to guys. He is just a bicurious mess. The sad truth of it all actually was I didn’t love hooking up with him. He wasn’t as good of a kisser as I remembered, and he seemed like he had lost weight. I clearly had the better body, and was blatantly more attractive. I guess that’s what happens when you fall out of love. I think about him a lot right now, but I think ti is just because my body is trying to form a cathexis to him. Sooner or later it will die down again. I am not expecting to see him at Wyatt’s party tomorrow. It is going to be a party bus, which could potentially be fun. I think I would drink or smoke before, because I do not want to be sober on a bus for 5 hours and be the only gay kid. Today was my last day of summer school, which was nice, but I think I will miss it a little. I don’t know if I will hook up with Levi tomorrow or not.

-Abrupt change in style and which brands I consume

drawn toward aloofness. Incapable of finding someone attractive who is attracted to Thomas. –an attempt to recreate the way I felt toward Levi

• Attempting to reintegrate

“He showed up wearing this Pepto Bismall®-pink polo—the kind that Lindsay Lohan has to wear in Mean Girls. It was a cute, clumsy gesture. Of course people were paying attention to him—I mean that’s why he wore the shirt.”

AJ character.

After he gets out of the hospital, Thomas often pretends he starts in his own reality show.

Conversation with little brother:

He asks me why I did it, and I have to think for the first time about whether I will tell him the truth.

Who is freer than me?

When Thomas is high he is a level closer to communicating with animals.

• Shunning Levi

I laugh at his pretension at nuance. Does he deserve a swift death? Or should he be maimed?

I took a decadently long nap at 3pm. It’s one of those days with strokes of clouds, and as I think of him the room grows brighter and then suddenly dims. Andrea texts me that one of her friends is having people over in the early evening, and I say I’ll come along, even though I’m nervous about seeing people. When we get there I see Him in the corner, bleary-eyed drunk, cradled between two underclassmen, one classically pale and blonde, the other tan with artificial highlights sliced into a long bob. I can’t tell if they actually like him or just feel bad for how drunk he is, but that’s the last gaze I permit myself, and turn my attention back to Andrea.

I’ve started wearing a rubber band on my left wrist, and whenever I think about him I snap it, hoping that I’ll start to associate the thoughts of him with physical pain, which might slowly train me to let him go. But so far it hasn’t worked, and toward the end of the afternoon today, when the skin near my scars swelled with scarlet, the rubber band broke. I just don’t know how to keep him out of my head.

At the peak of the bridge I looked over the bay and saw flashes of lightning ignite the clouds for moments then disappear. Each iteration traced new silhouettes, so that every strobe revealed fresh forms, only to plunge them back into chaos and indistinction. *Who else is out there?* I thought.

• Becoming the fascination of straight girl friends

The pretty girls and I trade blasts of icy stares until the chill becomes unbearable and one of us cracks with a smile.

Smoking Parliaments@ by the pool.

His replacement smokes and lacks his muscles but bears the same curled crown and soft metal glow. However, the attention he receives from the girls dulls the appeal he has for me, because his gaze is tinted with a vanity with which I am all too personally familiar.

• Becoming preoccupied with fashion and glamor

“Because I do not wish to experience your emotions any more.”

• Medical Marijuana Dispensary Culture

I keep telling my aunt that by the time I get cancer they’ll have a cure for it.

Describe medical marijuana dispensary culture in the late oughts.

The doctor in the screen asks, “Marijuana is great, right?” and I say “Yeah, it is.” “Okay, you’re good to go,” he dismisses, and the receptionist comes back and takes me to a room further back.

I get out of the car and walk over, asking the idiot what his problem is. He calls me a faggot and so I look him up and down, pretending I like what I see even though he’s just some dirty burnout, and then he says “Fuck off!” and walks up into the dispensary. I went back to the car and they ask if I’m okay and I say yeah.

“Yeah, a bunch of white guys—they’ve got some pitbulls. A lot of black people going in there.”

“Was it a big space?” Thomas inquired.

“Nah, about 500 square feet in the lobby where folks line up, about 5 or 600 in the back where they have the plants.”

• Experimenting with my sexuality

When he was younger he could have been one of those boys who woke in early dawn to surf before class. He has that arrogance of men who have unconsciously always surrounded themselves with handsome friends. He smirks at me through the steam as the bald man to left opens his towel and begins touching himself. The steam drifts between us but I know he’s still looking at me.

“How’s it going?” I huff with as much testosterone as I can imagine.

“Good,” he smirks again as his gaze appraises my breasts and moves down toward my navel. He leans forward with his elbows on his knees and raises his eyebrows. “Well do you want to see it or not?”

“Yeah, ” I squeak.

“Let’s see yours first.” The bald man to my right beats himself harder. With characteristic drama, I straighten myself and then part each side of the towel across my lap in a theatrical reveal, a move I make to torture him into acknowledging his attraction to my faggotry.

“No,” I sneer, “and you’re lucky I let you do that, you filthy pervert.”

He exhales hard, as if he can blow away my words. “You won’t always be young and hot, you know. One day you’ll look like me.”

“I’ve got a long, long, long—long time before that will happen,” I laugh as I step outside the locker room.

• Thinking I’m really liberal

Constantly worrying that other people will try to kill themselves

Isn’t that what people do when they check someone out—they imagine fucking them?

Instigate a conversation about cultural appropriation and the argument about creative freedom that I’ve heard from Erik and Cherry sur Bete—that people are too sensitive or are stifling the creative process in order to preserve “political correctness.”

I like the Puerto Rican flag more than the Texan one. The Puerto Rican flag is beautiful while the Texan one looks like a Tommy Hilfiger logo.

I can sense his reservations because I’m prettier than he is, so I start to fag out to make him feel more comfortable.

In all of my life, I’ve never experienced something so luxurious as a three hour nap in the middle of the day.

I wake up wondering what traumas I experienced while asleep.

It’s so hot that I want to lie naked in front of the fan but whenever I do I can feel its gusts pulling at the hairs on my legs.

Going on a trip to New York. A conservative Jewish trouple on the subway. He stared at me while she petted the back of his neck and the other boy placed his arm on his leg.

Thomas goes to a rich Catholic school on Coronado, the only high school on the island. After he attempts suicide he goes to another school across the bridge where he brings the white privilege and euro-centrism he hated in Coronado.

Throwing away people like objects. Consumer goods. Friends being “in fashion,” en vogue.

This section can be a commentary on exposure to New York.

Thomas ridicules Chris—eviscerates his aspirations to work in film as a desperate endeavor to grasp at a diluted downtrodden magic.

His magic isn’t as strong as mine.

And look who’s wearing fur, although his scraggly coat looks more like he skinned a golden retriever.

“Leave me unmolested by your beaurocratic tentacles.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Subscribing to an ideology is like wearing a piece of clothing. When you wear it, you also wear a certain style, a certain fashion, a certain way of presenting yourself to the world.

The data presented in this section indicates that whites do not see or interpret their own racial segregation and isolation as a racial issue at all. This blindness is central for understanding their views in a host of racial matters. Recognizing whites’ lack of realization that race matters in their lives, combined with their limited interracial socialization, helps decipher the apparent contradiction between their stated preference for a color blind approach to life (which corresponds to their perception of how they live their own lives) and the white rality of their lives.

Whites’ answers signify they have serious difficulties in thinking about these relationships as normal.

-Racism without Racists, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

Critiquing autocorrect as hegemonic—autocorrecting non-Western names and non rational gender identities.

An hour and a half had passed, and we felt nothing from the white cupids or blue mazarattis. We stood around Sophie’s butcher block counter top and looked at one another. “We could try railing it,” I shrug. The idea seemed to click with everyone fairly easily, so we pulled out our credit cards and each crushed whatever variety we had in front of us, scraping the accumulated powder into neat little lines.

“What now?” Lyric said. I considered calling my sister, but then I decided to be bold and declared, “We snort it.”

I threw myself into one of the bar stools and glanced around before learning over my row with my left thumb hooked over my left nostril. “I feel like we’re in Scarface,” Wyatt said.

Then I sniffed as hard as I could. My first thought was that the mucous had suddenly seemed to conglomerate in the back of my sinuses, and then I trailed the chemical sting that reach from there to my nostrils, flaring them to try and clear an airway.

Before he sullies me with his loneliness.

His pageant masculinity.

Thinking about whether violence ins permissible in certain conditions.

I feel it. I feel it so strongly.

“I am a reflection of what has created me.”

Socialism needs to market itself as what it gives people, because right now many members of the bourgeoisie think socialism will take things away from them.

The difficulty some people have with the idea that they are not inherently more valuable than other people.

Daniel telling me about being followed in department stores.

Josh telling me he had to leave school because he was accused of raping a guy.

Daniel, Josh, and Keoni are the same person. I absolve myself of the responsibility of caring for them because that is my privilege.

Airing the honesty only a partner about to leave me could honor.

Kids from the apartment complex screaming out “Faggot!” as Daniel and I kissed in the rain, trying to recreate that *Notebook* scene.

When a couple realizes they’re fighting it’s over.

Oil stains in the street—rainbow anemones.

Sadism: his back was streaked with pink welts, and I walked away, skin shiny like plastic.

Thomas in therapy wearing the rubber band to correct his thinking.

Thomas’ Catholicism informs the guilt he feels when he reveals himself to be an animal AND a human. That as a human he is an animal with animal inclinations. He illustrates anthropocentrism as he attempts to privilege his “rational” faculties over his animal existence and he has difficulty reconciling the two as parts of a whole. This is also reflected in his criticism of other people and animals.

Thomas’ former idea of himself as a “not-animal” because he is human must be critiqued.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“I’m so OCD about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

“Shut the fuck up, Thomas. You don’t have fucking OCD.”

“I’m so OCD about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“Shut the fuck up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,” Thomas snapped. “You don’t have fucking OCD.”

Categorical evaluation syllogism argument on why Vogue is a terrible magazine. Terrible magazines do this, this, and this. Vogue does this, this, and this. Therefore Vogue is a terrible magazine.

“So teach me how to be inclusive—how can I be a good ally to you?” White entitlement.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As I sat at my table for one, lifted oave the depths of the proletarian food court (Wendy’s, Chipotle, and Subway, oh my!), I felt the occasional tremors beneath the table. Looking around several times, I stopped visibly paying them mind when no no one else around me seemed to bother. How did they come to know those were no real earthquakes? Had they also stumbled through the same process of imitation, coming to the agreed conclusion that nothing was wrong, all perfectly normal?

On the plane, someone holding onto Thomas.

“Don’t worry: we’re not meant to die.”

Abrupt withdrawing of hold: shock, indignation, disgust.

Thomas sexualizing/objectifying men in authority positions like the police and his teachers while also sexualizing/objectifying men of lower middle class. Making the “eating out gesture” toward an Airline worker through the window of the first class cabin, seated in black leather armchair.

It’s been so long since I cared about school—for the first time in awhile I’m realizing it can be more than just a holding cell.

Pulling a moth out of a spider web

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A tear—I’m breathing. I’m alive. I will live tomorrow. Maybe not the next day. But I have tomorrow. Should I choose to transgress, to shed the veneers that protect me from difference, should I choose difference, love difference, love others and choose to love myself—I’ll be more alive than I am right now.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I’m walking from the office to my car. From behind, I’m walking like a girl, but my shoulders are too broad for anyone to assume I’m anything other than an effeminate young man. I walk with one foot landing in the same line where the other left off, his hips slightly swaying as he rhythmically matched heel with toe. I’m carrying his messenger bag they way he had seen Real Housewives carry *Berkins.*

I feel the sun burning freckles through my skin.

“It’s amazing to think how exploitive and cruel owning pets is,” she said as she pet \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cringed. “

Some people would rather be moving than waiting in line.

Marketing: are our desires our own?

“Facebook is so bourgeois.”

Daisy and Tim think that there is a spiritual presence in their home. Both link the apparition to Veda, their three-month old daughter. When I was with Daisy while Tim was at work, Daisy showed me two videos that she posted to Facebook, which Tim asserts are evidence of the presence.

Each video captures similar footage. Through a radio wave, a camera in the bedroom sends footage to their baby monitor that captures suspect activity. While Veda sprawls on the bed, gurgling various cooing noises, sporadic orbs of light stream across the opposite wall. As Tim first described to me, and then I witnessed first hand through live footage, each orb varies in size, magnitude, density, and the speed in which it crosses the screen; some orbs simply disappear halfway across.

Tim is adamant that the orbs are not dust, bugs, reflections, or static in the camera. Being the Renaissance man that he is, Tim studied and calculated the arc that a spec of dust makes, as an air current would influence it. After seeing the live-footage while Tim closed the door to the bedroom, I would confidently be able to say that dust could not stream across the wall as erratically and spontaneously as the orbs. To the suggestion of bugs, Tim and Daisy both scoffed that if there were that many bugs in their apartment, they would be sleeping with mosquito nets. I myself didn’t see any bugs during the four hours that I spent in their home. The varying sizes of the orbs, and undeniable round whiteness don’t look like any flying bugs that I’ve ever seen; plus, how would a bug simply disappear in midair? Tim and Daisy have no mirrors in their bedroom. They wear no jewelry, and when the door is closed no light would be able to dance on the wall with the zeal of the orbs. The window is drawn in their bedroom, and it does not overlook a street. When I suggested that the orbs could be some radio static, Tim pointed out the noticeable static already present- the orbs were something very different.

Daisy makes herself paranoid with all of the paranormal investigative media she has seen. The orbs make her nervous, and she wants to know that they are not a malevolent spirit. She even said that she would need the spirit to be not neutral, but only benevolent in order to feel truly comfortable. The orbs please Tim. He repeats that he is the first to be skeptical, but fully believes they are something other than matter or reflected light. He believes they are a neighboring spirit, a manifestation of surplus energy that Veda produces, or scattered projections from the collective human consciousness that just so happen to conglomerate in their bedroom.

I believe that the orbs are some form of energy, whether it be some malfunction of the baby-monitor, or the surplus that Tim suggested Veda’s new life projects.

Thomas laying in his bed after letting his friends have sex in it.

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I couldn’t sleep, because every three minutes I had the sensation that I could squeeze more urine out before I slept for an indeterminate amount of hours.

Lately, interacting with others is both unfulfilling and irritating. Being by myself is lonely and isolating. I wish I could change everything. I wish things hadn’t unfolded this way. His way. I want to reset.

I don’t know how to navigate life under my new paradigm. I feel myself spiraling. I feel like Esther Greenwood and Holden Caufield. I’m trying to find meaning in what I create and am finding nothing but an attempt at meaning. I don’t know who I am or what will make me happy. I am an unevolved version of what I want to be.

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I open a box of *Crest White Strips®™.*  As I pulled a piece of plastic out of the bright, laminated box, I notice that in my carelessness I’ve allowed one of my fingers smush a strip. Instead of the clean, translucent product that’s supposed to come out of the bright, laminated box, the strips were now wrinkled and unpretty. Sighing, I peel off the top strip, and wonder fleetingly whether the peroxide will bleach my gums again. *Oh well,* he think, *Beauty is pain.* He tried to peel the strip off the plastic delicately, but smush the strip some more. *Fuck,* I swear to myself while somehow managing to hold each end with two fingers before pasting the strip over the top row of my teeth. Almost immediately I feel my gums burn, and I wonder if the strips are supposed to do that. *Oh well,* he think, *Beauty is pain.*

As I stare in the mirror, applying the lower strip and then feeling the burning again, he fixated on the zit by the corner of his mouth that had once been red and was now purple. He was sure that zit had been there for over a month. He figured it was being stubborn because he had a habit of drooling at night. He opened the tube of *Acne Free* *Benzol Peroxide®™* that he had bought yesterday and squeezed out a dime-sized amount of the goop, like the box said. *How did people get by before peroxide?* he wondered. Getting closer to the mirror, he poked the zit with an index finger covered in the *Acne Free Benzol Peroxide®™* goop. He hadn’t been as precise as he thought he should have been, and now the *Acne Free Benzol Peroxide®™* was leaking past the zit into his mouth. He wiped the goop away and washed his hand.

He stopped noticing the burning sensation on his gums because now the burning sensation was on his zit. *Good- die, you fucker*, he condemned. As his eyes met the mirror again, he noticed how dry his chin looked. *It must be that new face cleanser I’m using*. Thomas shrugged and picked up the bottle of *Neutrogena Face Moisturizer®™* that he had bought two weeks ago and rubbed a nickel-sized portion onto the chaffing face-scape. The residue of the moisturizer on his hands bothered him, and he washed his hands again. As he was staring down at the sink, he noticed the redness of his knuckles. He tightened his fists as the warm water passed over his hands, and under the strain his knuckles cracked and started to bleed. He turned off the faucet and dried his knuckles with a towel, only to leave small signatures of blood. Thomas went into the cabinet and brought out the *Aveeno Daily Body Moisturizer* he had bought that day. He squeezed out a quarter-size amount of lotion, and applied it to the raw valleys between his knuckles.

I’ve gotten high twice tonight, and I still can’t sleep. I’m certain that I have journal entries that say something very similar to that from 2008.

My relationship with marijuana is complicated. It is absolutely a crutch, and I wonder how much its consequences affect the rest of my life. I’m wondering whether or not I would be able to smoke pot and accomplish certain goals I have set for myself, like retiring early or getting a good job out of college.

My relationship with marijuana as both sacred and profane—compare to Satanism.

“Can we talk about gentrification? I feel that term disguises what it really it really implies—gentry being of some culturally sophisticated class. What we should really call this phenomena is displacement of people of color.”

I’ve deciphered the laws of my reality and am prepared to abide by them or hack my way through them to maintain the privilege to which I’ve grown accustomed.

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Thomas laying in his bed after his friends have sex in it.

“I’m just sick of fucking white people in fucking everything.”

Thomas thinking that’s racist.

“Wow,” that’s racist.

“Do you even know what racism is?”

Lower the diction, but maintain the direction and make more pleasing to read and less obvious. Less try-hardish and more effortless. More natural. Less academic.

Michael: Thomas, don’t you ever feel disgusted with yourself for doing absolutely nothing, all the time?

Thomas: Should you feel better about yourself because you work? You work hard, for what? More money? I don’t need any more money.

Michael: What about giving back to other people then? If I were you, I’d go crazy without a purpose.

Thomas: And what purpose have you contrived for yourself? You’re a worker, a drone at best. I can’t find any purpose in servitude.

Michael: But what about service? Thomas, you lay around all fucking day. Your schedule is punctuated with getting massages, going out to lunch, and smoking pot. You’re an idle hedonist who feeds the very system that you claim subordinates people like me. Call it servitude, but I’d rather work hard for someone else and get something out of it for myself than lay inert in a vacuum of my own indulgence.

Thomas: Michael, how can I rationalize hard work when I’ve never had to work hard? Why bother to strive? What for? The very idea of strife evokes animality and coarseness. Strife is unsophisticated. Why reduce myself to one of the working masses when I don’t have to? Every advantage of life has been offered to me, and I’ve chosen to say, “Yes, please” to the privilege that waits on me hand and foot. You can’t understand how I can take everything for granted anymore than I’m able to understand how you can’t take anything for granted. It’s ridiculous to even think we might find some sort of common ground on the subject when our realities are such opposites of one another—were stuck on opposites sides of the same coin without any chance of seeing heads or tails. The best we can hope for is to find novelty in one another’s circumstances, and then move on to more interesting conversation…

Michael: There’s nothing novel about being a lazy rich, slob, Thomas.

Thomas: I wish you wouldn’t flatter me; it’s unbecoming of you. You know I’m not rich. I’m positively bourgeois.

It’s Sunday night. There’s tequila in the closet, but I learned my lesson about drinking by myself. I feel restless and am longing for a close, intimate relationship. I miss the sense of codependency and feelings of complete comfort that come with being in love. I’ve felt lethargic lately. I smoked weed the other night, so I don’t know if I am still strung out from that. I feel like my antidepressants aren’t working as well as they used to. Therapy helps, though. I miss Levi. I realized I cannot be around him. He makes me crazy & obsessed and bipolar. However, I feel a gap left in my life that is numbing and leaves me feeling melancholy. It is has been about two months since I hav had sex. I have to say sexual frustration is as bad as it sounds. Apart from that, life is as unfulfilling as it was before Levi.

It’s a little past midnight and I can’t fucking sleep. I left my melatonin, asprin, ibuprofen, and tequila at dads, so there is no way I’m getting to sleep. I got a restricted call about ten minutes ago and for some reason I’m convinced it was Levi. Ugh, I have less than six hours to sleep, but it doesn’t seem like I am going to get to do that tonight. Hopefully mom will give me money for coffee. I’ve decided I am kind of pissed off that Avi never wrote me, emailed me, or called me. Being a romantic myself, I would have tried to contact him if I were in his position. Plus it’s not like he would have waited for me to make the first move, because he’s in fucking Africa. So how was I supposed to contact him? I can’t really explain this kind of thing to Monica. I know she won’t understand. I’m lonely. I feel like I really miss a romantic relationship.

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Something hit me the other night at work: our limit to understand concepts is created by how we conceptualize. In order to think of what something is, we must think of what it is not. It’s interesting to think of the amount of cases where we have to create exceptions to our rules of what things are. Exceptions are admittances that the boundaries we have drawn are not always correct. Exceptions illustrate that we don’t have a complete understanding of the categories we have drawn because we need to create excuses for when those categories are not exclusively defined by what we say they are (or are not).

I find this especially true when we conceptualize people. Despite the fact that we often think of ourselves as infinitely complex, I would argue that how we think of others tends to belittle their complexity. I would add to my argument by saying this isn’t an attempt to belittle or degrade, but merely to conceptualize. Many times we think of a person based on what they have shown us, and conceptualize who they are by what we have seen or heard from them. People very often do not actually conform to the roles and characters that others have created for them.

As I sat she reached over at a receipt laying between us. It was impossible to know from which of us it came, the time being midday and this stop one of many for apparently both of us. As she read it, I knew it to be the receipt of my manicure.

I’m starting to feel an omnipresent guilt about how much electricity and water I use. It hasn’t affected my normal consumption habits, but it is sublime to think that these commodities could be scarcer than they ever have been when I’m old.

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Today I tried running for the first time in a long while. While my lungs burned I thought about how cliché the expression is that one’s lungs burn, but I also noticed how accurate of a description that phrase was for the sensation that I felt when trying to run when grossly out of shape.

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I walk past a Chili’s Too, think about my other options and decide to cut my losses. I order a cup of tortilla soup, but when it’s served with a pre-grated cheese garnish, I resolve to fill myself on bitter, watered-down Chardonnay.

“What’s the difference between being smart with your money and exploiting other people?”

I can’t help but feel horrible sometimes about how privileged I am. Last night I went out and got drunk with my sister and her friends. When I came home, I threw up in the sink instead of the toilet, and ended up clogging the drain. This morning I called for a plumber. When I met Elmer, a man of atl east 50 years and an employee of Rescue Rooter, I told him that I had had “a rough night” to explain why he would in part be cleaning up my vomit. Before I could explain what my “rough night” entailed, he told me that he had had a rough night too. He had been working till 1 am unclogging someone’s toilet.

I know that I will never have to work as a plumber

We both stared inside the Victorian pipe into the mess of sludge and filth. {explain how he unclogged the pipe}

Elmer cleaning the puke out of the drain. Him asking me to watch him work.

Mom being upset at the rates they’re charging. Me asking him if he wants a glass of water.

I’ve decided to forsake a lot of my friendships. During this time, most of them have disappointed me, and it’s not worth my time or energy to maintain friendships with people who I can’t count on. I feel like I’m inevitably attracted to brooding, self-centered people. I want to stop associating with these types. When I go back to Seattle I won’t be disappointed if my friendships there have fizzled or burned out altogether. I would rather be alone than associate with friends who are preoccupied with their own shit 90% percent of the time. I resent Lyric especially because I was there for her when her Dad died. It was really sad to experience the decline of our friendship, but she has demonstrated to me that she is incapable of going out of her own way. She’s just always concerned with taking care of Lyric’s needs, and I’m in a place where I’m concerned with my family and myself, and that is all that I have time or energy for.

I’ve treated people like they are disposable in the past and now when I feel like people aren’t there for me I see them all as disposable, even my boyfriend of two years who was the only person of my friends who was truly there for me without it being at his convenience.

Yesterday I was walking home along the top of a hill. It was around 4 or 5 o’clock, my favorite time of day. As I came around a corner I saw the sun setting, and I started to cry.

I thought about how beautiful the sunset was, and how the whole day was just leading up to the sunset. I started to think about the sunset as a temporary death of the sun, and that reminded me of my dead father.

My father was his most loving, kind, supportive self in the few months before he died. He appeared relaxed and accepting. Despite the financial disorder and health concerns I know he was thinking about everyday, there was a sort of peace in his eyes.

My relationship with my father was most beautiful just before he died. And knowing that, as I saw the sun begin to set, made me think that some things are their most beautiful selves just before they end.

I still think of my father’s death as the most tragic thing that has ever happened in my life. I doubt that this would be a surprise to anyone, seeing that it has only been a little less than 8 months since he died. I can’t imagine what it will feel like on the anniversary of his death.

In therapy, I’ve explicated to many therapist that it is a goal of mine to become less dependent on my mother. By dependent, I mean emotionally, and I want her to be less emotionally dependent on me. My sanity is sometimes dependent on whether or not I know that she didn’t relapse that day, or it can be as neurotic as whether or not she had a good day. My therapist believes that in part, my mom knows how codependent I am with her, and that she, consciously or not, manipulates me into roles that I shouldn’t be.

I don’t know how to not worry about my mother. Sometimes I feel like if I didn’t worry about her all the time, I’d become selfish again and make reckless decisions for myself. I want to experience emotional freedom, and I want to navigate life in a way that isn’t conditional on whether or not my mother is happy. Her unhappiness makes me unhappy, and I cannot live like this.

There are lilies in my studio right now, that before I cooked my soup had spread a sweet, carefree aroma. I want to buy more lilies.

Tonight in a writing consultation I had with two clients who were working on the same paper, we talked about the notion that some people have that money can solve all their problems. I know, from what humble funds I do have, that money doesn’t make a person happy. I think money can certainly improve your quality of life, but after certain needs are met and improved, more money means more responsibility.

I wouldn’t mind having more money. I think that’s the interesting thing about it- most people would have more money if they could, regardless of socioeconomic class. I think money is one of the most evil things about modern society, and I think money inhibits us from treating each other like living things. I think most people value the idea and the physicality of money more than they value people they don’t know. I think I am beginning to combat that in myself, but I still have work to do.

Thomas walked from his car to the Charles Schwab office. A sunbeam skimmed across his oversized Prada sunglasses. He waited in the lobby while a Cialis commercial played on the flat screen. “You knew she was the one from the start, but everyday she reminds you of you erectile dysfunction,” an empathetic narrator said as a white woman applied mascara. Thomas laughed to himself as the receptionist handed him a bottle of Nestle Pure Life water. Thomas returned his attention to the screen as a segment began the IPO of Alibaba.

Militant Eco-critic—sometimes has good points but predominated by color blind racism.

Michael/Wyatt character—means well, wants to be liberal, but oppressive via ignorance.

Michael/Wyatt/Evan disgusts Thomas because he doesn’t wash his hands after leaving the bathroom, allegedly for “environmental” reasons.

“He wants to be both coddled and respected.”

“Upper middle class with blue collar dreams.”

“Don’t mind him. He leaves his phone number for every waiter,” I shrug as the waiter looks up at me.

“Shut up, Thomas,” Chris says.

My intimate mess.

I got out of the car and walked over, asking the idiot what the fuck his problem was. He called me a faggot and so I looked him up and down, pretending like I was checking him out even though he was just some nasty burnout, and then he said “Fuck off!” and walked up into the dispensary. I went back to the car and they asked if I was okay and I said yeah.

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Mom’s friends bringing over Charles Shaw and me judging them for it. Watching *Project Runway* with them and me not having it.

“Wathcing the lady with henna-ed hair drink her Charles Shaw and attempt to lecture me about forms she couldn’t convince me she understood. With contempt, I smiled.”

5) Blindness

-Confronting my racism and privilege

• Meeting Janna

“But how could I corrupt my body, my future with violence?”

The hardest part of getting toward what is real is recognizing your own ego.

• Trying to be friends with her

The black panthers proved that fighting an enemy is sometimes necessary.

How do I become a race traitor?

Fem rival glamour. I observe him constantly adjusting himself and all that lies before him so that he sees the world with the most potential beauty.

He hands me a paper that I conceal in my pocket. “What is it?” I ask. “A poem,” he says. When no one os looking I take it out of my pocket and read:

Janna / Amanda character telling Chris and me how we’re just greedy white men fighting each other.

“Come here, my dear, good, beautiful doggie, and smell this excellent perfume which comes from the best perfumer of Paris.

And the dog, wagging his tail, which, I believe, is that poor creature’s way of laughing and smiling, came up and put his curious nose on the uncorked bottle. Then, suddenly, he backed away in terror, barking at me reproachfully.

‘Ah, miserable dog, if I had offered you a package of excrement you would have sniffed at it with delight and perhaps gobbled it up. In this you resemble the public, which should never be offered delicate perfumes that infuriate them, but only carefully selected garbage.’ ”

Prove him wrong, I think.

Horrified, I show the poem to Janna.

“Who the fuck does he think he is?” she asks.

“I think I thought you were further along than you are. You are weak, and I love you.”

• My frustration that she’s smarter than I am and more radical

“I don’t have time for this toxic sentimentalism.”

I’m looking for jobs and see that Art.com is looking for a Social Media Marketing Associate.

A leather rose stitched into her purse like a corsage.

Discussing bisexuality with Janna. Her nuancing my perspective about blanket categorizations of bi people.

My Starbucks® Chai Tea Latte™ begins to taste like warm, spiced saliva.

I feel better today. I have to be in class in an hour, and I think I’ll make it through just fine. I’m buying $50 of weed tonight from the same girl I met Daniel through. Daniel got drunk and spent the night at his thirty-year-old friend’s house. It doesn’t really bother me—it just makes me feel like he has not right to get jealous about me. I’m getting skinny again, which kind of sucks, but I don’t care that much. I just can’t keep up with my metabolism. I’ve decided I’d like to stay with Daniel until I graduate—on the condition that he doesn’t go to the hospital again. He hasn’t been taking care of his health lately.

You can tell the people who have never been able to see themselves in a true reflection. Most people have only seen their reflections. But you know that thing where the pictures we see of ourselves are not the same images we see in the mirror.

She caught me staring at her poverty.

Sitting in that theater, looking at the lights to the sides of the ailes that lined the walls, I realized how much they looked like the stained glass imagery I remembered from my childhood. I remember sitting in the church, listening to the priest, uncvonced by the content of what he said and the unimpressed by the form in which he delivered his speech, and I had the most uncanny sensation of finding myself in a new house of worship. My dissatisfaction with botht he thing itself and its complement, the satire, emanated from a desire for a new conversation to take place, a conversation whose content did not center Roman Catholicism and whose reaction did not take the form of satire.

Failings of eyes because they’re looking at computer screens all the time. My anatomy is less for the physical world and more for the virtual.

Thomas glosses over “hard-to-pronounce” names (holidays, etc.) and thus never learns how to say them. This is revealed in his conversations with people with less Western names.

Having dreams of terrorist action scenes

I’m in New York so I know these rumbles can’t be an earthquake.

“He’s new money whiteness and smokes weed.”

No matter what I learn, I can only apply it toward an analysis of other people, never reflecting it upon myself.

Hearing screams in the city and doing nothing.

Thomas, and the world I see him inhabiting, is defined by inaction. Action is ridiculed as futile.

If you’re never uncomfortable you’ll never feel anything other than comfort, and pretty soon you’ll wonder whether you’re alive.

An Irish character who constantly cites Rome to credit himself authority.

(the argument that Irish people were slaves)

Is my Africanism used as a fundamental fictional technique to establish a character? (Re-Read *Playing in the Dark*)

A student of color responding to Kantian test of lying. “What if it’s a white racist looking for a person of color—what does Kant believe about racism?”

The black woman walking with me up the hill and when I said I couldn’t do it so I was turning and she told me I could but I turned away.

How it feels impossible to talk about light and darkness in the English language without connotations of racism.

How much more forgivable our flaws would be if we could only name them.

Whites live in a white habitus that creates and conditions their views, cognitions, and even sense of beauty and, more importantly, fosters a sense of racial solidarity.

Research in these traditions has also uncovered that when status differences between groups exist, as in the case between whites and blacks, the advantaged group develops it’s own “groupthink,” values, and norms to account for and rationalize these differences.

The more distant the group in question is from the white “norm” the more negative whites will view the group.

The universe of whiteness navigated on an everyday basis by most whites fosters a high degree of homogeneity of racaial views and even the manners in which whites express these views.

-Racism without Racists, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

“Baby, I need this,” I demand as the lighter clicks, and I cast a flame.

Georgette; Keoni’s performance art piece; Janna telling me she was raped

Sitting in a classroom while refracted images of porn and popular music inhibit one’s ability to listen to an Ecocritical lecture.

Drugs in school environment.

He lacks the fortitude to create a reality from silence.

Socially castrating business men at every opportunity.

Resisting the urge to pause an experience and relive a moment in the midst of a new experience.

“Isn’t it ironic that so many of you think of black people as culturally deficient while you constantly imitate our culture?”

White silence—not saying anything when a black parking attendant is abused by a white Slavic woman.

Thomas is an example of someone who doesn’t act but should.

I open my laptop and access the internet browser I use to watch porn. A pop up appeared. It’s a girl. “That’s not right,” I think. Her name is xxxKleoxxx. She’s wearing an inexpensive French maid outfit, and her hair is in very long braids, with a little black bow around her neck and on her braids. Something’s unusual about her. She’s not smiling. Next to her image, I see usernames chatting her, saying things like, “Show me your ass.”

xxxKleoxxx responds: “No.”

More perverts begin messaging her. “Turn around,” “Smile, sexy.”xxxKleoxxx starts to cry. “u should be cumming not crying.” xxxKleoxxx frowns and wipes a tear from her eye. “Ur in a bad mood today.” Her chatroom closes.

A new girl with a halter-top takes her place. She starts making smooching noises to the camera and adjusts her halter-top.

Upper middle class people debating what rich people ought to do with their time

“There’s nothing middle class people love more than judging how rich people spend their money.”

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Lacuna

Being at lyrics house trying to wean myself off weed

Collecting paraphanelia to induce a roll: glow sticks, Vicks vapor oil, pinkies.

When high, gradually increasing the difficulty of the tasks you give yourself before meeting with people so that you increase your consciousness before you see them.

Write about the fact that the image we see of ourselves in the mirror isn’t our actual selves but instead a horizontally flipped view, so the self we think we know isn’t the self other people see.

My novel is an invitation and an excuse for white supremacists to experience awakenings that bring them out of their points of view.

“It looks cheap.”

“What’s wrong with cheap?”

My novel is an economic critique.

The feeling of losing power over my friends as they begin to talk about me.

Watching Chris live out an efficiency I wish I did but instead choosing the privilege of appearing masculine.

About Janna/ Amanda:

“Don’t worry about her. She’s just angry.”

Responding to the angry WOC stereotypes.

Watching a friend cry and feeling closer.

My novel focuses on fictional high school relationships.

My intimate mess.

I live a story with every breath.

I can see the whiteness already getting to her the way it got to me. I don’t know how to express that this is temporary. While we’re here the pain is like a boil, but as soon as we can cross the bridge, the boil we be lanced and we’ll start to heal. But I can see her finding the same white magic that I did, and using it in the same way to obscure this image of herself while inside she crumbles.

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Thomas responding to a presentation that argues for people to buy used clothes.

“What would you say to people who think used clothes smell bad?”

Another student asking, “Do you even know what it’s like to buy your wardrobe from GoodWill?”

Banality of moralized endings of Kardashian episodes.

Subsequent discussion of whether the Kardashians are positive examples of mainstream beauty ideals.

The price of your delusion of freedom enchains for everyone else.

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Mayas and Azecs were most likely the first peoples of California.

What European demographic replaced the Spanish as the new hegemonic order in California?

1540—Grand Canyon Discovered.

Need to read California early history.

Henry Hudson? 1609

1619 First African people enslaved and sold in America (Virginia)

Roger Williams 1636—radical religious and racial zealot—separation of church and state

William Penn, Quaker late 17th century

John Peter Zenger and Aleander Hamliton 1732—free speech

Jeffery Amgerst, British military leader, gave smallpox blankets 1758

“You idiots think we’re studying history like this all stopped happening at some point. The present is the thread from this past. This is all connected and has manifested into whatever this is now.”

We all just stare at her.

With every step I take I alter the world.

My cousin Andrew and I drove from Davis to Sacramento to Roseville. During that drive Andrew catalyzed a recent paradigmatic shift of mine.

Andrew believes that the world we live in is an evil place. He says that those who hold power intend to keep those without power in subordination and complacency. He believes they deliberately limit our knowledge, and pacify us with reasonable comfort. I asked Andrew if he thought that the C.E.O. of Monsanto, the Pope, and the President of the United States represented the same oppressive force, and he said yes. Andrew believes that the majority of people do what their told to do without very much trouble. Archetypical examples of individuals who didn’t do what they were expected to do by their governments are the obvious Jesus, Gahndi, MLK jr., Malcolm X, etc. Andrew thought that Malcolm X had the most progressive view of any examples I asked about, but said that he was born during the wrong time.

Andrew believes that the systems that maintain order in our lives are structured under a philosophy of infinite expansion in a finite world. He says that at some point, our systems will fail us. Andrew believes that it will take a serious failure of our systems to rouse the masses out of complacency to realize that our institutions are evil. Our systems are corrupt, but to correct any particular one would be a waste of effort, because the others would maintain their structure and eventually mitigate any real change.

I asked Andrew what his political stance was. He told me that he was so far left, that he didn’t believe he could even call himself left. I asked him which would he pick to describe himself more accurately, capitalism or socialism, and he said socialism.

Andrew believes that we are closer now than we have ever been to something like an Armageddon. I asked Andrew how he finds good in a world where the most controlling institutions do no serve justice or the common good, and he said that he is still figuring out if and what there is anything he can do.

Leslie Marmon Silko tell this story about this Spanish princess who lived in Tenochitlan and ordered that her chamber maids kill every cockroach in the palace. Any cockroach she saw was attributed to the responsibility of one of her ladies. She ended up killing all of her chamber maids because she couldn’t control the life around her.

I am going to write about Leslie Marmon Silko and Deborah Miranda.

Posit this white guy who tries to be radical with his critiques within liberal discourse but ends up validating white supremacy.

6.29.13

I’ve been having a lot of thoughts lately about how much control I have in the world, over myself, and about the decisions I make. Lots of conversations have seemed to arise (and I deliberately use the passive voice because I’m not sure how they arise, or from where) about the American government (military, legislature, and judicial system) and its connection to American corporations. I feel like I’ve known certain facts to be true, like the fact that Monsanto genetically modifies lots of our food, but this information seems to have somehow “clicked” just recently. In the past, I felt apathetic about “the bigger picture”. I figured that since I am so small, that my acknowledgment and resistance towards any power would be a waste of time, since in the end, it is so much larger than me, that inaction and ignorance were both reasonable and acceptable.

If this is true, what can I do in the meantime? How can I limit my contribution to the Evil in a way that actually matters? Is there a direct relation between maintaining my material comfort and sustaining a comparatively low quality of life experienced by globally exploited workers? Would my withdrawal from the current lifestyle of consumption I complacently enjoy actually matter? Or would that be a pathetic attempt to really just alleviate the guilt of my own conscience, when in reality, the system does not need my participation at all in order to functioning? These inquiries all lead to one larger, more sublime question: can one person really make a difference, especially within a society that is so obliviously controlled?

The Janna character is harangued for speaking toward class imbalance.

“I’m not the boy wearing Converse with suspenders and bow tie who tries to call that fashion. I’m Lolita boy in sock garters with Prada cat eye sunglasses. I’m a Grecian ephebe wearing Versace blouses.”

Reading Marx, giving up privilege: but I am too weak.

Jobs and the environment.

“Why don’t you try to be like John Brown?”

John Brown, Harper’s Ferry.

“In order to promote economic growth, it is necessary to compromise the environment.”

“In order to protect the environment, jobs will have to be lost.”

All economic prosperity depends on the prosperity of the Earth—the consequences of being overly productive.

Our bodies are two separate vessels, moving further apart.

My rage at the fact that I wish I were born a woman.

This world makes me want to buy expensive sheets, take ambition and lie in bed and watch tv.

Environmental justice, social justice, and economic justice should not be seen as dissonant competitors but as parts of the same whole.

“I’m socially liberal but fiscally conservative,” I assert.

“That’s cognitively dissonant,” she rebukes.

“How liberal can you be if you’re a billionaire?”

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White gay liberation and racism, ala The Wizard of Oz

--Janna going off on Chris for describing why The Wizard of Oz is great.

Bring in critiques of L. Frank Baum.

Mrs. Schneider giving a white feminist critique of women staying in the home to do work other than "women's work," Thomas using that expession, Mrs. Schneider threatening to make him clean.

Janna character contending her grandmother always worked.

In therapy, I’ve explicated to many therapist that it is a goal of mine to become less dependent on my mother. By dependent, I mean emotionally, and I want her to be less emotionally dependent on me. My sanity is sometimes dependent on whether or not I know that she didn’t relapse that day, or it can be as neurotic as whether or not she had a good day. My therapist believes that in part, my mom knows how codependent I am with her, and that she, consciously or not, manipulates me into roles that I shouldn’t be.

I don’t know how to not worry about my mother. Sometimes I feel like if I didn’t worry about her all the time, I’d become selfish again and make reckless decisions for myself. I want to experience emotional freedom, and I want to navigate life in a way that isn’t conditional on whether or not my mother is happy. Her unhappiness makes me unhappy, and I cannot live like this.

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GayCity worker asks Thomas what he will do if he has AIDS. “Kill myself.” Worker says he himself has aids.

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Married people are always trying to get single people to get married. Single people are always trying to get married people to be single.

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Thomas resorts to classism to compensate for the lack of privilege he experiences through his sexuality.

He stood with a tentative expectancy so commonly in straight white men. I stalled my car, graciously waiting for the pale, portly construction worker to cross {humanize through details}, when he gestured for me to move on, with—was that irritation—when *he* was the one to disrupt traffic? I punched my horn, hoping to blare him across the street.

“Drive, faggot!” I heard him shout over the noise I’d made. I put the car in park and rolled down my window.

“I’m sorry—your blue collar was covering your mouth. What did you say?” My expression was a shallow earnestness drenched in derision. By now other cars behind me were beeping, so he flipped me off and crossed the street.

After Thomas calls the construction worker blue colar.

“Thomas, that was really gross.”

“I know—did you see how dirty his shirt was? I could *smell* the Burger King™.”

“No, Thomas—what you said. That was disgusting.”

“What?”

He emerges with these basic revelations that all of us have already.

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An art instillation scene: a room in which all of the walls are covered with screens that show peoples faces while they watch porn.

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The sting of dry tears. Driving down the 5. Crying, but not sure why. I miss my father. I don’t know what I’m doing anymore. I don’t know what I want to be. Im not suicidal, but sometimes I wonder why I’m here or what good I’m serving. As I write that, I roll my eyes at the egotism.

I’ve been having a harder time with my father’s death recently. I know that I shouldn’t comfort myself with drugs or alcohol, and I know that using either is a pathetic attempt to change how I feel, but I feel fractured.

I’ve noticed that I get especially sad around sunset. It’s strange, because this is my favorite time of day. I think sunsets signify death for me, and then I get nostalgic.

Sometimes its hard for me to get over how I’ve hurt other people. I don’t always forgive myself for ways I know that I damaged other people. I don’t even know if I warrant forgiveness for the attitude I used to have.

Money feels evil. A lot of interaction seems to be situated around communicating affluence and privilege. I don’t want to be a pawn for anyone.

Sometimes it feels impossible to not hurt someone. Subtle nuances of conversation and interaction seem to be the most precarious instances of where I unintentionally (or subconsciously intentionally) hurt someone.

I’m trying really hard to find meaning in my life. I know that I will never be the richest, best looking, funniest, smartest, most interesting, most kind, most artistic individual. At times, I almost feel like the world would be a better place if I wasn’t here. Not that I would try to kill myself again, but my privilege, my resources, my consumption- they are liabilities to the welfare of everyone else.

I don’t want to hurt other people. I have made an effort to communicate love as much as possible, and yet I don’t think I’m doing an even close to adequate job.

I marvel at how little control I have- how little anyone has. The fact that the world is as organized as it is today is unbelievable- I guess we have imperialism to thank for that. Sometimes it feels like the world could unravel at any moment- that the line between a functioning world and one governed by overwhelming chaos is so incredibly thin that it might not exist at all. In fact, that is the way it truly is- someone somewhere else is living a quality of life I cannot conceive, separated from me by, of course, money.

Time and money are two creations of humans that I think essentially are not good. I would be surprised if time wasn’t created to better manage money (or something like it). I’m amazed at how inarticulate I can be when I try to organize my thoughts on paper. I end up using cumbersome words like “cumbersome” to describe simple emotions with simple implications. Why did I just use the word implication?

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Porn watching scene: limiting scene to search terms/advertisements. No descriptions of actual masturbation.

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“Yeah, they have it pretty rough there, in Mexico,” Steve admitted.

“Yeah, I can’t imagine not having drinkable tap water,” Thomas reveled.

“I always remember the time when I was younger that my family and I visited Mexico, and I when I say Mexico I mean Tijuana, and I saw these boxes on hills. I asked my mom what they were, and my mom said that people lived there. I couldn’t believe her. They were just boxes on hills.”

“Most people drink *Coca Cola™* more than water in Mexico. I got so sick of drinking so many sugary drinks. They serve this diluted sugary water drink; water is probably too expensive to serve to everyone at restaurants,” Thomas mused.

“Yeah, like, everything around me is a luxury. This is a luxury,” pointing to a stereo, “This is a luxury,” pointing at the pipe they were smoking out of, “All of these are just luxuries,” Steve said as he gestured to the rest of the room.

“Yeah, I don’t mean to sound like an ignorant American, but I don’t think most Americans could live like that. I mean, some could. But I think when you’ve lived like this since you were born, I think it’d be hard to live like that.”

“Yeah, I mean, I don’t need a lot to be happy,” Steve offered, as he put the empty pipe down on the table. “But I think I’d rather just be comfortable.”

Thomas stood up. “I better go,” he announced.

“Oh yeah, sure, sorry I’m just like—“ and Steve leisurely waved his hand over his head. Then he walked Thomas to the door.

“Thanks, Steve,” said Thomas.

Thomas opened the door and held his hand out so that it wouldn’t swing back at Steve, and he walked out of the apartment.

“Thank *you*,” Steve replied.

Thomas descended the stairs down the hall while wrinkling the smell of dog and tomato sauce. While he skipped down the stairs, he swung his weight ‘round the corners with his hand on a rail, which was with peeling white paint. Once outside, in the night, Thomas started walking toward the busy street that ran perpendicular to Steve’s, but he turned around eventually when he realized the park was in the other direction. He spun on the ball of his right foot, he walked in the opposite direction than before, the wooden heels of his brown oxfords clicking like high heels.

In front of him was what sounded like a traditional Asian couple. Thomas picked up his pace, for with the sun down he was fearful of the prowlers. As he walked faster toward the couple, he discerned that they were speaking either Thai or Vietnamese—and that the woman was wearing a wig. Yet her dress fit her well, which was surprising because when Thomas looked at each lover’s figure, he saw that they were shaped with similar silhouettes.

Thomas’s pace eventually superseded that of the couple. He walked down the little hill from Steve’s toward the park, keeping his head up and his expression ready to scowl. A white man walked toward him with a dog. “Are you walking your dog, or is your dog walking you?” Thomas sneered in his head. The man moved his gait so that if he and Thomas were to continue to walk without stopping, they would collide. Thomas rolled his eyes so hard that the man couldn’t possibly ignore dismissive rejection, even with the last rays of twilight fading. Still, he kept walking in the same line, and Thomas, irritated, exhaled sharply and cut across the sidewalk to the set of repeating squares opposite of the man. When their paths finally crossed, Thomas’s air, a combination of hauteur and contempt, whipped the man as he turned his head to look at Thomas. Thomas kept his gaze straight ahead, declining to dignify the animal and the dog.

Within another minute, Thomas arrived at his smoking park. However, a muscled youth with dark hair and dark skin was practicing Tai Chi where Thomas was accustomed to perch. Annoyed, Thomas selected a less desirable piece of the park.

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When I took an introductory English course, I learned of the notion of “the sublime”, and how for the Romantics, it was illustrated by the feeling of being taken over by behemoth mountains, or other experiences inspired by nature. When I think of my contemporary notion of the sublime, I think of the seemingly infinite matrix of corruption and control that guides our imperialistic capitalist American society. I wonder how I can not be complacent- how I can make meaning for myself in the world and greater universe, while still staying sane and somewhat grounded. Is that even possible?

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Thomas decided to get up and brush his teeth. He slid out of his full-size bed slid the short hall to his bathroom. After flicking on both lights, He grabbed the *Johnson and Johnson*® mint waxed and began rubbing the floss up and down against his teeth like his dentist had told him. Thomas looked down at the state of the sink and was disappointed with himself. He continued pulling and sliding the floss between his teeth until he was sure that his gums would not bleed and that he had excavated a sufficient amount of plaque.

I realized how awful it was that I didn’t have any *Q-tips®*. I admonish himself and decided to go to *Safeway®* later that day to stock up. He picked up his *Crest Pro-Health®* tooth brush and commenced brushing in tiny-little circles over his teeth. After two minutes of intermittent spitting, he ejected one last glob, and rinsed with mouth with *Crest Pro-Health®* mouthwash. When Thomas put down the bottle of *Crest Pro-Health®* mouthwash for the last time, he noticed some of the emerald green liquid had hardened and crusted on his bathroom counter. Thomas paid it no mind, and for doing so then scolded himself.

Television featuring youth to evoke hope.

Weepy, sentimental old men.

“His meandering concessions of meaning for colloquialisms and cliches.”

Which is best: gumption or humility?

I sat down to the chess press, noticed a water bottle sitting on top of it and thought, “Some people just act like they own the place.” I did a set, then sat staring at the large digital clock hung in the center of the room till its red digits showed another 30 seconds go by. Before the thirty seconds were up, a strong man with dark brown skin came to stand next to the machine. He gestured for me to get up, and I said, “What?”

“Get up from the machine,” he said.

“I didn’t know this was yours.”

“It’s not. I’m doing sets,” he said before motioning for me to get up again.

Wanting to avoid conflict, I got up reluctantly, and as I brushed past him, said, “You could at least say please or something.”

“No, I can’t. I should kick your ass,” he said quietly after me.

I moved to work out my triceps, then to the push up machine, keeping my eye on him. *Why should he be able to intimidate me. He’s just another macho man with something to prove, hopped up on testosterone. It’s ridiculous. He threatened me. If he comes up to me again, I’m going to say, “Get the fuck away from me before I tell someone you threatened me.” I could have him kicked out of this gym.*

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Describing colors in hex codes

I knows he feels my expectations like the weight of stones.

Stepping into the sunlight.

Business and the exploitation of other people’s labor as the source of my inherited wealth.

A character who really likes Ayn Rand.

“The relationship of a child to a parent should be to help them grow, while children, in turn, should help their parents die.

“I wonder what percentage of white men think they’re geniuses.”

I blow out toward the cloud as if I can make my smoke merge with it.

The hidden heaven I don’t even know exists.

Some perverse system of justice whereby I can’t enjoy the entertainment of my phone while he won’t speak to me.

His aptitude to describe my reality so terrifyingly clear.

Media ingrains images in our minds that we project onto our lives.

I want to live in the Athens of my time.

Reflection on how Athens is the colonizers’ societal ideal.

Every posture betrays his weakness.

Do people need lies? Is the Truth too horrible?

You can feel how much more likely something is to happen just because you’ve done it once. And is that just the way things are or is it the algorithm?

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A conversation about not having the privilege to worry about surveillance—just trying to work to survive student debt and keep a good job rather than work against surveillance. Thomas is obsessed with surveillance and incredibly paranoid.

A subtle, mechanic taxonomy system of permanent registration. Filling out forms and creating passwords.

And then the other layer of it is… (one analysis leads to another, which leads to another about what I should do with my life.

I fantasized about how I could make her looked like the oppressor—how could I show her how ignorant she was?

“I think there’s more surveillance in California than in New York.”

On hard breakups and having the faith that things will get better:

I’m just going to let time pass, and we can both just agree to not kill ourselves.

On drag:

“It’s like okay then I’m like that person with hat other person plus a little of her. And then culture keeps iterating on itself and then you have these incredibly nuanced, almost undecipherable creations with extremely high entropy.”

fly on a glass wall looking out, not able to find out how to get, while gorging itself in the room in which it is trapped

I looked in his face and said, “I don’t have any money.”

Fourth of July fireworks: as long as I can remember, they have been an integral part of my Independence Day celebrations. This year, instead of riding our bicycles down to the golf course with the other Americans, my mother and I chose to watch the fireworks from our single-story roof. While our views were partially obstructed by palm trees and second story apartments, we were able to see enough, enough to know that on an area of less than 8 square miles, there were four simultaneous shows on different parts of the island.

The fireworks show(s) this year were extravagant. There were more fireworks than I had ever seen before, and even a couple of new varieties: endearing hearts and multi-colored smiley faces. I wondered how much it all cost and who paid for the shows- was it our military or the taxpayers? How comfortable was I with either answer? And what kind of effect on the environment would the remnants of all the extra explosions have? I wondered why fireworks are so important to our uncommonly large military community. Is it just the sentiment of tradition, or are they really something of a symbolic significance?

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I should travel, I should get an internship. I should find a job, I should get a routine.

My obsession of self-distinction is both my mantra and my undoing. I do not believe I can operate differently.

Interviewing with Russell investments for an internship.

“Why is Zimbabwe a frontier market?”

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Stabbing Holden Caufield.

Lately, interacting with others is both unfulfilling and irritating. Being by myself is lonely and isolating. I wish I could change everything. I wish things hadn’t unfolded this way. His way. I want to reset.

I wonder if I will just magically fall into place. I wonder if I am capable of finding something that I am passionate about and really doing it passionately.

Too much privilege and not enough time.

I wish my father were still alive.

I find myself depressed by my being living proof between the disparity between the rich and the poor and the shrinking middle class. I don’t know how to take action or how to commit to one idea, wholly and heartily.

About boyfriend.

Every trespass of mine I see in him. I cannot bear the thought of him partaking in the indulgences I’ve allowed myself.

Maybe some people have therapists so they have someone else to listen to the stories they tell themselves. Maybe they need someone to listen to make the stories real.

A lot of gay boys walk with the intention of strutting like their favorite models, or stand in a posture they imagine would suit whatever glamorous starlet. But I know that I’m already such a faggot that I will have that affectation whether I try to affect it or not, so now I walk without a forced hauteur, know my hips will still sway, my ass still sashay.

I’d rather just have a boy who I know will chat on me than watch his naïve flirtations, impotent overtures that will only lead our solitary walks home.

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It is very important to me to find ways to enjoy every day. Each day is all we are guaranteed, and I don’t want life to feel like I’m waiting to talk to a representative from Comcast. I need to find novelty and new experiences. I think (I am positive) this includes venturing outside of my condo to interact with other people. Interaction is difficult for me, but maybe it gets better with more practice. Either way, I’m wasting away indoors.

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I’m sitting on my usual hill where I smoke. The sky’s turning a deep indigo, but twilight isn’t over. Cars keep crossing the intersection the hill overlooks, and I’m too stimulated to continue smoking.

To his left, he felt a space occupied. When he turned his head, he saw a heterosexual couple standing in this street. Each partner had their iPhones in front of their faces, pointing toward the sunset. They stood like that for several minutes, then left.

Chris Schapp is Andrew Sworenson who kills himself. Chris is a frenemy of mine. I abuse him to the point that he kills himself.

6) Eyes Half Open

Thomas likes flaunting his wealth to taunt the bourgeoisie. He thinks he’s being provocative toward a coercive socialist state. Thomas likes Ayn Rand.

Thomas has to engage with white people’s responses to being accused of racism. White people are still angry at being called racist.

If I’m too busy trying to express myself I’ll never make art.

Thomas likes tormenting the white men who hit on him.

My professor is on the 5th floor and I ascend the steps slowly so he won’t be out of breath when he reached her office. At the top of each flight, I pause for several cycles of breathing. When I finally reach the fifth floor, I panick and walk into the men’s bathroom. My reflection in the mirror moves its hair to the right. He wets it and shapeds the stands into the pose that reassures me everything is okay. I know my armpits are wet too, so I take off the cardigan and wipe my underarms with scratchy paper towels that leave my skin irritated so that my blue veins are purple lines on pink.

“Let’s talk about um this look right now, which I’m living for, it’s like the epitome of, like latex glamor.”

“Unbelievable. Like breathtaking when you walked out. It was just like an oil painting, like a perverted oil painting.”

The floral wallpaper behind us as we cut at each other. (About Chris)

Thomas tries to sneeze an attractive black man who is only interested in the femme with him. Thomas has to confront his fragility.

“yeah, I’ve paid for sex: tops, mostly.”

Today I was silent when I should have spoken. Keoni and I were leaving the parking lot of the grocery store. As we backed the car out to wait in line for the parking attendant to let us out of the garage, we realized as a line of cars starting to form that the mechanism to let customers out of the garage had failed. Cars could neither enter nor leave the garage. As about a dozen cars began to line up, the customers started to become impatient. The parking attendant, a black man about my age, was working to fix the machine so that cars could enter the garage, when a heterosexual couple in the car ahead of us began to lose their temper over the wait. The woman stepped out of the car and began screaming at the attendant, telling him that she needed to leave now. He looked toward the line of cars, resting his gaze briefly on mine, and said, “You all have no idea what I’m going through right now.” She said, “I don’t care; I need to leave!” And after she continued to scream, he walked over to our side of the machine and was able to lift the barricade so that her car could leave. Worried about our groceries more than his endurance of verbal abuse while trying to do his job, I jetted the car out along with the couple ahead of us. It was only after we returned to our home when I wondered how much race factored into her treatment of him. While I believe the woman would have experienced frustration with the situation regardless of who the parking attendant was, Keoni and I couldn’t help but think she would not have had the audacity to scream at him had he not been black. I realized that I should have told her to calm down and said not to speak to him that way. After talking with Keoni, I realize that this experience is a teachable moment for me. Next time I will speak up. I do not like feeling like I failed that man, when my education and experiences have empowered me to speak up when I witness racial injustice.

Deconstruct the term “politically correct.”

“What you call ‘politically correct’ I think of as empathetic to the experiences of marginalized people like me. Ask yourself why you feel entitled to tokenize the aesthetics of my culture, and why you feel threatened and resistant when people like me say we don’t like when you do that. What side of the line are you trying to be on? White liberals think their ‘creative expression’ is more important than recognizing systems of oppression that they perpetuate. And to be perfectly honest, I don’t think there’s anything creative in you dressing up as a caricature everyone has seen before. Expect more from your creativity. Demand more of yourself in what types of images you can regurgitate.”

I admit that I am more confused now than ever before. Words and writing: that which nourishes me destroys me. Any thought I might attempt to articulate violates those several other simultaneous thoughts I have. No word or sentence, no single phrase can be nuanced enough to describe my experience so that I might feel sufficiently expressed.

I’ve been having a lot of thoughts lately about how much control I have in the world, over myself, and about the decisions I make. Lots of conversations have seemed to arise (and I deliberately use the passive voice because I’m not sure how they arise, or from where) about the American government (military, legislature, and judicial system) and its connection to American corporations. I feel like I’ve known certain facts to be true, like the fact that Monsanto genetically modifies lots of our food, but this information seems to have somehow “clicked” just recently. In the past, I felt apathetic about “the bigger picture”. I figured that since I am so small, that my acknowledgment and resistance towards any power would be a waste of time, since in the end, it is so much larger than me, that inaction and ignorance were both acceptable and reasonable.

“I mean I think one thing we can agree on easily is that anyone who has more than a billion dollars should have their wealth redistributed.” (Who says this?)

• Reading authors of color

Follow the path. Follow the path set before you.

A trail of authors that can lead toward a path of enlightenment for white men with ignorance of their privilege.

I have known that Google News is problematically curated. I have noticed Black Lives Matter receive spotty attention even when events related to the movement are of currency and national importance. I understand that Google would engineer the app to attract my attention and to encourage me to revisit the site. I know that Google News only pulls from particular news media, many of which I do not trust for the type of perspective to which I wish to expose myself. Google News relies on publications like *The New York Times,* a publication within which I frequently observe racist headlines and otherwise problematic ideologies.

b.2 wedding in new york

Most Americans are polytheistic—they just don’t know it. Americans (and non-Americans) worship a constantly changing pantheon of celebrity spiritual icons. The Celebrity is the post-post-modern God. God isn’t dead: He’s just a zombie. Knowledge of the celebrity has entirely replaced knowledge of the Bible. People are aware of a celebrity their whole lives without ever actually seeing the celebrity in person.

My misanthropy is never more intense than when I fly.

“Have a headache from all of the seersucker and pastel.”

Socially castrating business men at every opportunity.

Resisting the urge to pause an experience and relive a moment in the midst of a new experience.

Thomas waited at the TSA line and felt like a pig in a plastic pen.

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Thomas, with his legs crossed, read a biography of Oscar Wilde. An old man to his right coughed an urgent greeting. Thomas darted his eye to the right and saw that a unopened drugstore novel lay on his neighbor’s lap. The man crossed his legs so that his foot was inches from Thomas’s oxford. Somewhat irritated and vastly more interested in the biography, Thomas re-crossed his legs so that his foot dangled to the other side, out of reach. The man, who wore white socks with running shoes, continued to eject coughs regularly, which rose in volume. Thomas refused to dignify the summons and continued reading. He couldn’t decide which was more irritating—the desperate attempt for attention or the running shoes with white socks. After a most desperate ejection from the old man, Thomas conspicuously widened his eyes so that their subsequent roll would have maximum effect. Yet the man ignored the admonishment, as Thomas ignored the man’s inarticulate advances. The man began to pant.

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“Is there something we can do for you, ma’am?” the flight attendant asked.

“She’s switching seats,” said the old lady.

“Can it wait until we’re up in the air? We need the cabin secure.”

“No, she’s switching.”

The flight attendant went back to his radio: “Cabin not secure, repeat: cabin not secure.”

“I’m too damn old to be treated like that,” she said. “And I was a flight attendant fifty years ago. It used to be about the passengers.”

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Thomas was high above the coulds that had previously been above him. With a rocket’s eye view, he observed small white patches, and the higher the plan flew, the more the patches congonloerated into a solid white mass. Then he looked up, only to realize that whiter, whispier clouds still looked down upon him.

I told my cousin I broke up with Daniel, and he asks me if it always felt like Daniel wanted something from me. And I say yeah, there was a part of myself I didn’t want to belong to anyone else that being with Daniel seemed to require. And my cousin starts saying that’s how he feels about this woman he’s dating and that he doesn’t want to feel like anyone owns him or that he owns anyone else. I tell him I agree, and that right before my father died he told me marriage ruins relationships. My cousin says yeah but we’re at a wedding so we should probably celebrate marriage.

• James wanting Jessica to go with him to Hollywood instead of college, her saying No

• Jessica and Janna start dating

“People have their own paths, and we have to all remember that.”

“Don’t try to comfort me with your platitudes.”

• My ignorance about intersectionality repeatedly revealed, as well as my failure to account for my privilege

“I’m not going to apologize for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

Attempting to recreate the white privileged abandon of the ‘60s but failing again because this was based on fantasy, a commercialized version of experiences. Cellular phones and the smallness of our island preventing me as well.

I want to be in advertising when I have a career. I really want to study it in college.

Romanticizing feminist lesbianism—wanting to inhabit radical otherness

• Getting an internship with the ballet, starting to realize the racism in my boss along with his lasciviousness

Having an internship at the ballet and realizing it’s not preparing me for a lucrative job in tech

Internship with Mike watching what I write

Cabrillo and Cortez. —taking the critique beyond just the Spanish as the colonizers and deconstructing their own sense of national identity.

Thomas conflates the ballet not paying his bills with a somewhat contrived racial awakening.

“Azealia banks has a real mouth on her.”

(After working out the math for how the wealth of the fifteen would be redistributed for everyone) “I just don’t see why we should have to live like this.”

Thomas’s upper class pretensions blind him from class consciousness.

Thomas watched his internship supervisor engorge himself on teriyaki chicken and black coffee. He wondered how it was possible to slurp something solid. *The sauce probably works like a lubricant*, he figured

High school fashion show, Chris and I both work for pervy Ballet Mark.

“[blank] wears sweatpants all the time, and this is unprofessional?”

“These are joggers,” [blank] interjects.

I can tell he knows I’m a faggot because every day when I come into class he has something to say about the way I’m dressed. Yesterday when I wore a black collared shirt from Nordstrom® with black slacks and he told me I looked like a priest. Today when he saw me with my buzzed hair and oversized leather jacket he asked if I was joining the military.

I walk under a Macy’s® Sign and stare at the red star. It’s like the flamboyance of consumerism can’t help but advertise the allures of Communism.

God the way he hankers, you think he’d be addicted to coke or something.

He tells me, “I feel like we’re in that movie *The Devil Wears Prada!”* And even though I feel the same way, the fact that he chose to voice that sentiment makes me hate him for expressing it.

• -boss is an amalgamation of Michael Notestine, Michael Cepress, Erik, and Mark.

• -descent into neuroticism and guilt, preoccupation with a career.

I feel crazy. Does of Celexa and daily consumption of marijuana. I ahven’t taken my meds in a couple days. I want to escape. I’ll be an escape artist. I like adventures. I want to live my life like it is one.

I’m watching *Fantasia.* I’m really happy with all of my friends. Andrea is the only one that doesn’t smoke. I am consumed by my own fantasies. I smoke every day. I like pretty things.

• Going to New York to visit a cousin

“Just like all people from San Francisco hate people from LA.

The impossibility of knowing ourselves without being around others.

New York City has everything capitalism can offer except land.

Thomas was waiting for his flight:

A shrill ringing reverberated in the gate area. Thomas, no longer able to concentrate on Euripides, looked up. No one else seemed to notice the noise; the other passengers remained committed to their iPhones®™. It continued for another minute. Thomas returned to *Media,* until he was interrupted again. The noise, though, instead of a constant ringing, was now a constant beeping, with milliseconds of fidgety rest between each sound. Thomas, again, looked up—to the same, complacent crowd. Thomas began to worry he was the only one who could hear the noise.

The plane began to take off. On the monitor in front of his seat, Thomas could tell that a commercial was about to start. It happened to be a car commercial. Despite the audio over the loudspeaker, so that every passenger had the opportunity to listen, Thomas thought he might be able to avoid the advertisement if he could turn off his monitor—he couldn’t. He tried every button, but it appeared that Virgin America™ mandated every passenger to subject themselves to the commercials.

The gridded pixels of the organized land segmented together like the patterns of modern military camouflage patterns. I sat back in my seat and balked at the idea of congruency—how the scale of coercive design could mimic itself at both macro and local levels—boiled down to the same philosophy of boxes and borders.

An airline stewardess walked down the aisle, her attention at the parallel strips delineating the aisle of seats. Assuming she arrived to gratify a want of mine, I looked up, only to watch her turn on her heel in the opposite direction.

The old woman across the isle looked at Thomas. Her hair was white and she was overweight. Her clothes might have been hand-made. She kept her gaze on Thomas. When Thomas looked over, he was perturbed; why was she looking? Eventually, she broke her focus and turned her attention to the front of the plane. Unsteadily, she rose from her seat and grappled onto the adjacent ones. Wobbling, she transgressed into the aisle. Like a stack of plates, she gradually made her way to the front of the aircraft. Thomas, finished with *The Bacchae,* picked out *Marius the Epicurean* from his purse. The cover of the novel, which was burgundy, was obscured to look green-purple by the electric blue interior of the otherwise black leather bag. After opening the book, Thomas realized it was a denser text, literarily; this, he realized, would be no *Tortilla Flat.* After reading the first paragraph twice, he was prevented from reading it a third time when the flight crew announced that they were about to interrupt. Retro static introduced a scratched female voice that spoke, “Pardon the interruption, ladies and gentleman, but would any passenger who speaks Russian please come to the front of the aircraft?”

Inquisitive and unsettled, Thomas tried to resume reading*,* but he was unceremoniously interrupted yet another time; it was the captain over the speaker system. “Ladies and gentle, pardon the interruption, but would any medical professionals aboard the plane please come to the front of the plane?”

7) False sense of security

This week was really stressful. I stopped smoking everday so I wouldn’t be dumb when I was coming down for finals. I’m pretty sure I got a 4.0. Fucking Karl tried to give me a B. Tomorrow I pick up a ¼ ounce of weed and ½ of mushrooms. I wanted to make sure I’d be stocked for break. I like myself better when I’m stoned/coming down. I feel like I’m more real with myself and more easy going. I wish I could sleep right now. Semester #1 is over tomorrow. Thank god. Hardest/most stressful semester and week. Deleted Levi’s number and Myspace. Not going to ever talk to him. All gay people are either weird/ugly/diseased. That’s why I think I smoke so much. TO compensate for a lack of a romantic life. Whatever, I get all my drugs tomorrow so I’ll be fine for about two weeks. I can’t wait to do mushrooms again. It’s been over a year, and it’s been a bout 4 days since I smoked. I don’t really feel sad right now. Just on edge, like a numbed down meth trip. I’ve been sleeping awfully, but it’s because I try to go to bed early because I’m out of weed. I don’t care, I just have to get through work and school tomorrow and then I’ll be okay.

• Predominance of tech

Becca’s conversation with us about watching Netflix all night and the amount of power it consumes from servers in the ocean.

Peoples’ resistance to a constantly critical eye. People exhausted by endless critique. An argument that validates an arbitrary critique as valid in itself. Critiques as essential to individualism and diversity.

Facebook’s mission is to make the world more open and connected. And what we mean by that is that we think that people’s lives are gonna be better and really that the whole world will function better when there’s more information and understanding out there about both big things that are happening in the world and local things—what’s going on with your friends and the people around you. In the world, in theory, there exists this kind of map or graph of all the relationships between people—they’re the real relationships that exist. The social graph is something that’s always existed as long as there were two people on earth that knew each other. And that social graph had two people and a connection. But one thing that there’s never been is a map of everybody in the world and their relationships with each other. By giving each person the responsibility for their own story, their own point in that graph, together you have this amazing map of people. You know, now, it’s like they are real people on the end of the connection, and before Facebook, there was nothing like that where you could do that. We’re now changing within a generation the fabric of how humanity communicates with itself. There are over a 125 billion friendships on Facebook; there over 300 million photos uploaded every single day. There’s two billion likes a day, and comments are left over a billion times a day. Over 900 million people use Facebook on a monthly basis; over half a billion use it on a daily basis. The mobile phone is becoming more and more and more a huge part of our daily lives, which we think means that Facebook will just become more and more a part of our daily lives. We have almost 500 million mobile users, and Facebook is the number one most downloaded application on every major platform in the United States, and we think that’s really *natural* because the things you do on a phone are extremely personal and social, and they’re exactly the kinds of things that Facebook is amazing at helping you do. In everything that we do, we really want to honor the fact that this is a network of people, and that um, we’re all here because of the people using Facebook and because there’s this critical mass of people and this network, um, developers then want to build products for that set of people, and because there are all these people here, um, advertisers want to reach them. And then because there’s this ability to make an impact, a lot of the best people in the world want to come work at Facebook. And then because of all these things, we’ve built a, um, what we’re really proud of and think is a good business. So it’s all because of, um, people wanting to use this product and this network, and I think a lot of what we do in terms of our internal prioritization has to honor that. So if you think five years out, using Facebook doesn’t literally just mean using, um, the Facebook app or, you know, software that we’ve written ourselves. Um, I think that we’re going to reach this point where almost every app that you use is going to be integrated with Facebook in some way because the developers of those apps are going to want to make it so that you can interact with your friends and that you can share content back to Facebook to help grow those apps, and it’s a very symbiotic relationship. So, um, we make decisions at Facebook not optimizing for, you know, what is going to happen in the next year, but what’s going to set us up to really be in this world where every product experience that you have is social and that’s all powered by Facebook.

-Mark Zuckerberg

Hearing about my cousin’s friend who got a job with Google.

I am an embodiment of unrealized potential. Latent kinetic energy, dying, dissipating in inaction. I want to be something, be somebody, but feel like everybody, anyone.

I don’t know how to navigate life under my new paradigm. I feel myself spiraling. I feel like Esther Greenwood and Holden Caufield. I’m trying to find meaning in what I create and am finding nothing but an attempt at meaning. I don’t know who I am or what will make me happy. I am an unevolved version of what I want to be.

• Quitting my interest in clothes after realizing being a stylist or a costumer designer won’t make me money. Alleging I quit because of racism in the industry.

I’m plagued by the paradox of skills vs. knowledge. I can already tell that the acquisition of knowledge does not necessarily translate to financial prosperity. It could lead to stability and comfort, but if I became a professor or was a small time editor, I would never be rich through my own means.

Little brother says money is analogous to hit points.

Shoulder pads to football players are what hip pads are to drag queens.

Shame seems to be a dominant underlying attitude many of my family members experience toward their sexuality. I think coming from Catholic and Methodist backgrounds tends to encourage my family to associate sexuality with sin, or at least gross overindulgence.

It’s interesting that Microsoft word marks words like cisgendered and polyamorous as incorrect. Someone should write something about how technology often uncritically reinforces the status quo.

Antipathy

As children and debt saddle my peers, I will orchestrate my transformation into the most beautiful self I have imagined.

Life is a video game, capitalism is a mini game.

The fear of earthquakes that have yet to come.

• Learning to code so I can have a good paying job, taking the advice of my younger brother.

Janna gets into an Ivy League school and is accused of taking a white students’ place because she’s black. “Reverse discrimination” Color blind racism.

Lately I’ve thought obsessively about becoming a eunuch. I hate how much I fixate on sex and wonder what I could accomplish if I didn’t have my libido to distract me. I think I would be a lot more productive. Maybe this sounds twisted, but I feel like Mattel® incarnated this century’s ideal physical form. When I was younger nudity never seemed so ordinary to me as when I stared at the bare Barbie dolls my sister and cousins collected. The monochrome curves of flesh unmarred by the irregular lines and coloration of genitalia and nipples offered a shameless image of beauty I coveted.

fly on a glass wall looking out, not able to find out how to get, while gorging itself in the room in which it is trapped

I feel paralyzed by conscious mediocrity. Knowing that someone somewhere does something better than you, and that the bar is there, not here, makes me feel indolent in almost any endeavor. I watch friends pursue their dreams and realize goals, but I feel like I’m not worthy of realizing my dreams or goals because of my inadequacy. I’m not sure that I’m studying what I want to study. I’m not sure that I would even know how to articulate myself in the right discipline. I feel clumsy and naïve. I wish that I had tried harder.

• Learning to be more professional, cleaning up my Facebook

• False sense of security as I move toward graduation and college

Can you name what you want?

Pacify the rage of never being able to present myself as I would to this world without incurring some form of its violence.

The ways we choose to sell ourselves.

How his photograph changed once I got to know him. : two scenes: one where Thomas sees the photograph before he sees him and describes it, and one after he meets him and describes his appearance.

The barista whose milk designs vary with her mood.

A discussion or essay about whether white ignorance is a form of white privilege.

“You can’t just critique everything and offer no constructive solutions!”

“I felt alone with you even when I was fully present.”

Why would I want to offer a new construction.

So other could then deconstruct it.

When alone I can be dark and feline.

Unaware of self in Eco-critical and social justice seminars

“But the Bible doesn’t say that”

“Where do we go from here?”

Brick facades at my elementary school. Watching the workers glue the bricks to the outsides of concrete pillars.

I want to live in a world where this happens.

Where is our father?

My words are so weightless that I can’t stop speaking, and I just keep speaking as if I’m spitting out feathers.

Getting my braces off and cutting my hair and feeling pretty. Starting to get attention.

I need to illustrate how racism of indigenous peoples in San Diego was informed by existing attitudes of dominance of humans over nature. That by taking for granted “rational” life of “non-rational,” white settlers and missionaries associated indigenous peoples as closer to the land and therefore justified their exploitation and colonization. The underlying ideology that needs to be critiqued is humans over nature, rather than an ideology that positions humans in relation to nature.

Opens with the movie theater

Sitting in that theater, looking at the lights to the sides of the aisles that lined the walls, I realized how much they looked like stain glass imagery I remembered from my childhood. I remember sitting in the church, listening to the priest, unconvinced by the content of what he said and unimpressed by the form in which he delieved his speech, and I had the most uncanny sensation of finding myself in a new house of worship. My dissatisfaction with both the thing itself and its complement, the satire, emanated from a desire for a new conversation to take place, a conversation whose content did not center Roman Catholicism and whose reaction did not take the form of satire.

“I’m tired of doing all of the work, Thomas. Don’t you understand what you’re asking of me? Why can’t you?”

And I don’t think it’s right that Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates have that money, and I’m not afraid to name them: Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates. What could we do with that wealth? Why aren’t we talking about this?

(A character asks this in class).

Even not drinking is about drinking.

Thomas rhetorically brutalizes feeble attempts of “straight” men to experiment.

“That’s why gay men make good waiters. Straight men love exerting dominance over other men, especially if the woman they’re with is watching.”

1 designer for school play, 2 assistants. Designer based off Michael.

Witnessing a play as a lover, the actor beloved.

Lascivious, smelly designer. “Provacative” but really just vulgar. Stereotypical gay that thinks he needs to be “outrageous” to cultivate personality.

The theater as one of the only refuges from Iphone activity.

I overheard the woman over-enunciate the word “gelato” to distinguish the visit from all who might be her audience, an experience elevated from mere ice cream.

American fetishization of European culture.

We have reason to be skeptical of Patriotism.

Gail’s micro-aggressions toward my “lifestyle choices,” meaning she called Keoni my “friend” at every opportunity and made derisive comments about me “not living a life” (because I don’t need to run to every corner of the globe and work my ass off at jobs I don’t like in order to experience my spirituality and overall satisfaction in my life) wore me down, and by the second to last day there I was ready to leave.

Foucault writes that the nineteenth century was when sexual identities became codified in a system of classification through medical discourse: “The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (*The History of Sexuality.*) He also argues that the medical gaze that objectifies sexuality institutes a circulation of power and pleasure: “The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it; The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting. Capture and seduction, confrontation and mutual reinforcement: parents and children, adults and adolescents, educator and students, doctors and patients, psychiatrist with his hysteric and his perverts, all have played this game continually since the nineteenth century. These attractions, these evasions, the circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries not to be crossed, but perpetual spirals of power and pleasure (*The History of Sexuality*).

It’s interesting that Microsoft Word marks words like cisgendered and polyamorous as incorrect. Someone should write something about how technology often uncritically reinforces the status quo.

A character using Catholicism as drag—Luke.

I remember when the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage: I was shopping.

Driving through traffic and hearing the same radio station playing the same song in many cars on the freeway (work music)

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“Could you please tell us the difference between modernism and postmodernism?”

“I actually don’t know much about art,” replied the man. “I normally work at Tiffany’s—I’m surrounded by beautiful things every day—I can’t complain.”

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The familiar, ominous sense of guilt creeps under my armpits. *Do I deserve to express the way I feel?* I’ve had the misfortune of reading a friend’s screenplay that inspired nothing in me except contempt. Along with the screenplay, my friend had emailed me a set of focused questions to which he was expected to respond.

It wasn’t easy for Thomas to rationalize how being honest with his friend (who he wasn’t sure he would be talking to in five years) would be a good thing, whether his honesty would be worth expressing despite the collateral emotional trauma he might instigate. While his friend had asked for his feedback, diplomacy had never been a forte of Thomas’s, and Thomas wasn’t sure he would be able to frame his feedback congenially.

Nevertheless, Thomas had written back to his friend his responses to the focused questions, and then some. He had sent the email twenty-seven hours and eight minutes ago, and still had yet to hear back from his friend. He was absolutely sure that his email had been read. Charlie never put his phone down, and with email alerts, Charlie would have already read and reread Thomas’s email several times.

The issue at hand was that Charlie thought he and Thomas were better friends than they actually were. As evidenced in his screenplay, Charlie had a tendency to delude himself into mistaking his romantic, ideal world for reality. Thomas figured his email was a barbarous slap for Charlie out of his continual daydream.

Another issue was that Charlie had included a character inspired by Thomas in his screenplay- a character that Thomas wanted little association with, compounded with the fact that Thomas’s character and the character Charlie created out of inspiration from himself had a contentious, awkward relationship. Thomas figured this was actually a quite lucid portrayal of their real-life relationship.

Thomas knew that his email had undoubtedly wounded Charlie. But Thomas didn’t know how to be authentic with his own feelings while validating Charlie’s creative endeavor.

Thomas often felt clumsy and uncouth when addressing others honestly. It was difficult for Thomas to authentically say what he felt without in turn hurting someone else’s feelings. Thomas had no desire to cause unnecessary pain for other people. He knew in the past that he had been gratuitously harsh, and yearned to learn how to express himself in a way that didn’t compromise the emotional well being of other people. He wondered if that was at all possible.

Today my mother didn’t call me back for the 3rd time in a row. I am sick and tired of catering to her emotional needs while not receiving the same consideration from her. I am exploring options in hypnotherapy to decenter my emotional well-being from my mother.

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A conversation that attempts to discuss misconceptions of the term “acceleration” with the term Native American.

Someone trying to talk about Native American culture “accelerating.”

In order for me to have my “freedom” people like Elmer and Simona could not have theirs. They represented the “Africanis” people of the West Coast. Read Tony Morrison, playing in the dark.

Her invisible labor. How I would see her work because I was lazing around at home in the middle of the day.

She left my cigarettes on my pillow, and it broke my heart.

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I feel like I’m having to decide how important money is to me. I definitely acknowledge the merit of money to generate short, immediate pleasure, but I doubt that it helps me understand myself any better. If anything, I think money confuses me as to what I truly am. I’m recognizing more and more that all things are transcendent of their appearances. Every object, organism, idea etc. exists in/on a separate dimension/plane/space. I am more than my body, I am more than my face, more than my thoughts, more than my possessions, more than my test scores.

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Thomas sat outside the administration building. He wore round Miu Miu sunglasses*®* and a black Commes des Garcons*®* cardigan with black shorts and black socks. The eyes on the heart patch my cardigan stared at the doors. I cross my his legs and feel the pull of my garters tighten around my twink calves. I gaze up to the blue sky, rest my eyes on a cross, fixed on the top of a gothic turret.

In front of me bloom lavender and orange sherbet flowers in stone bowls. Jasmine run through my hair and brush against my neck.

Whiteness studies

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7) False sense of security with acceptance into college

-Pursuing a tech job, learning code

A culture bomb.

“We’re afraid that by acknowledging the truth about our reality, for what it is, we’ll somehow make things worse than they already are.”

Something is bubbling.

The old guard of maxims decayed into lies. Most of our artists will die in poverty after a life of impotent genius spent trying to pay rent.

Artists and critics, critics and creators.

What will we do when we ask them to give up power, and they say, no?

How does one engineer something viral?

Privacy is the greatest luxury. The idea that a person’s body reflects their morality.

The safe squareness. A way of presenting to the tastes of a mass palate.

When walking outside your house becomes a political act (drone, surveillance, etc.). Walking for leisure an example of privilege.

That morning he had checked his stocks on his Charles Schwab app. Plug Power (PLUG) was up 134% since he had bought it a couple days before. He realized that his modest portfolio was grossly imbalanced towards the 3-D printing and fuel cell energy industries. He debated whether or not he should sell off and claim his $6,000 gain, but figured that he had bought the stock for the long run, and didn’t think that it would be sold at the price he had bought it at in the near future.

People can be brought to revolution with drama and excitement.

I opened an investment account for future plastic surgeries.

I think a lot of us are just really desperate and have to do anything for money.

Everyone is worried about money, we’re the anxious lower class.

We have to decide that we ourselves are not autocrats.

Heaven and hell are all around us.

Ending the novel with everyone starting to get jobs at tech companies/corporations=false resolution. One character super stressed out that they won’t get a job.

*Epilogue*

Freedom—from those words—but freedom means nothing outside of them.

No longer attempting to act among the background of what is beautiful, pitifully attempting to imitate beauty through my own subjectivity, I now relinquish my subjectivity, my claim to be an agent of beauty, and I submit, subside to become part of the background of which against I would otherwise act. Comfort and perfect belonging are mine as long as I am compelled to forsake action for contemplation, acting for being. I will fade into the beautiful scene, never a focal point but always a part.