

He tiptoed around the ~~several~~ incompatible plastic storage bins. About half ~~were~~ ^{are} cracked under the weight of piles of paper that leaned on the sides of the bins because the ~~exceeded~~ extra height of five thousand ~~one~~ ^{caused} staples ~~had~~ cumulatively ~~caused~~ one ~~side~~ corner to grow much higher than the others.

A schoolgirl's script minus the hearts over the i's and j's is recognizably his own, occasionally vandalized by the rushed calligraphy in red ~~ballpoint~~ Papermate Inkjoy™ from some stuffy teacher or another who didn't appreciate his experimentation with the present-tense in the fourth-grade creative writing unit:

(transcribe entire story here)

~~First~~ grade science was mostly full of A water-damaged notebook. FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS AND PRE-CALCULUS 10 (YHM 10) ~~BLOCK 2~~ B 1 S2^(honors) because somebody at the provincial ministry of education thought that "Math 10" ~~had~~ didn't have enough syllables. He's not sure why he's kept this.

Mrs. Incandenza's lessons consisted of ~~verbal~~ sermons where the ~~contents~~ and contents of Addison-Wesley's Mathematics 10 ed. Shirley Parchiskin (and occasionally ~~the~~ ^{somehow less educationally} pedagogically

effective, Math Makes Sense 10 pub. Pearson Education Toronto 2006) were repeated nearly verbatim ~~entirely~~ with just enough omitted that her lessons never really gave the students the conceptual understanding that Parchuskin was already ~~so~~ poor enough at articulating. ~~It was a~~ from the textbook to teacher to ~~this~~ faded this damn Hilroy 80 pg. 8mm ruled twist-ring notebook, He surmised that the information only decreased in educational value. ~~I~~ would He's reluctant to throw it in ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~rest~~ ~~the~~ ~~rest~~ already the overflowing Blue Jay & Navel oranges on-board crate. Countless hours spent colour-coding what's now elementary information feel wasted in the recycling bin. But He, who ~~was~~ an obsessive. Maybe one day, when He's ~~much~~ older, he'll look back at these and get all nostalgic and reminiscent. Yet here he is, already older and staring at this notebook, not nostalgic nor reminiscent of the tortuously boring course that he ~~mostly~~ slept through half of, only torn by an admittedly irrational attachment ~~to~~ and a desire to actually clear shit from this room, then crushed by the realization

notebooks

that this notebook is ~~one of~~ just one ~~#~~ out of three IKEA SAMLA bins, one U-LINE, and ~~two~~ ^{two} of those finicky folding type storage crates ^{things} that ~~Costco sells for~~ they sell for \$15.99 each or just \$32 for two at Home Depot (they're called Clever Crates) worth of ^{no} old school work ~~and~~. Not just ~~paper~~ notes and worksheets and "self-reflections" but also all sorts of trinkets and crafts from art and woodworking classes that annoyingly seem to have been created for the sole purpose of occupying maximum volume while ~~doing~~ serving almost no practical function except as ~~#~~ an ^(elaborate) ^{antech-ed} extremely ugly clock that loses fifteen minutes every month or ~~perhaps~~, ~~for the art stuff,~~ literally nothing, no function at all except to ~~force~~ ~~the~~ have his parents frown being impressed by this piece of construction paper with glitter, yarn, oil pastel, and ~~taped~~ Elnar's liquid glue vomited on it. This button blanket is ~~also~~ nice though, He'll keep this one. Pieces of red felt pre-cut into the distinct silhouettes of Coast Salish animals are sewn gingerly by tiny hands guided by teachers who struggled to sew the buttons in for ~~#~~ the kids without them realizing ~~that~~ how little their uncoordinated ~~hands~~ digits were actually doing.

These digits deftly leaf through page after dusty
page of graphite-trotted lined paper ~~that~~
~~strikes~~ blindly, unexpectedly against ~~the~~ the
~~anodized aluminum shell of a 12.9" iPad Pro~~
whose ~~font~~ script ~~gets increasingly~~ is increasingly
rushed in a sort of adult/doctor's handwriting
~~types~~ way and the lined paper gradually turns
into Xerox acid-free with size 12 Times
New Roman and ~~an~~ illegibly hastened ~~font~~
~~only pen and pencil~~ only occasionally
spacing the titanium white printer paper
~~laid low~~. Blindly, unexpectedly, deft digits
cut dash anodized aluminum that brings quite
owl suddenly emotional weight that distracts from
iPad the ^{mild} physical trauma of bruised phalanges. He'll
but save money in the long run because he won't have
to keep buying paper and writing utensils and
notebooks. His math is good enough that he knows
this is a lie, unless he plans on using it for 42.3
years. His parents ~~concerned~~ surrendered to
his months of salesmanship and, logically,
got the most impractically large size (12.9") alongside
the \$129 Apple Pencil and the magnetic Magic
Keyboard Pro Max Plus S (?) for god knows
how much more (oh yeah, 512 GB too). ~~He~~ He
~~spends~~ spends more time researching the best
note-taking app than ~~actually~~ He does.

spending more ~~for~~ time taking obsessively organized notes than he does actually ~~typing~~ ~~at~~ making sense of the content. Even more time than that opening legendary chests or collecting gold coins or any ~~one~~ of a long list of ~~tasks~~ digital tasks that sound so embarrassingly stupid that He really doesn't want to ~~recall~~ recall any of the jargon ever. So engrossed in ~~a~~ headshotting some fag with a Kar98k that all 12.9" slipped out of sweaty hands and onto hard bathroom tile. Hard enough apparently that some piece of microscopic engineering marvel inside gave up its life of processing 1s and 0s transcribing ~~endless~~ the endless stream of highly-compressed images and videos of ~~enids~~ enviable attractive people, among a ~~million~~ hundred other similarly pointless activities ~~at~~ ~~He's~~ ~~an~~. ~~some~~ engineer in San Cupertino He knows that's probably not how ~~#~~ it all works inside but he doesn't care either. Some nerd in San Cupertino knows probably, He wonders if ~~he's~~ ~~he's~~ ~~he's~~ proud that his ingenuity has allowed millions of people to be able to get headshots in slightly more realistic graphics and open YouTube videos one millisecond faster.

He still does all these, just on any one of

three other devices. This 12.9" iPad Pro is permanently broken now so its precious silicon just sits here. Oh God, they kept the receipt. He stuffs it back in the pile but not before he ~~unhappily~~ voluntarily / involuntarily sneaks a peak at the four digits before the decimal. He decides to stop sorting the ~~the~~ school stuff |

DEL

finish :-

✓ Fix trans. from supra

As paper and staples work together to construct yet taller structures, they soon outgrow the strained support of cracked polypropylene walls ~~is~~ and spilled out and over and across unwacuumed carpet ~~drawings~~ drawing His gaze to another section of this ~~god~~ god forsaken (?) room whose squandered ~~spacious~~ spaciousness ~~is~~ asphyxiates its inhabitants. He took for granted how easy it was to throw away paper. He realizes, as ~~moldy and~~ perpetually moist sporting equipment rears its ugly, deflated heads. He deduces that the water in the base of the ~~free standing~~ free standing free-standing punching bag hosts a new ~~microbiotic~~ species of ~~edge~~ algae evolved in isolation from the outside world ~~in the~~. He can't tell if the smell comes from ^{the} acne lesions ~~is~~ revealing jaundiced foam in the punching bag and accompanying boxing gloves or from the undersized baseball mitts. ~~or from the~~ Maybe, probably, definitely, it's coming from the hockey gloves whose ~~pain~~ ~~have~~ ~~left~~ left hockey glove over there. Unlikely that the right glove is ~~is~~ contributing most of the smell because years of abrasion with grip tape ~~has~~ swiss cheese-ify cow hide ~~that~~ vainly sewn in Bangladesh ~~in~~ to prevent calluses on blistering ^{on} adolescent hands already calloused ~~alone~~ by waxed laces tied too tight for fear of being called a ~~bent~~ "dusty bender." ~~fat~~ Only His fingers aren't numb from lacng His skates but ~~not~~ he can't feel ~~them~~ them anyways because the locker room is about the temperature of an industrial cooler. He sits

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early connection?

nearest the door as usual ~~because~~ because he has trouble waking up at 5 AM on ~~Wednesday~~ Wednesdays and ~~being~~ finding the motivation to brave sub-zero ~~and not~~. The punishment for latecomers is ~~the~~ being subjected to the ~~sitely~~ ~~cold~~ yet-colder rink-side air ~~after~~ every time someone opens the door to leave or the coach comes in to tell those of us still struggling with our skates to HURRY UP, PRACTICE ~~START~~

STARTED FIVE MINUTES AGO but, still, frozen fingers fumbled to grasp stiff laces and loop them around hardened, reddened hands and when, finally, left and right skates are tight enough that he can't feel his toes, not sure ~~if~~ whether due to the cold or from cut-off circulation, frantic sounds of velcro tearing and reattaching ~~in~~ indicate ~~that~~ warn of the impending exodus from ^{trunk} cold ~~into~~ somehow colder. Only, after just ten minutes of crossovers and breakout drills, any worries of hypothermia are forgotten. The polyester and layers of polyester absorb warm sweat that gives everything an inescapable moistness that has yet to leave the glove apparently. Actually, everything in here is moist. The basement has this permanent cold dampness that permeates everything with a crummy wetness. Everything that enters here leaves forever feeling and smelling like running a gauntlet walled by racks of thrift store clothing. Clothes that are either 10 years out of fashion or 20 years old and somehow

again in fashion

~~fashionable again~~. Clothes that are two sizes too small or one size too big. The ^{only} ones that fit him now were ~~his mother's~~. He tried wearing one of ~~the~~ his father's one-size-too-big jackets to ~~school~~ school once. Somebody ~~commented~~ commented on the uncharacteristic fashion choice:

"What the hell are you wearing?"

"It's my dad's."

"You look like three midgets in a trench coat trying to look like one tall person."

"Thanks I'm never wearing this again."

"Hey it's not a bad look, kids are into that these days."

"It's a funny thing isn't it?" ← stupid line

"What?"

"So much of today's fashion is recycled from the past.

Science fiction writers in the 1980s thought we'd be wearing full-body suits in fluorescent colours that probably had integrated technology to eliminate the need to shit or something like that but what they probably never expected was that we would be wearing the same clothes they were but in various permutations with their children's or their own parents' clothing and bits and pieces... no, entire limbs, at times, deleted to show more somehow untanned or, ~~at the other extreme, unhealthily and~~ ~~thankfully,~~ unnaturally tanned skin. ~~unhealthily~~ ~~thankfully,~~ I'm ^{thinking} guessing that there's a collective nostalgia for a time ~~past~~ we weren't alive to

see ~~because of~~, more so ~~than~~ than previous generations, because of the saturation of our ~~daily 24 hours~~ ~~quotidiane(?)~~ 24 hours with media, media like whatever the fuck is on Netflix, on HBO... Does anyone actually watch stuff on Amazon Prime? Why does Disney+ even exist? We were ~~born~~ born in the wrong generation to see live the Beatles and Queen and Black Sabbath and Pink Floyd but we were born in the exact generation when all this music can be streamed whenever we please so that we can tell ourselves that we were born in the wrong generation while listening to some recently-dead long-haired Brit wank off on acid and an expensive synthesizer. We have this nostalgia for a "better" time before music became all ~~ass and pussy~~, before electronics and computers made everything lifelessly convenient, before these ~~ahem~~ mediums of social discourse and interaction made modern life so vain and lonely because we're all aware enough to see the vanity and the ~~the~~ superficial social connections and also aware enough to be tormented by it all, but not aware enough to know what the fuck to do about it other than complain and listen to and concur with our parents' lamentations of kids these days and how "back in their day"... phrases that we now use ironically more than we do unironically because to not be ironic invites humiliation.

It's so easy and naïve to make fun of the vanity of modernity; it's just as easy to make fun of the people ~~silly enough~~ making fun of the vanity of modernity because everything they can think to say has already been thought and said by everyone else, but they are in the extra vulnerable position of thinking that they're special and original in their very unspecial and unoriginal opinions.

May be I can put it this way. Maybe we're all the same, we as in all of us across these arbitrarily defined generations. Perhaps we're all just as vain and superficial, only that we, we as in this generation that I ~~apparently~~^{supposedly} belong to, have been given the means to express our vanity in ways that our parents could never. But we, me and you (you my friend at school, not necessarily you the reader) and everybody else approximately the same age as us, are so frequently exposed to modern vanity and its equally annoying critics that we conflate the folly of social media with genuine loneliness which sometimes gets to the point where our ~~mistaken~~^{mistaken} perception of genuine loneliness in spite of what we realize is superficial socialness } only then makes us truly, genuinely... alone in the room. He feels his internal monologue is getting a bit unbearable so he turns on an AM/FM portable radio from the pile of dated electronics that unexpectedly functions. Some genius realized you could sell more of these by sticking a solar panel on it instead of powering them

with the usual, much more practical D-cell batteries. The unbranded AA Li-ion batteries inside are totally ~~dead~~ dead so the radio now only works while in direct sunlight. He retracts the aluminum shutters of one window so that the golden rays of this August dusk betray the positions of multitudinous dust particles. Set on the windowsill, the radio blares to life. It's already tuned to a station. He wonders which —

YOU'RE LISTENING TO

94.5 DISNEY FM 7*, HOME OF

THE HOTTEST HI — oh okay.

He goes back to deconstructing piles of stuff and then reconstructing them into different piles of stuff.

This pile is for garbage. He figures that

someone else will resolve the issue of it already being

too large for the household garbage bin that only

gets emptied biweekly.

This pile is for paper that

can be recycled. The paper was at ~~one point~~

contained in a Glad[™] garbage bag but the bag got

shredded, somehow, by the paper itself and has pretty much ~~mixed~~ mixed itself in with

the loose pile of paper that's slowly taking

up more and more floor space. Attempts

at steepening its angle of repose to make

it more compact have only yielded document

avalanches like something out of the ~~night~~

nightmares of an existentially distressed

revenue agency worker.

This is the ~~one~~ donation pile.

Frankly, 90% of this stuff is

specify patented features

worthless and will ~~probably~~ probably get thrown out by the thrift store workers, but the garbage pile is already too big so better to let the thrift store deal with it, right? He can just imagine the indirect journey to the landfill. Drop it all off at the donation centre. The stuff looks clean enough that it's not obviously worthless so it gets past the ~~guys~~ guys helping you unload and the conveyor takes it into the big sorting and storage area. Not sure how it works, but he figures that at some point, the actually sellable stuff gets picked out and the rest gets tossed into a big dumpster and ends up, eventually, right alongside the stuff in pile #1. All facilitated by people getting paid at or near minimum wage. He's getting paid nothing. to sort through the worthless miscellanea (?) of a lifetime's worth of accumulated product. Realize that the expense of most of it (he willingly ignores the expense of some of the stuff in here) necessitated that there be economies of scale. That this Disney World of Science commemorative stress ball could only have cost so little to manufacture if it had been just one of tens of thousands of identical stress balls that came out of a single mold. This mold a complex mirror negative of the sulci ~~and~~ and gyri on the brain-shaped stress ball handed out to commemorate International Pediatric Neurology Week at the aforementioned science museum whose ~~name~~ official name nobody actually uses. (to raise awareness for children with brain tumours around the world) He wonders if the folks at the old Disney World of Science care for

the upcoming Breast Cancer Awareness Day or, even better, Male Reproductive Health Month. He wonders if the Chinese injection-mold operator wonders what the hell white people* need all these squishy brains for. We* don't. He tosses the brain into the donation pile and it bounces off a light-up globe and strikes pile #2 causing another mini-avalanche, for fuck's sake.

- consider
changing age of
himself

, drag out
final part?

No. _____

DATE . . .

The sun waves a little goodbye and ducks under the horizon. The dim orange rays once in transit up the room's walls now race along the southwesterly azimuth to meet the sun's waving finger tips ~~then~~ as it finally withdraws and disappears for the day. ~~the~~ He learns now that his ears ~~were~~ were indeed ringing but the relievedly distracting tone subsides to ~~make~~ give way to the overwhelming roar of silence that washes over the room and floods it and carries Him and everything else in the room up for one last ^{grasping} breath of air and then ~~fata~~lly, entropically, down.