

# THE LONELINESS outline

by [Matthew Temple](#)

Music: Carousel by Melanie Martinez off the Crybaby album, NIN, Portishead, Massive Attack, Yael Naim's Toxic, Moulin Rouge End Credits Bolero, music from the latest Batman movies, maybe Arvo Pärt for the ending (I just used Batman for the whole thing.)

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~~Cutting reality show. Describe Andrew's (the show's producer) Twitter avi and how jealous I am of it and how I wonder what he tells his mother what he does in LA when he goes home for Thanksgiving—and how can he be proud of himself for producing such drivel? It got down to two and I won. The guy I beat asked what it was like for me and I said I hated every minute.~~

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~~Killed by police bullet and then I wake up and it's eighty years later.~~

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~~People I've never met are taking care of me. They're young and I think I'm young too but they tell me I'm eighty. I'm getting out of the hospital. Why was I in the hospital? Because you're well now, you're ready to be released. Well from what? A psychotic episode. Mania. You're bipolar. But this time you lost some of your memory. What's the last thing you remember? Climbing up a tree and getting shot by that cop. You were never shot by a cop. You had a psychotic episode then. When? After the TV show—do you remember that? The one with all the cutting? Yeah. You won! You say that like it's something to be proud of. The only reason I won that game is because I'm bipolar. They put a crazy person in the~~

~~ring with a bunch of neurotypicals. They had no chance. Am I remembering that right? I have bipolar? Yes, but they don't call it bipolar anymore. And we don't say "typical." Why not? Because no one's typical. I could have told you that sixty years ago.~~

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~~I think I've been in a coma for 80 years and they tell me I was never in coma at all. Look at where we're taking you from—a psychiatric ward. Do you think they keep people with comas in psych hospitals? It's a delusion, it's one of your persistent delusions, that you've just woken from a coma.~~

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~~So I ask them about my life and they tell me I had eighty nipple skins sewn into each of my breasts with silk from a spider's web so my nipples would be extra sensitive. Somehow they're able to project an image of this into my mind. I'm a woman! You had a male-to-female sex change operation. But I feel like a man now. You changed back. I look closely at some text at the bottom of the image: Copyright Sony Pictures!? Why does Sony Pictures own this image of my breast? Cause you're famous, Mr. Temple!! The tech laughs. She has brown skin, black hair, and a laugh that could put one last breath of air in your lungs right before you died.~~

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~~The four techs tell me details of my life. It was wild famous crazy and connected. Love and laughter.~~

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~~Then we're on a street corner, and it's the same intersection where the cutting game was held, except the arena is gone: no chain-link fences, no white painted ramps and walls. It's a high-rise~~

apartment building. Every window has thick, woven wire grating on it, all the way to the very top floor. The techs call me a cab. They set down my stretcher and my suitcases and piles and piles of paper that they say I wrote but I have no memory of. My whole life is gone after the age of twenty-two. And I am a man being abandoned on a street corner by hot medical technicians and I want to fuck them, boy and girl, and the black one pushes down her pants and I see her beautiful ass and she looks over her shoulder and simply tells me: "Stick it in!" She smiles. "Sex is no big deal in the future." "It's not your future!" I say. "Right," she says. "It's only yours cause you're crazy." "I thought we didn't say 'crazy' anymore." "Oh no we say that." So it's an orgy on this street corner while we wait for my cab and I'm fucking all these boys and girls with their perfect genitals and my cock is hard but I can't cum. "Tell me, why can't I cum? Is it an antidepressant they have me on? Or..antidepressants don't exist in the future." "They don't," says the black girl {use her name of course, she's just my main psych tech}. "Watch one of the documentaries on yourself. You can't cum unless someone is your friend. It's a proclivity you developed in your teens—some say even earlier, when you were just a little kid. You don't know us well enough to cum. You'd have to love us in order to cum in us." "I could love you." She touches my face, and I can feel that it's her smooth skin against my rough and spotty beardless cheek. "I could love you too."

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My cab comes and the wind blows and we lose some of the drawings as they blow down the street. My psych techs walk down the sidewalk and my angle is skewed like some shot from Natural Born Killers. I see the world in different films, cut together in spasms, covered with gels, lit by a cinematographer. My whole life is a movie.

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And it's not quite over.

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~~But I'm at the elevators and I'm an old man and there are two people, each waiting for a separate elevator even though we're on the first floor so the only way there is is *up!* The elevators never come and the wind is rising and the one woman starts asking me questions about the cutting show and the one man starts pressing, then punching, then kicking the shit out of one of the elevator buttons. "I've almost got it!!" he claims.~~

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~~All I am trying to do is hold on to my papers. I need to get them scanned into the net before I die. And I see some of them, describing my perfect plans—plans for books, plans for games I once wanted to make but that I realize *someone else has already made* in the time that I was missing! But I was never missing! I was conscious all that time. I only *feel* that I just woke up, eighty years old. But all that time was real, to me, while it was happening. And I'm tapping into the net in my brain and I'm watching the documentary of me—if I look into the sky it makes it easier to see. And all that's up there is four gray walls, the walls of buildings around us, and *waay* at the top is the lighter gray of the storm. Pictures of me, coming at rapid speeds, videos. It looks like I did what I always did, from when I was little. I see myself directing films, even me and my sisters putting on plays in the basement for our parents to see. I think my sisters must be dead by now, since I've traveled sixty years into the future..but no..I haven't traveled at all..I've just lost my mind..and they're probably still alive. But there's me, and I see births and I see deaths, I see that a second lover of mine died, not from bulimia this time but by suicide. All I have of her is pictures from a documentary that was made in a time I can't remember. It looks like I had a life with this woman, but the only thing that exists of us now is me re-creating memories, but not~~

of being with her, only of seeing us be together in this documentary. And {Hannah (whatever, main psych tech)} was right, sex is no big deal in the future. There are shots of me licking and biting and sucking her clitoris while I have two fingers inside her till she cums. And she has a beautiful fucking face and her arms are covered with self-harm scars—at least that's what we used to call them. And that's how she killed herself, with a million tiny cuts across the arms, but deep cuts—and that's how I killed that guy, on the show, with a million deep gashes into the forearm. We all killed each other until only one was left. I mean that's what happened. On the show. I wish I had that last guy here with me now, waiting for this elevator. That guy had spunk, he had guts, he was a fighter. Something from a David Mamet play: *It's alright. There's no one here but the fighters.* Well now there's no one here at all except me.

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The elevator comes and the guy and the gal get in. They're standing on the back wall with their arms crossed, both wearing trench coats and here's me, eighty years old, and I make one trip into the elevator with a suitcase and then another trip into the elevator with another suitcase and then I'm out there in the wind and rain and I'm thinking they were *smart* to wear trench coats, it's a fucking storm and I'm wearing a pair of Mickey Mouse boxers and a hospital gown. It reminds me of every dream I have where I have too much stuff and I have to move and I can't move fast enough to get it all and I'm gonna lose some of my stuff!! In one I'm in a subway car and all my Legos are out—some loose, some built into buildings and tanks and fighter planes—and the signal dings and the next stop is mine and I'm trying to get all those Legos in the bag but I can't. I cannot. I cannot get them all into my bag before the next stop. I'm going to have to leave some of them behind. I always have these dreams. I have too much stuff, and I'm going to have to leave some of it behind. Maybe I'm having one of those dreams now.

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~~In the elevator. With these two people who are angry and fascinated. One is angry at the elevator button, which he kicked in. One is fascinated with me, still asking questions about my life and every time she asks a question I go into the net, through my head, and I look up the answer and tell her. Everything she's asking me about is nothing I know. We're learning together. She asks: *How did you..?* and I quickly go to the net in my head and look up some Sony Pictures footage of myself and watch the documentary really fast and come back to this woman with an answer. She's completely into me but she wouldn't pick up a single piece of paper and help me move it into the elevator. She's not a friend, she's a fan. A fan is kind of like a person who's using pornography. They don't really give a shit about you once they cum. They don't even watch the end of the movie. As soon as they get off, they close the tab and you are *gone* to them—they'll never see you again. You're their drug. They're just using you to get high. How do I know this? I must have been famous. Then it occurs to me that more people know me than I know myself. There is more knowledge about me stored in hard drives and other people's heads than in my own fucking head. Then I realize I haven't seen a computer this whole time, from the beginning I remember, there hasn't been a single computer. Then I start getting scared.~~

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~~Imagine a hallway so long that you can't see the end of it. That's what I have to go through to get to my room. There are bell boys and buy boys and..just..fucking..boys! everywhere. Fuck me. This must be hell. An infinite hallway. An old man. Too much to carry. And no pussy in sight. It sounds like the tagline from the next release from Sony Pictures. These boys won't talk to me. They're carrying trays of dirty dishes from rooms and *I can tell by looking at the dirt on the dishes which celebrity they belong to.* Let's say there's a knife. And there's peanut butter left on this knife like from after~~

~~you make a sandwich—well that’s Alec Baldwin, obviously. Or there’s this bagel with no cream cheese, no jelly, nothing silly like that. No. This bagel..it’s just half a bagel, cause she ate the other half..this bagel just has the shiny evidence of melted butter..real butter..and the bagel is toasted just the right way..never blackened, no part left untouched, but just this perfect wave of brown toasting covering maybe one third of the surface of the bagel. Oh. Also. This is not an everything bagel, this is not a sesame seed bagel, this is not a poppy seed bagel, this is not a bagel that had lox on it. It’s the plainest bagel you can find, prepared in the subtlest, classiest way. That bagel is obviously Jennifer Lawrence.~~

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~~And so on and so *fucking* forth.~~

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~~Hotel rooms don’t have numbers on them in the future for security reasons. Your head just purrs at you softly when you have arrived. It reminds me of something from my childhood, before the cutting game. When I would drive myself home from the psychiatrist (when I was still allowed to drive), when I got home the GPS would say, very proudly: *You have arrived at your destination.* It made me laugh every time because I took it in the deepest possible manner, which of course the GPS did not intend, and that was hilarious to me, that this non-conscious being might be proud of me (in a grand sense) for *arriving at my destination.* Usually people’s destinations are success and death. Mine is just a crappy hotel room.~~

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~~Ok it isn’t crappy. Have you seen *Lost in Translation*, by Sofia Coppola? Well have you seen the cover? Right. It’s a picture of one of the most serious people who ever lived, a self-hater..so..naturally,~~

~~a comedian. Bill Murray, straight faced, sitting on the edge of a hotel room in Japan. I'm not saying I'm Bill Murray, ok, so just cool it. All I'm saying is that this hotel room is like that hotel room. Except mine doesn't have a film crew. Lance Acord did not shoot my life. There's no documentary crew. No photographers. No girlfriends. There's nobody, ok, just me.~~

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~~The shades are drawn, which makes my room even more depressing than Bill Murray's. I am afraid to open them because I'm afraid. Of what? I guess..of being assassinated? Of being reminded that there are bars on all the windows in the future, even thirty floors up, and what does that mean? I assume it means people burglarize hotel rooms at thirty floors up. There's a mirror in my head, somehow, and I see a cold sore developing on my lip. It looks familiar. I think I've had it before. Exact same one. Exact same spot. But I don't have herpes. Can you have cold sores without herpes? How have I gotten to be eighty years old without knowing this? In my brain, Google overlays my question, in the exact words I thought it: *Can you have cold sores without herpes?* I panic, which Google interprets as a *cancel*. Thank you. It might not even be a cold sore, I might just need some ChapStick.~~

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~~But that's how it starts, these things, it's like unravelling a ball of string. One thing goes wrong: one stinking cold sore or the flu or, you know, whatever..fucking..Ebola..and you're dead. At least you start the slide. What do you think is the average age at which a thinking person realizes that life is the process of dying. That life (the whole arc of it) and death (the whole arc of *it*) are overlappable. They're the exact same thing. Because you can't die if you're not alive, and you can't live without someday dying..so they are the exact, same, fucking, thing.~~





Like if you get a scab, don't pick at it. If you do it makes it larger. If you pick long enough your leg falls off.



~~So I'm in this hotel room with imaginary Bill Murray, imaginary Sofia Coppola, imaginary Lance Acord. Imaginary Scarlett Johansson is standing in the bathroom brushing her teeth and thinking: *Who is Matthew Temple? Isn't he that guy who won The Cutting Show? He must be like eighty years old by now. Is he even still alive?* And she's holding this book in the other hand—the hand she's not brushing her teeth with—and imaginary Scarlett Johansson turns around slowly and the bathroom door is open and she sees me sitting on the bed. I'm real though and she's imaginary so I can't see her but she can see me. She turns around and goes back to brushing her teeth and reading this book. And her brow crunches down and she's like: *What am I doing in this psychotic book by psychotic Matthew Temple?* And then she starts to wonder if that's the real her, the one she's reading about in the book, not the one reading the book.~~



~~In the future, if you want to know if you're a vampire, you Google yourself and if no results come back, then you are.~~



~~And I sit in this room forever, you see, because you are reading about it. And as I sit here I can access the archives of everything that's ever been recorded. I remember that beautiful girl my dick was just in. We'll never have sex again. We'll never cum together. And I wanted, oh I wanted so much to see her face when she reached the point. That girl back there, the best one, that my dick~~

was in...she was the best one. You know like if one of the four was going to become a movie star, it would be her. There was my friend Zochae—he's dead—we changed our names together and shaved our heads together and painted and took mushrooms together while we were painting and we mixed music specially for the purpose of listening to it while we were painting on mushrooms. We played the same song on two devices, out of sync, on repeat, to increase the trip factor. It worked. And there was Rebecca, she's the first person I knew closely who died. She died when I was twenty-three. I can remember everything from when I was kid right up to the moment just before I met Rebecca—that was sometime when I was twenty-two. After that the only memory I have is in the archives. She warped me..or maybe I'm giving her too much credit. But I don't think so. I think I met an angel. I mean that, I guess, I in some sort of metaphor because I don't think of myself as the kind of person who believes in angels. But I do. I have to, because I met one. She told me children came up to her in a park and said she was an angel. And she fucking was. You know how when someone moves to your town from another town and every time you say or do anything, the person remembers something related to that thing, that happened in their old town, and they're always telling you stories about their old town and after a while you kind of take it as an insult? That's how I am with Rebecca. I know this painful fact about myself from the archives. In some ways I think the me that I am now, as opposed to the childhood me, was formed on the day we met. I can't describe how I felt because I don't remember. I can only tell you what my face looks like on old video of me chasing her around a warehouse with my paintings all over the walls. And this photo I found that's widely circulated on my fan sites where Rebecca is meditating, with her eyes closed, in that same warehouse. I'm going through every still photo of her that I can find and trying to glean the essence of her, find the most quintessential Rebecca face, but I can't find one. I don't know which one is most *really* her. There are cassette tapes of me talking, while I stand in the stairwell of my friend Matt's warehouse across town, waiting with Matt's girlfriend for the police. It's just an audio

tape but you can tell that I'm in a stairwell and that I'm at Matt's warehouse and all those other details because I explain it on the tape. The tape is for Rebecca's sister, one of them, and I never sent it. Trying to fix something that's forever going to be broken. There are audio tapes of me in high school, in the tenth grade, masturbating in the bottom bunk of my bunk beds (top bunk was empty), and I'm recording my breathing and moaning sounds through the whole process of initial stimulation to orgasm. I did this out of a certain love for myself. I never intended the tapes to become public—but I never cared that they did. You know how the NSA is able to control all the cameras on all our devices and record you without turning on the *record* light? Well, I found this video of myself saying that the NSA had come to me and threatened to release videos of me jerking off to porn unless I redacted this sentence that you're reading right now. How did they know way back then that I was someday going to write that sentence? Because the US government has time travel. They've had it forever. Got it from the aliens, or Tesla, or somewhere. Anyway in this video I say that I told them to go ahead and release all my masturbation videos. I didn't care. How does that hurt me, if you see me ejaculate? Only if I'm a control freak, if I have a big ego, if I'm trying to control your impression of me. My friend Julian, in high school, he was always worried about which song he would first become famous for, because (as he said) the first song someone hears of an artist, it colors their expectations of what the second song and the third song and all the other songs will be like, and if they're too different, they might not like you anymore and it could fuck up your whole career. True. It's true. What he said was true. But I never liked the premise of the whole question. First of all, it assumes you're going to become famous, and for me, that means you're misfocused from the start. You can't control other people's impressions of me. Some people think I'm crazy. Who cares? It has absolutely no effect on me. That's not true. But it has little effect. And it is certainly not important enough to direct your life around.

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~~I mean, look how I got famous: I won the motherfucking Cutting Game. The Cutting Show. Now outlawed in all countries. And now played in secret in all countries. Watchable only on the deep web. If I look at enough footage of myself, will I *become* myself again? I don't *feel* like someone who legally murdered multiple people on what was the greatest reality TV show of all time. You've got to think about statements like that and check your ego. Every year, a new movie comes out that is touted as *the biggest box-office hit ever!!* Wow, yeah, that's because last year there were six billion people on the planet and this year there's twenty *two*. More people, more tickets, more "money"...it doesn't mean anything about your movie!! It doesn't mean it's good. It doesn't even mean people like it. It just means it was there. Why does Coke sell more than Pepsi? Because it's *there* in more restaurants, movie theaters, fast food places, vending machines. It's just more *there*. It's like food companies paying for the primo spots in grocery stores or publishing companies paying for the primo tables at Barnes & Noble, the ones up front, in the middle of the aisles, that you *have* to see both coming and going. That's why those books sell tons of copies—somebody paid to have them right in your face.~~



~~The guy, my friend Matt, who me and Matt's girlfriend were searching for, was inside his warehouse, hanging by his neck from a beam across the ceiling. There was a large a-frame ladder next to him. There was a cow's head covered in tar, that had started to decompose, and was stinking. It was an art piece by Matt. Hand written in a journal from the archive: *Note to self: when your friend cuts the head off a cow with a chainsaw, covers it in tar, lights it on fire, and wheels it in on a dolly to his art opening, ask him how he's feeling.* He might not be doing well. Yeah. I know that now.~~



I closed all the tabs in my head.



Google informed me that I was *fourteen minutes from home* and I was like: *Holy fuck, this hotel room is my home. Right? I got dispatched from the hospital, fucked some mental health techs with really smooth skin, after a life of making a shit ton of art and killing a few people in the process. That's ego, right? Over-self-importance? Like they died because of me, because I handed them the drug or neglected to recognize their bulimia? Or in Matt's case, I knew he was stressed over his debts, so I say all the usual things, like: I should have known, all the signs were there. They are always there, but even psychiatrists don't see them all the time. All you get is a general feeling of something's not right. Or you're worried—but you don't know exactly why you're worried and you don't follow that question to see where it goes. That's the problem. You sense an itch with someone, but you don't sleuth it out to figure out if it's nothing or if it's like..the signs of suicide.*



*You are fourteen minutes from home.*



What does that mean?



Follow the question.



I look around the room and all my imaginary friends are gone.



I wonder if it means I'm going to kill myself in fourteen minutes.

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Or die in fourteen minutes or whatever.

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~~Flashback to The Cutting Game. When I killed that last guy. It could have gone either way. I've never told anyone this before but you know..he kind of wanted it to be over. I don't think he wanted to die for it to be over, but that was, by the rules, the only way out. We were looking at each other, eye to eye, hand to hand, knife to knife baby. And his eyes told me to do it. It was just this little downward shift and then he looked back at me and his brown eyes said: do it. Fucking kill me. This show must not go on. Look at us, we're killing each other for the entertainment of teenagers who don't even know what death is. And I was younger. I was eighteen, he was thirty-three, so that was Jesus' age when he died and this guy's name might have been Jesus, I don't know, but he was saying kill me. Kill me and let's force these motherfuckers to change the channel.~~

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I turned on the TV in the hotel room. I don't know what I expected to see there—reruns of The Cutting Show? It was complete static, there was static on every channel!! And that's when I started to realize I might be in a dream. You have to look for the signs. We believe the reality we're presented with..yes. That is true. But if you learn not to do that, you'll start to see the cracks in the wall, the places where the wallpaper is peeling. Every channel on TV was static. Yeah. It's true. I can tell you with absolute certainty that I am in a dream. You know what my latest thing is, when I "wake up" like this inside a dream? I go up to people and I inform them that they are a figment of my imagination. And these fuckers talk back!

~~They find it interesting that I think they aren't real...!!...my brain, who is making all this shit up, imagines that *figments of my imagination* would be surprised to think that I think that they are not real!! My brain thinks that it would be interesting for me if the other characters in my dreams absolutely thought they were real. So they argue with me!! They make the case for their own reality. I sit and listen quietly. Then I tell them that I can prove they aren't real. How? Because once I realize I'm dreaming, it's never long before I wake up. I tell them they'll be going away soon.~~

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~~And soon enough, I wake up, leaving behind that numberless hotel room which I am sure is a preview of how the real me will die, psychotic, alone, with more stuff than I can carry. And I'm going to have to leave some of it behind. Let's be real: I'm going to have to leave all of it behind, the two suitcases, all the paper drawings, everything I'm wearing, my body, my brain, the mind it supports, all the thoughts contained in it, all its connections to other computers, my knowledge of the archive..~~

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~~My whole life..~~

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~~..will be gone:~~

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~~And the only place I'll be is in your head, because you're reading this, because you watched some movie I made, some poem I wrote. Because you watched all my YouTube videos. I'm not alive in the videos, but I'm alive when you watch them.~~

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I tell myself: ~~you're in a dream!!~~ I have to wake up before my fourteen minutes are up. Once Google decides I'm zero minutes from home, I'm sure I will die in this hotel room, and I'll never wake up, I'll die in my bed and this will be my last dream. Remember, if you die in the Matrix, you die in real life. So I scream at myself to wake up.

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The hotel room is gone.

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I am not an eighty-year-old man.

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I'm in my bed, in my room in my mom's apartment, because I am a thirty-seven-year-old man who has disabling mental illness and I cannot survive on my own right now, not without medicine.

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I am trying to categorize the weirdness of that dream among my weirdest dreams of all time. I hear Regina Spektor playing on Pandora on my iPad which is in bed with me.

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And I am kneeling over Jesus.

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The dying man gives me that look that says: *kill me*.



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~~I am holding a real knife. There is real blood.~~

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~~My mom leans into the room.~~

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~~"Matthew?"~~

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~~I look down. There's no Jesus. There was never any Cutting Game.  
My bed looks like a battle zone. The quilt I sleep on is halfway off  
the bed. My pillows are crunched to half their original size.~~

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~~"Are you alright?"~~

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~~There's no blood. I had thought I was holding a knife.~~

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~~I lie down.~~

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~~I look over at the iPad. There's a Tweet, one I wrote. It says: 3am.  
Racing thoughts. Off my medicine bc the insurance company didn't  
approve what my doctor prescribed. Then the thumbs up emoji.~~

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~~“Mom, yes, I’m ok. I can see why you’re not supposed to stop Klonopin suddenly. I feel cold, but that’s the only physical symptom that I have, and I have no reason to believe that anything is wrong with me physically. I went to sleep around four thirty, I think, and I just had the weirdest dream.”~~

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~~[I like this: I wake up from a drug withdrawal dream as a high-schooler—a dream of reflecting on my life from the end—and then I get the email inviting me to apply to be a contestant on the show that ultimately starts the entire life I’m about to live.]~~

~~Then an email, inviting people with 3.7 or higher GPAs to apply for a game show—name confidential—apply with your agent or visit this address? Must be willing to lose it all to gain it all. To lose it all again, I say, and I hit reply.~~

~~[with that exact phrasing at the end, not THE LONELINESS as I suggest later in this outline]~~

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~~And somewhere in there, police footage of me, as the camera-mounted spotlight finds a one-hundred pound me hiding under a bed, body shaking, holding five hypodermic needles in one hand, mouth grinning wide, and the scariest eyes you've ever seen. I'm holding my dick in my other hand, jerking it, trying to cum. Desperately, desperately trying to cum. From the outside the situation looks horrible, and as the police cuff this Smeagol-looking creature that even I don't recognize as myself, I see that his (my?) dick is bleeding. I've been jerking off so long on crystal meth that my fucking dick is bleeding!~~

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Footage of me, shot by trick or treaters, some four-year-olds jumping up to the house. I'm sitting on the porch, about thirty-six, lit by a bulb on the side of the house. Their camera catches me sitting in a chair drinking whiskey and smoking Kamel Reds and these kids are like "Trick or treat!!" Of course I can't see their costumes because the camera is on me, but I'm wearing pajamas, barefoot, head shaved. Gently, as though these were my own kids, I say "I'm so sorry, I don't have any candy tonight." The kids slowly retreat. "I'm sorry," I say, and then as their camera turns to face the minivan their parents used to drop them off at my house, I can be heard saying, "I'm a complete asshole. Sitting here on Halloween drinking and smoking with *the porch light on!!!*? And what the fuck"—and here the kids' camera turns back on me and I'm standing, pointing at them with my cigarette—"What the fuck is this driving your kids around the neighborhood for Halloween??" I start walking toward the vehicle and parents inside are like "Drive! Drive! He's going to kill us!!" I'm getting closer to them. "I'm not going to kill you, bitch!! I just wonder if you think that *driving* your kids from house to house really *captures the spirit of Halloween!!* We used to *walk!!* That's part of the whole thing!!" But they're too far away. The audio fades and the minivan door closes and the whole thing cuts. It's actually jogging my memory, seeing that house, vague memories of humidity and lizards crawling the fence. Yeah, I remember things here and there. Buying cigarettes with change. It was my aunt's house. I remember walking drunk, falling down drunk walking to the bar at 2am getting mud all over me, sitting down in the parking lot next to this homeless woman with a shopping cart and she's sliding away from me as I'm trying to start up a conversation. Yeah, that's something true I remember: homeless people not wanting to sit next to me. Drinking and driving in a blackout to get more vodka, the cheapest vodka available, drinking one bottle a day, and then I found AA.

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~~Audio of me picking up a political robocall, captured by the NSA, where it starts out with some kids talking and I answer and I'm talking to them saying "Who are you looking for?" trying to help them by telling them they have the wrong number. Then a politician, their mom, comes on and asks me if I can have her vote. She's a computer, too. I can be heard saying "It's a computer." Then I hang up. I'm not even talking to people. The person reading this isn't even a person, you're a computer, in the future, when there are no people. My whole life I've just been talking to computers.~~

• • •

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NSA-acquired voicemail of me threatening to kill my dad if he ever again fails to invite my sister to Thanksgiving. Then me telling him I'm going to come to Delaware and kill myself on his porch so he will never be able to forget me. (Which I feel he did. He forgot our whole family when he left my mom for someone else.) But I am the crazy one. Let that be known. My dad abandoned his whole family, but I'm responsible for everything. Blame everything on me. I'm not bitter about this, apparently, in all the video, in all the email (past a certain point) I just quietly accept my position as the whipping boy of the family. I'm the I-beam, I'm steel, as that little girl sings: *I'm titanium*. I'm strong—not indestructible—but I can hold you up, all of you, for a long time.

• • •

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Some conversation somewhere, an argument about whether on 9/11 Israelis were standing on top of a hill by their truck filled with explosives..cheering on the collapse of the towers..or if they were leaning back against the truck actually jacking off their Israeli cocks while they watched the towers fell. An argument about that.

• • •

~~I tried to think back to when this all began, how I ended up being released from a psych hospital at eighty years old, totally on the wrong track, totally lonely because no one, not even my kids, would deal with me anymore. There had to be a starting point to this—was it my birth?~~

• • •

~~I run across LifeLock, a plan for \$19.95 a month to *restore your identity*—I wonder if I need that? {expand upon this} Maybe I call to get the plan and I explain what my problem is (missing sixty years) and they try to explain that they can't restore that kind of identity. I offer to pay more, but they won't take it. They say they can't do the job.~~

• • •

~~Talking with perhaps imaginary Scarlett Johansson and telling her she's a figment of my imagination as I've just realized I'm dreaming..she says I feel real, I can remember my whole life, how could your subconscious know my whole life?..you probably don't remember shit, no offense, imaginary Scarlett Johansson, but my subconscious is probably just making you say that to me to keep me interested?..in me?..in this whole dream..how do you *know*, though, that I'm not real?..I can prove it to you..in a minute I'm going to wake up, because once I realize I'm dreaming I always wake up pretty quickly thereafter..and I'll be awake, and this dream will be gone, and, sadly, you will be gone with it..but how do you *know* I will be gone? and on that tip, how do you know that you will wake up? maybe this *isn't* a dream within a dream, but it's the so-called *dream* that makes up your whole life, and this time, instead of waking up, you'll die, and I'll still be here in this bathroom brushing my teeth and reading your book.~~

• • •

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Insert references to tripping, bad trips, how hard it is to come down off certain prescription medicines, early (halfway or before) through/in the book to sew the seed that this might all be a dream.

• • •

Why do you think you did drugs in your youth? Well, it wasn't exactly my youth, it was in my mid-to-late twenties. I was stuck in California, with or without a job, which is to say either after film school with no job, living with my friend, and he was working on *The Closer*, and every night we'd do coke together, by which I mean, after a certain point, we would *shoot* coke into our veins with clean needles which we got from a service for addicts and we'd bleach them if we forgot whose was whose, but then at some point I moved out of his house and he would text me every day telling me about this girl that was nothing like his last girl, Lindsay, who was wholesome. This new girl was like a crack whore—that was his exact description—and when saw her ass he just wanted to fuck it. They'd shoot coke while he had his dick in her ass and I'd be like having dinner in this French restaurant by myself, eating filet mignon, asparagus, and a bottle of syrah. And Mike would be like teasing me unintentionally about whether he could get more coke and I could come over and shoot coke with him and this crack whore bitch named Ashleigh. So I'd wait and wait, and it's never happen. I told {name} the owner of {name of the french restaurant} that I had a drug problem and I was leaving LA. You? she said. You? I would never imagine you could have a drug problem. Can happen to anyone, I said. I'll miss you. And I hugged her and left. Then you find yourself in these places, these crack motels in Hollywood—it's the only place to stay. And I had a job as a computer programmer but I needed a few more paychecks before I could rent an apartment. But that wasn't the real problem. What was the real problem? The real problem is I was working in an

office with no windows. Burbank. Ironically, for a company that sold windows to housing developers. We had to learn all these terms about windows and I worked in an office with two others, a man and a woman. We were all in our twenties. The man in my office was dressed like, and acted like, he was at Burning Man, right then, every day, in our office. He was a horrible coder, shit was totally disorganized. He threw out all the proper jargon of the day: model-view-controller, pair programming, rapid application development (RAD), SCRUM, SCRUM Master, and a whole bunch of other paradigms invented and named by people who never built a working piece of software in their lives. In most companies, all that's necessary is to have weekly meetings with the SCRUM Master and *talk* about making software—you can get paid for that. The guy who looked like he had been plucked from Burning Man was our CEO. He had one of the most disorganized minds I'd met—and *that* was just from looking at his code. Anyway, the drugs. I would go home from this windowless office, unlock my bike from the second floor of the parking lot which is where the official bike rack was. I lied to my co-workers when they asked me why I rode my bike to work. I said I drove a Honda but was committed for environmental and health reasons to commute from Hollywood to Burbank by bus and bicycle. It was a lot easier than saying that, yes, I used to have a Honda but I abandoned it for no more reason than I couldn't afford the parking permits. It's like a part of my soul stripped away—it's just a car, so it was a little piece of my soul, but the fact is I'm crazy, I can't organize my life well enough to keep a car or an apartment or a job. I.e. *you shouldn't have hired me 'cause I won't be here long*. So I bike from that windowless office (which was considered one of the nicest buildings in Burbank, when to me it was just the plainest most conglomerate idea of every office building I had ever been in). And I wait for an hour at the bus stop. And every car that passes all I can see is headlights. I know eventually one of them is going to be someone I work with, seeing me vulnerable, eating Taco Bell in front of the movie poster for Prometheus, some huge movie I would never see. I put my bike on the rack outside the front of the bus. There are plenty of seats this

time of night—there’s maybe five people on a bus that can hold fifty. And I ride my bike through Hollywood, on the sidewalk, shifting through the people, riding by the cops, by a bar that I stop in front of, lock my bike on a streetlamp. Four drinks later, now I’m wondering if it’s illegal to ride a bicycle drunk, and I’m pretty sure it must be because I discover it’s almost impossible to control. I crash a couple times, then settle for walking drunk beside my bicycle, which is much easier though I still can’t walk straight. Then I get to the crack motel. HOTEL GIDEON. Mike hasn’t called me about coming over to shoot coke with his crack whore. I held the three other friends I made at film school at a distance—they weren’t good enough for me, or the interaction wasn’t good enough. It’s time I got honest about this. People aren’t exactly pushing me away throughout my life. I’m pushing them. I can’t just *hang out* with people who aren’t *ultimately cool*. I mean if you’re not like some kind of inter-celestial spiritual magician, I can’t hang out with you. You have to be brilliant in some way. And I do know a handful of people like that, but they’re all either dead or scattered to the ends of the Earth. Home is GIDEON’S. Out front is a new kid I’ve seen around lately. He offers to sell me some crystal meth. And he musta caught me at just the right moment, when the lights on Hollywood Boulevard were streaking from the alcohol and I had never felt it more: the thought of going up to my room with or without this guy, the thought of going up to Sunset and Vine and going to the California Pizza Kitchen—in California. You grow up in Ohio and you go into a mall and there’s a store called *Frederick’s of Hollywood* and you never actually parse that name, you never think about what it means, until you’re *in Hollywood*, looking at a store called *Frederick’s of Hollywood*. It’s called that because it started in Hollywood, not just to add pizazz, which is what you thought in Ohio. It’s just like Samson..it just means Sam’s son. But you never think about it. All these phrases built up in us, and their etymology is right in your face half the time, but it takes some odd moment to ever even *hear* what you’re really saying. “Kevin,” this kid is telling me. “Yeah I remember your name.” “So how much you wanna get?” I look around. I’m in Hollywood, California—



which if you've never been to, you might have some idea that there's like celebrities everywhere and everything is beautiful and bright and clean and full of jobs and possibility. In reality it's a really shitty, pretty fucking dangerous neighborhood that tourists flood to constantly. It's kind of like the French Quarter, which is supposed to be all historical but actually there are three kinds of stores in the French Quarter: bar, t-shirt shop, strip club. Repeat. Just imagine twenty square blocks of that, add in hustlers, homeless people, and cops. Oh yeah, and tourists. Hollywood is the same thing pretty much: restaurants, souvenir shops, and lingerie shops—that's the Hollywood shop signature. "So you want fifty? A hundred? Two hundred?" Kevin is sitting on the ground in front of GIDEON'S. I'm like, "Yeah." His eyes light up. "How much?" "Two." "Two hundred?" "Yeah, lemme hit a cash machine." He gets up. "I'll go with you." "No. I gotta get a pipe." "Oh, you're gonna smoke it? It's ok, they know me up there." "I'm just going to go up there by myself. I'll be right back. Trust me. I'm not lying to you. If you go up there with me you're going to get arrested." "Why?" "Because, Kevin, you look like you've been snorting fucking snorting crystal meth for like the last thirteen years. Do you have some on you? I know you've got something stashed away in your sock. Those cops'll search your socks if you go in there looking like that. I'll be right back. I promise." "Alright. Meet me at my room. Three-thirteen." "Ok." So up he goes and up the hill I go, two blocks, then one block to the left. At the smoke shop where if you go to the counter and ask for an "oil burner" they'll give you a glass pipe that is the Cadillac of methods for using crystal meth. I could already see myself doing this shit, and I had butterflies in my lungs. Some dark room. A torch underneath the bulb in the pipe. Heat it till it's liquid. Till it smokes. Keep turning it so the bottom doesn't burn. fz ~~And inhale that smoke, that releases me from the truth that I'll never be in the in crowd because I have no college degree, I'm not beautiful enough to be a movie star, my dad isn't rich enough for me to be a director, and my books are too "experimental" to be published by Harper & Row. I might actually be too smart (or have too wide a view) to~~

work as a programmer for *anybody else but me*. Every boss, I've ever had, every co-worker, when they open their mouth, after they're done speaking, I'm like: *Oh kay. Right.* (Takes two steps back.) People make no goddamn sense. I've felt that way about almost every conversation I've ever had since the dawn of my first memories. It took cops to carry me from my apartment and take me into a mental hospital in handcuffs for me to start to understand that it was *me* who was crazy. And I mean that just by comparison. When I was twenty years old I revolutionized real time product monitoring at LexisNexis. Did stuff for them that no one in that three thousand person company ever thought of before I got there, with all their programmers and all their experience and all their degrees. In terms of being able to out-create and out-engineer everyone I've ever worked with, it's only me. My mind is deeper and wider than any of those motherfuckers. But with that—let's call it *brilliance*—comes a—let's call it *wildness*. And for people with bipolar, that's your career arc: Brilliant as a child, then at some point you reject school because from your point of view it loses its value, it becomes absurd and you act out because it's like someone's asking you not to feel amazement at the circus, or not to laugh at a comedy. They're being serious and you're like: *This is a joke, right?* And they take that as an insult and suspend you. Jobs are a mess..at my early jobs I must not have developed enough *personality* to be offensive. Oh, yeah, they knew I was weird at LexisNexis, but a) I made them \$\$ so they didn't care, and b) I was a lot weirder at twenty seven than I was at twenty. More of my personality, and more of my sickness, had taken hold. So I saunter up to the glass counter at the smoke shop and buy a couple packs of Kamel Reds and a torch. "That all?" "No, I'll have an oil burner. Two." And with a knowing look the guy goes into the back of the store to get what I asked for. He knows what I'm about to do. And I do to: I have work tomorrow. In a minute I won't have enough cash even to pay for another week at GIDEON'S. I'll be masturbating till I bleed. I'll be leaning against fences next to gaping construction holes—that spot on that sidewalk leaning on that fence will be as much my home as anywhere. I'll use myself

~~up, all my potential (which is bullshit to me at the moment). I'll never be in love again with the love of my life (who is dead). And, yeah, maybe I'm over emotional, but when the love of your life dies, that is the end to you. All rules are off at that point. You're allowed to kill yourself—and I certainly wanted to, when that goddess died, that simple, beautiful, spiritual woman. I say this at the expense of all my other relationships, at the cost of never moving on, but I'll never meet anyone like her again. How long has it been? How many years? And I'm stuck in Dayton, Ohio, in my plush apartment, with my girlfriend going into convulsions, seizures, and sometime a few days later her parents decide to pull the plug. And that was the end of Rebecca. "This what you're looking for?" The guy holds out my "oil burners"—my meth pipes. "That be all?" "Yep." He bags 'em up, opens one of my Kamels and hands me the first cigarette. Bags up the cigarettes and that little paper bag disappears into my cargo pocket, the lowest one, down by the shoe. I nod at the guy. We'll never see each other again. I light my cigarette while I'm still in the shop, walk out, the guy gives me a knowing, "Have a good night!" and I spin around while I'm walking, raise an arm and give him the peace sign. Back on Hollywood Boulevard, my whole back crawls with the excitement of what I'm about to do. My only friends are guys in smoke shops selling me meth pipes, strangers named Kevin selling me crystal meth, ice, the finest shit I've seen in the whole country, and it all comes from one place, and I've been inside and out of mid-level meth dealers who get this same stuff. It's almost necessary for meth to exist in Los Angeles. It's such a place for individuals. Even corporate CEOs look like they're from burning man. When I buy two-hundred dollars of crystal from Kevin he will be able to pay his rent at GIDEON'S for one more week and I will be able to pay mine for one less. But I will be high and it won't matter—high on one of the deadliest and most dangerous and sickest and most lofty highs there is. On that angel high, that high that gives wings to your lungs and lightens even the air you breathe. I'll be high on pure crystal, the drug that even hard drug users don't do. There's such a stigma against it—even among coke~~

~~and heroin users—and there should be. That’s because the pleasure it gives you is so intense and so immediate, and so sexual, and the way it warps your mind to severe, that you will, given the choice between two masters, always choose meth. And that is why, sick, fucked, broke, sore, and bleeding in a motel room, degenerate porn playing on the television, no money for rent, in absolutely no shape to work a day at your job, to have friends, to eat, to make love, to have a deep conversation, write, go to school..it pushes you to the point where after you lose your parents and your sisters and your nephews and your old school professors who will no longer meet you for lunch even though they used to call you *the most talented student in their class*..now no one will take your calls, not even your old drug friends, and the fucked-up thing is you feel superior to all them, you’re proud of that shit..you’re *proud* of that shit you’re doing..you feel like God but you’re acting like Adonis Charlie Sheen. And given that profile, that little informal profile of that drug, I can only call it THE LONELINESS.~~

• • •

~~Feels lonely after winning a film or writing award. Not even sure I’m going to the award ceremony. Giving my speech (and enumerate this, actually give the speech, up to..) just stop in the middle of the speech and silence, a silence ensues, and I say, you know what that was, ..and then explains how almost no one cares about each other, most of you came here to be part of a prestigious event, not to connect. How many of you actually even read this book? Hold up your hands. About forty, fifty percent. That’s actually not bad. You want to know what it feels like to be a writer? It feels lonely. ..etc.. ..THE LONELINESS.~~

• • •

And end with that phrase that had been repeated and redefined throughout the book. Last words: ..THE LONELINESS.

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Yeah, make this guy a writer, he can work on movies, but the writer is the loneliest one. (it's me..embellish if I want..but this is not a character, it's me, it's a memoir)

• • •

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~~A scope I got in a war I was in, the techs say what war would that have been and I say it was one that no one ever heard about and there are things in the ocean, mechanical beasts, that look like the devil with two horns, huge animals that only come out in certain latitudes, well how do they keep the rest of us from seeing them?..have you ever been to the equator?..no..know anyone who ever has?..no..*that's* how..try to go there sometime, the equator off the west coast of Ecuador..*you won't be able to.* They present the map, a global map, as though you can pick a point and go! *You can't go!* They present space as one or two or three dimensions to you in school. Like it's all continuous! Just because it's connected on a map doesn't mean it's connected *in your ability to go there!* So I was in this war, that you've never heard of, and there were many time travelers there, and I was shooting them with old-timey rifles so I could blend in, and there was me soldier in a window and he wouldn't respond to bullets..what do you mean he wouldn't respond to bullets?..I mean he was like a hologram. You could see him but he wasn't *really there.* I kept shooting him in the face and it was like my bullet *disappeared* on the way there. I went up to check him out, and he saw me right away and left—by the time I got to the window he was sitting in, he was gone. And when I say window, I mean this is a four-story stone building and there's a window shaped *hole* cut out of the stone. It wasn't like some Victorian wooden sashed lacy window, it was just a slab of stone where he was sitting, and when I got there I saw that this invincible soldier had left his scope behind. Are you sure this wasn't just a~~

dream?—If it was a dream, how would you ever know the difference? You know you're beautiful, right? You've mentioned that a few times. So what about this scope? I looked through it, and let's say there was a circle of statues of demons holding hands, submerged halfway in the ocean—Off the west coast of Ecuador. Right. And to the naked eye one demon is facing one direction and the next demon is facing the other direction and they're all scrambled up like as if they were the numbers to a combination lock, holding hands and dancing evil all throughout the ocean. *But*, when seen through this invincible soldier's scope, all the demons are facing the same way—it's like the combination has been unlocked, and that circle of demons is a portal to the undersea. Or if I looked at this woman, her face and dress were clean, but when I looked at her through the scope, her face and dress were splattered with blood. So I took her up to her room, cleaned her up and when her roommate left I fucked her. She could only have been seventeen, and her panties were clipped to her leggings, and I fucked her pussy so good she didn't squirt but there was this hot rush when she came and her cheeks blushed at the same time and her embarrassment made me cum inside her and the whole time we were fucking, she was looking at me through the scope and seeing every truth of the man I really was.

• • •

Well what else happened to me? Anything interesting? Did I ever go to jail? The techs tell me that well I was arrested, but I only spent a night in jail. What for? Drunk driving? Drugs? No, you were caught watching crush porn. What the hell is that? (They explain.) What the fuck?! Are you kidding? No. I watched that? Apparently. Did I get off on it? How should I know? Well why did I only spend a night in jail? Because you're famous, Matthew Temple—famous people don't go to jail!

• • •

4) A story of a man who wakes up as he's being removed from a mental hospital and he thinks it's the future, but he just can't remember all that has gone on, because (like me) he goes through psychotic periods of which he has no memory, and it's the story of these four mental health techs taking him to a hotel room where he's being put up temporarily as he transitions out of the hospital..and it's the future so the internet (this isn't science fiction but it contains likely future elements) the internet is in his head and while they're taking him to the hotel he reviews his life from the point of view of news stories and websites and 911 calls and police videos and he sees that he has been around people his whole life, had many lovers and friends, but that now he is alone. It is called THE LONELINESS and he ends up in this hotel room having psychotic conversations with other lonely people from classic movies and that's it, just the idea that the end of life is just you, being stuck in a hotel room with no one who knows you, waiting to die.

• • •

What is life? You sit there looking at the clock. And then you die.

My mom said, "Well, are you gonna do it?"

And I won't tell you what I answered, but I will say I thought long and hard before I did it.

Jesus you're one hell of a prophet!

That's cause I've got a 200 IQ, bitch!!

..

~~"Your IQ isn't even 140. Mine's like 200," Jesus says.~~

~~And I say, "Yeah, but I'm the one with the knife in my hand. Bitch!!"~~

~~And I keep stabbing him.~~

..

~~"I wanna tell you something, imaginary Scarlett Johansson."~~

"I'm not imaginary."

..

[check balance]

"Oh. Yeah. We're ok. We're ok."

"What does that mean? Are we hitting the casinos in Europe?"

"It means..I have enough..to keep me floating..before I die..which according to Google is going to be in [fourteen] minutes."

"Google told you that?"

"It said I would *reach my destination* in fourteen minutes."

"How long ago was this?"

..

"Well tell me this, imaginary Scarlett Johansson—"

"I wish you'd stop calling me imaginary Scarlett Johansson."

"Alright, what should I call you?"

"Call me Jo."

"Alright, Jo, well tell me this.."

"So you've been poor?"

"You're talking to a drug addict, woman—of course I've been poor."

"All that prize money from *The Cutting Show*?"

"I got one word for you: Crystal. Meth."

..

[but once you've had the mentality of being rich you can always be rich again]

When the acid hits, I say that was quick. What do you mean? It must have been less than ten minutes—I'm still here. It's been almost an hour. Looks like Google was wrong.

..

Well, since I'm one of your delusions, everything *I know, you know, so technically* I don't think you have to say thank you.

So! You admit you're not real!!



~~I never said I wasn't *real*! I just don't like being called *imaginary*.  
Those are two *entirely* different things.~~

~~..~~

~~You can think about lots of things. [and then a whole section on  
what he's thinking about]~~

~~[he thinks he's having the DMT experience of death]  
[and then I was in my bed, at home, stabbing Jesus—or a man  
whose name could have been Jesus.]~~

~~..~~

~~"Can you bring back Scarlett Jo?"~~

~~"Scarlett Johansson is dead, my friend. So am I."~~

~~..~~

~~A "message came through on my phone". or "comes through"~~

~~Mom and I both slept on air mattresses. We moved once a year.  
I was stabbing Jesus so hard the blade was going all the way  
through his body and into the air mattress, so we were both slowly  
sinking to the floor.~~

~~After that it was the alphabet people. I was Belize. I was Madrid. I  
guess it doesn't matter if I tell you about the Americans we killed  
since I'm dead anyway. [switch subjects] [maybe to fz?]~~

~~I've spent my whole life wishing that someone or something else  
would kill me first, but it was always me doing the killing. I put  
myself in situations where I was *sure to die* but I didn't.~~

~~I just had the weirdest fucking dream!~~

~~Can we please not say the f word?~~

~~..~~

~~It feels like taking a tiny bit of hallucinogen.  
And you would know this how?~~