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Marcel, my cat, is prowling around and whining and scratching at the sofa. The summer afternoon is on edge in the heat until he settles into the couch, finally quiet again. Giving my nerves a rest at last.

The Procedure

12:34 on clock in car when I am returning from the hospital after my Covid test before the Procedure.

Victor catching me at the elevator bank taking my paperwork and leading me to a sign-in desk that is really just a folding table. Where are we?

Cross shaped bed-- arms out, hands open, sweating through my palms.

The doctor comes to fill out my cahart and let me know that we will be getting going soon and that he has been delayed just a bit because he had to help out with another surgery. The prepping and recovery area has a nurses station that is slowly filling up with student doctors. He assures me that it takes longer to fill out the forms that to do the actual procedure.

Waiting a long time.

Intern coming into the operating room asking if this is Dr. Pagani’s surgery, he asks several times to make sure. This guy is going to be cutting into me and he’s not even sure where he is?

The nurse sort of playfully telling me that this is my chance to back out as she wheels through the door.

What’s your religion. Non-religious.

What kind of work do you do? I’m a programmer. Oh, okay, good, right, you don’t want to do anything too active.

The knives are in you again or more specifically in your squirmy stitched and bruised and bloated scrotum.

Do you need the ExtraSharp? Not yet. We’ll use that later.

What have I done? I have voluntarily let some dude stick a scalpel into my scrotum and render me impotent.

Cousin Annette with her failed IVF. Chrishon with her hysterectomy.

The surgeon’s scalpel, my burning wound, the matter-of-fact block between you and the ever after.

The phantom blade severing your seed slide-- now you are truly self-absorbed.

I not too good at making the best out of a bad situation, but I seem to excel at making the worst out of a good situation.

Suddenly he had to pee pretty intensely. Suddenly cold and having to pee, a weak position, like his incision wounds healing in his ballsack, his dwindling bank account, his dragging coping habits, his middle-aged body, his coding obsession, his gravy train, his daily unleaven.

Noticing 12:34 after getting on the bike after jogging 9.5 miles back from leaving my sperm sample at the UIC Andrology Lab. The collection of images that I took while in the collection room and on the first leg of my walk along Polk Avenue. Flower cross in the overstuffed street side garbage, Greek orthodox birdhouse looking icon with Christ at the center of a tree, the rooted limbs extending out to where the apostles perch like birds on a limb. The dead bird with desiccated eye with gorgeous metallic green fly with vibrant red eyes sneaking up his beak.

[Bricks](#bricks)

BRICKS

An dress sock array of pleasantly mottled brown brick.

IPA Haze warmth on the red brick. Golden. Refresh me in the sun. Warming oven brick. Pizza oven brick.

01/22/2021: Sometimes sun shines on the brick wall just right. Sometimes the ivy grows up just so.

Just a brick in the wall of the city.

Espiritus d’ Division

Division: Western to Austin-

Liquor stores, Store Front Churches, Nail/beauty salons, Day Cares, Autoshops.

Mt. Olive, Soul Saving, True Love, Apostolic, New Kingdom, New Miracle, of Christ, Christ Resurrection Old Rugged Cross, Spiritual Isreal, New Assembly of Holiness, New Fellowship, Faith to live by, New Inspirational Missionary, Refuge of God in Christ, Divine Intervention, True Gospel, Grace Deliverance, New Deliverance, Great True Vine, New Song, Holy Trinity, Old Landmark, New Greater Saint James, Sunset, Ice cold, Joey’s, Burhnam

North Park

When I met my future parents in law I was in a play that I had only auditioned for in order to be able to spend more time with their daughter. Then I got a part and she didn’t. But our relationship took off and I ran myself ragged, over scheduling myself with plays and classes and editing the literary magazine.

College girlfriend who made her way around the friend group and was sad and groupied for a popular indy folk singer for a minute. And he wrote a song for her and named it right after her. Everyone thought they could steal from her and not apologize. He used her picture as the cover of the magazine but hadn’t added color so the thing didn’t work. It didn’t pop. We didn’t have the budget for color. Or maybe we did. That stupid fucking magazine with Heidi’s poems and Heidi’s depression and suicide, the only one of us that could really go through with it. Confronting the shit and transcending it. Leaving it. leaving those pills. Leaving those broken relationships. And her twin still living. Working class and kids and uninspired posts of normal life. Not marketing, just being. Sent me a gift card when we had a baby. People sending you things and being kind and your trying to fade away, get the hell away. Transcend yourself, shut out all of the bullshit, but you couldn’t and you can’t and change is all and everything.

Even the professors were fascinated. Wrote that elaborate *Sad Professor* paper about Kierkegaardian despair -- infinity possibility, limited possibility… and connecting it to *The Glass Menagerie* and then pulling in a quote from the latest *REM* album, from a song called *Sad Professor*, but then remaining on good terms with the professor, that awkward hug with my brother’s girlfriend who was visiting the professor. The professor having a wife who was a Dean at a small Indiana law school, a pathway to a full law school scholarship based on the professors recommendation. But the not following through and then the law school dissolving and the professors marriage dissolving …

This guy fancies himself as some big feminist yet he's an absolute dog! Big phony! (2018)

hides his boyish good looks behind his way-to-hip-for-North-Park beard...All the women want him, and all the men want to be him. (2005)

The best of the best. I'm so glad he's willing to stay at this scrawny little school, he really breaks down the subject matter and turns you on to new perspectives.(2004)

Dooley is a well-respected man. Though he is definitely a tough grader, he simply wants the best for his students. I fell in love with English all over again because of him, but also learned A LOT in a crammed time period. Responds to emails efficiently. He can tell who do their hw and who did it 10 minutes before class. Pop quiz every day.(2019)

Professor Dooley teaches the American, modern, and postmodern literature courses in the major, as well as a student favorite, Film and Literature. Students in these courses are required to find evidence of modern and postmodern impacts on the city and culture by analyzing architecture, public art, museums, and cultural icons. He takes students to Michigan Avenue and does a semiotic reading of the Apple and Disney stores. Students then analyze the unintentional (and intentional) messages that are encoded in these businesses. (north park website)

Learning to socialize half in the bag. Enhanced sensations, shredded memory. Finding time some time to try and pull the pieces back together. The Romantics – experience recalled in tranquility, the hell of being a literature professor, teaching the same shit for decades, the same canned speeches and types of students. A marrisage falling apart. A beard that grows and then recedes. Correcting papers. Growing blisters on one’s eyes. Awakening young minds to ideas they will never quite be able to do anything concretely with.