July 24, 2022 Chicago, Illinois

Dear Uncle John,

I feel like I should tell you right off that this letter has been composed. I made it up. I constructed it over time, slowly, piecing it together from various streams of writing. Full disclosure I should also maybe mention that I wrote a computer program to help me manager these streams. Several in fact, though the first couple were sort of prototypes that I have been iteratively improving as my shallow sophistication in Ruby based app and web development slowly broadens, if not deepens.

So yes, while I am communicating to you right now via the written form of pretty standard 21st century English in many was a lot of this letter was composed in Ruby.

Composability is a system design principle that deals with the inter-relationships of components. A highly composable system provides components that can be selected and assembled in various combinations to satisfy specific user requirements. In information systems, the essential features that makes a component compoasable are that it be self-contained (modular): it can be deployed independently—note it may cooperate with other components, but depentend components are replaceable. Stateless: it treats each request as an independent transaction, unrelated to any previous request. Stateless is just one technique; managed state and transactional systems can also be composable, but with greater difficulty.

Composable can also mean capable of being set to music. Capable of being composed. Composable architecture is **a design pattern that allows developers to create reusable components to build applications more quickly and easily**.

“Composability is to software as compounding interest is to finance.” Compounding interest is just money building on itself. It’s math that, on a long enough time horizon, looks like magic. Each new combination becomes its own new lego block, until, a few interactions in, you end up with something exponentially more powerful than the original building blocks. My main takeaway is that **creativity is remixing.** it’s almost a tree with new branches from each generation.

Rhapsodize c. 1600, "to piece together (narratives)," a sense now obsolete; 1806, "to talk rhapsodically, express with poetical enthusiasm;"

1540s, "epic poem," also "a book of an epic" (suitable for recitation at one time), from French *rhapsodie*, from Latin *rhapsodia*, from Greek *rhapsōidia* "verse composition, recitation of epic poetry; a book, a lay, a canto," from *rhapsōdos* "reciter of epic poems," literally "one who stitches or strings songs together," from stem of *rhaptein* "to stitch, sew, weave"

"miscellaneous collection, confused mass (of things)," thus "literary work consisting of miscellaneous or disconnected pieces, a rambling composition." This, now obsolete, might be the path of the word to the meaning "an exalted or exaggeratedly enthusiastic expression of sentiment or feeling, speech or writing with more enthusiasm than accuracy or logical connection of ideas" (1630s). The meaning "sprightly musical composition" is recorded by 1850s.

How in control are you of what you are saying. The meaning you are trying to present, create. How much control do you have over how other people will respond to your creation. Interpret it. Misinterpret it. Have no connection of the process that you undertook to create the work. How the process and the work itself it the worth of the creation. The path and journey and birthing are the real value and I hold all of that exactly in my heart.

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**Questlove – Creative Quest**

Our trip to Gladstone coincided with June’s full moon. It was a Strawberry moon that rose full and copper-colored over the bay in such a stunning way, almost causing me to collide with a big buck as I biked along the dark stretch of road between Gladstone and Kipling returning from Casey Goodman’s after watching the Golden State Warriors wrap up their NBA championship over the Boston Celtics. The great moon rising, magnified so surprisingly large, hovering low on the horizon over the bay, seemingly shining brighter than even the scattered harbor lights, completely distracted me. Thankfully the buck was less enthralled by the moon that I was and turned back towards the woods and away from the road instead of running right through me. I really didn’t notice him at all until the rustle of his quick stopping and turning momentarily broke the moon’s strawberry spell.

We had such a lovely time at 625 Minneapolis Avenue. Swimming in the bay, swinging back and forth on the rope swing, having meals out on the deck, the girls scampering around the playroom and up and down the stairs playing extremely well together, somehow staying off each other’s nerves in a way that is sometimes hard for them to do at home. We had such a nice time, just hanging out and doing little outings around the area.

Helena and I took a wonderful perimeter run around town, she in the baby jogger that has been serving our family well for nearly 4 decades now, and me in my sandals (which have been serving me well since last August). We ran to the campground, where the wooden board walk that had cut through the reedy wetlands where the lake met the shore, the boards , some splintered, some missing, the lake got high and claimed a victim. . and then past the old clinic and the pet casket factory, down main street past the Dairy Flo (which we ended up visiting twice while in town) then zigzagging along the neighborhood streets beside the highway and past the football field. I had the thought of doing a lap around the track pushing Helena in the jogging stroller, but then thought it best that I follow the posted rules about keeping vehicles off the track.

We then raced down Minneapolis on the sidewalk that I’ve called “the rollercoaster” ever since I was a kid. I really played up the drops and dips or the uneven sidewalk and Helena in the baby jogger thought it was great, laughing and calling for more as we hustled along. I picked up the pace on the final leg towards home, past Jones, and the State police post and the pavilion, shoving Helena out away in front of me on the wide carless street and then chasing after her.

Another day I had a lovely solo beach run, mostly on grass from the house around the harbor and then on the beach past the skate park and the beach house, and then across the highway and up the old bluff road, returning down the packed dirt cow path. It felt so good to run on the sand and the cow path trail and to jog continuously without all the block by block stop and go intersections with their stop signs and streetlights that I’m generally used to.

We also had fun playing at the sports park and running up and down the bunny hill, and then checking out a few holes of the 27-hole disc golf course that stretches around back behind the baseball fields. I’d love to do a jogging disc golf round of all 27 holes someday, throwing discs and running after them all through the well-maintained looking course. It seems like it would be a fun family activity with siblings and nieces and nephews and whoever else wanted to hustle through the 27 holes.

Seeing animals was certainly a highlight-- a bald eagle, chipmunks, deer, crayfish. Esme and I did some crayfish ‘hunting’ at the Old Dutch Mill and it was really fun. We waded around in the gentle river on the limestone bedrock, attempting to catch crayfish with our improvised plastic oil filter and Starbuck’s cup implements. Helena napped in the car while Esme and I splashed after the darting crustaceans in the light rapids above and below the river’s small waterfall until dusk began to come on and the mosquitos began to swarm.

The Buckman's new puppy Gus was another highlight. This summer the girls have been getting a lot of puppy time as our downstairs neighbors recently brought home a very young black lab name Rainbow. Gus was so sweet and very game to romp around and play with the girls. He used Esme as a chew toy a little bit, but she didn’t mind at all, the stinging nips being well worth the joy of the puppy play.

On the way back to Chicago we stopped in a park in Marinette after picking up pasties from Colonel K’s, and picnicked with a flock of geese, full grown and goslings, whose feathers (and poop) were strewn all over the grassy lawn, an endless collection of quill shaped treasures for the girls to gather up after they’d eaten their half of a pizza pasty.

We also stopped in Port Washington, a bit north of Milwaukee, for ice cream and a shore stroll. The very quaint town was at the height of its summer liveliness and easy, relaxed fun. We passed two outdoor summer concerts one at a park at the bottom of the town’s bluff, a classical concert, and one at the top of the bluff, a classic rock concert.

We walked along the shoreline and scampered around on the craggy boulders of the break wall, which the girls loved climbing on. Esme took off ahead while I stayed close to spot Helena as her three-year-old body maneuvered boulder to boulder. She really surprised me with her dexterity and good sense of what her long legs could and could not step across. If she thought she could make the distance between rocks she’d say cheerily “I’ll handle this one.” But if she felt like it was a bit of a stretch, she’d reach a hand back to me and say “You handle this one!” Then there was a wooden stairway with a few rest benches climbing from the shoreline to the top of the bluff. Helena who had just blocks before back in town where we’d parked on main street, had been unable/unwilling to walk on her own, insisting that she needed to be carried now powered up the stairs without complaint. She was off to adventure!

We were rewarded for our climb with a fairly elaborate and colorful play structure at the top of the bluff. While the girls played, I trotted down a mountain bike trail that took you down the bluff and back to the main streets where we’d parked our car, to drive it back up to the park, allowing the girls to play a bit longer before we got back on the road.

When we finally arrived home to our lonely and affectionate cat, it was a cool evening, so we opened up the apartment and let the breeze in. Our living space is small and a bit closed in with the city all around, but it does still shine in the summer when it is cool and the breeze can gust in from all sides. The apartment was clean and clutter free from our pre-trip picking up and it was lovely to return to our ordered and settled and breezy living space.

Now it is an overcast Sunday nearly a month since we got back. We went to the beach last night for dinner, biking there and back. Returning home a bit later than we had planned as it was hard to leave our cool, relaxing beach encampment after a week of very hot and humid weather. The girls went to bed late, after bathing to get *most* of the sand off of them. They both went to sleep without complaint, very tired after a hot, active day, a hot active week. As is their wonderful habit when we do keep them up too late, both girls slept in and awoke in cheerful moods to the grey overcast morning.

Now Helena is playing with her Picasso blocks on the floor, making homes and schools and stores for her animal figurines, happily having them chat and sing to one another. Esme is in the kitchen working on the third chapter of her “Sparkles” book, a story about a cat and her kittens and their many adventures and misadventures. The day is quiet and calm and I am deeply appreciating my lovely girls and my lovely wife and the blissful normalcy of healthy, simple, “normal” family time together.

Here is hoping you are both are having a lovely “normal”, “uneventful” day as well. This coming week seems significant, as I will be really picking up the pace with my application processes. This journey has been incredibly challenging, humbling, centering, scattering, sort of like I have been taken apart and then slowly pieced back together again. Ideally, I will soon have some movement on the job front, mentally freeing me to make some last minute summer travel plans. We would really love to come up and see you guys in August and hopefully will. I feel like I am rounding some sort of inchoate corner here, though will not feel completely at ease until it is rounded and I am beginning to actually get some applications filed and land some promising interviews.

At any rate, thank you both so much for the use of your lovely, clean and ordered home, we had such a nice time as a family. There is a magic to being out and away from your own space, leaving behind the drag of certain patterns and put off tasks. You two have built and maintained such a great space both inside and out, certainly a testament to your hard work and diligence and settled living. You have made a wonderful life and your willingness to share it is a beautiful thing.

Much love to both of you and we all look forward to seeing you soon.