September 2nd, 2020

Finally reading *Sick in the Head*. Don’t worry, I’m still planning on returning it.

I’m highlighting all the best quotes and using the margins to rewrite the parts that I don’t like. It’s pretty incredible , just the whole process of pulling the book together. It is prtty unreal how well documented the formation of Judd Apatow is. Its pretty special. You definitely see reflected in his work the influence of all these great comics and to have these actual conversations between young enguine Judd and older established Judd is pretty amazing.

At this point in his career, he has made a few cult classics. Been a commercially successful director, writer and producer. His stand up is really pretty good and seems pretty honest and straight forward.

What a wonderful fucking world this is no? There is so much goodness all around us. We don’t have to worry about tanything. We do have to worry about many things. Jet plans over head. They left their homes because the bombers had leveled them then their children died in the flames of a tent fire in a Jordanian refugee camp. This world is cruel. What is the source Who are we speaking to.? What are the voices in my head. Jese, is that you. Jesus speaks oto me and I seak to Jesus and I know Jesus Christ and God and Zeus and Zoroastra and if that is not true then what is. Then Reveal yourself to me lord. I am humble and open and if salvation would likght the way then I would follow salvation, but what I have seen of your church and the blindness and the alien ret rograde values that keep you from moving forward and advancing a humanist agenda. The Catholic Church that led us through the slog of the Middle Ages. Nope. Fuck you, Pope. Humanism, let’s go! It split the church and made space for lives to live without church and thank God for that! Yes, there is a god shaped hole in my life. I was raised all my life to pray and sing to God and now I don’t and I feel dumb and I feel stopped up and I know that I should sing and I should sing for God and God in my life- my family, my neighbors, my city, my state, my country, my continent, my hemisphere, my earth, my galaxy, my universe and out and out to the ringing of the spheres and we harmonize in the dark with the purple and orange behind our eyes. The ice and fire and the love and the hate and the passion and the place and I can do this without drugs I can do this all without drugs.

March 17th, 2021

Happy St. Patrick’s day. Word is they dyed the river green a few days ago (cue my Vietnamese student from a few years ago, “Teacher, you know they put chemicals in the liver to turn it green.”

And you were right about keto. Have been riding the Keto train this money and I am now officially back to my highschool weight. Handles of love melting away. Ribs popping out. Stretching like a Yogi, eating like a sage. A step away from caffeine, alcohol and THC has been very interesting. Worthwhile. A bit of the bitch at first, but now have been sleeping so well. Waking up early, ready to work. No coffee in my cup, but still fire in my belly.

Ruby continues to be my muse. Stretching the language out into the Rails development platform and digging deeper into the testing suite (RSpec). Along the way have been trying to bring along my JavaScript, JQuery, HTML(w/Emmet), CSS (+ SASS), git, commandline,

04/21/2021

Running up the score on most letters sent to you.

How’s the glass business? Coffee? More sympathy for ol’ Razny now?

Just the fact that you are reading this is a sign that I am doing well. Pulling some lose ends together. Completing some projects, arcs, pushing some paper. It has been a long strange year and I have spent a good bit of it in the ditches, but I think my digging is finally starting to hit paydirt. Finally pulled together my first CRUD applet (Create, Read, Update, Destroy). Its functionality is basically identical to what I used Outlook for when I was selling – address book and touch point/crm tracker. Thinking about this program and the data and data needs of this program has been a great way into playing around with program design as well as working on my Ruby fluency. It’s a pretty simple program in the larger scheme of this, but it is kind of a cool milestone, as it was my “hacking” Outlook (aka using it in a specific, systematic way to display data and print reports) to make my selling process easier and more organized. Became the backbone, the spine of the businesses that I was able to build up over time at both Michigan Avenue and on Oak. Which is not a humble brag, or maybe it is, I don’t know, but its certainly a vote of confidence for systems. Picking a direction. Making a plan and running the chaos of the actual work and the execution of the work though the system. Allow it to pull together the loose ends and sweep up the crumbs and contain the information passively for you that you do not have the wherewithal to consciously keep track of. Allowing more of your brain to focus on creative problem solving tasks rather than repetitive clerical or secretarial type tasks. Established a basic, one source ticker and tracker of your responsibilities and life chronicle.

Man, I am so sorry about your dad, and I am sorry to bring it up, cause it seems like a melodramatic topic to broach in a letter. But I just want to say, damn, that must have been really hard and I still think about the timing of it all and frankly just fell shocked and struck dumb for you and I have no idea how you pushed through that chapter in your life. I hope the current chapter continues to project in the correct trajectory. My apologies for writing all rhymey. I think I am simultaneous trying to write a letter to you as well as the lyrical liner notes to the next Albert Hammond Jr. Album. Really colorful and memorable like. Multi-facted. Revealer of different interfaces depending the prevailing light and weather system of the season.   
 And why not get stoned and write poetry.

Stephen Malkimus, Dave Berman—

Casually profound; a negative capability; humorous, pathos filled vignettes, cause life is a little romantic and bewildering and funny and scary and sad and engaging and ultimately al that we have and all that we’ll ever have.

Casket sequence, ecstatic stretching, designed a basic searchable index of strings while taking a shower to cover up the week smell on me before my wife wakes up. So eager to sneak a few more naked stretches in before I throw some clothes on and get writing and coding that I hook the candle on the back of my American Standard with my Tom Ford designer glasses, bowling the candle over and spilling and splattering its resovoir of hot wax all over the walls and the floor before cascading to the floor and shattering on the bathroom tile floor.  
 Watches that came in with shattered crystals, 9 times out of 10 got busted in the bathroom… on the marble.

Exploding stovetop espresso machine when I neglected to put the screen in.

China: rats, pollution dust, pigeons, cigarettes, very cheap and passable beer, very awful and cheap red wine, Cinnamon Girl, alone with the rats with Owen away, Chinese and Chess and Chinese Chess, Bathhouse, Soccer injury- messed up knee, hobbled hippie through Yunnan, returned later with Alex and betsy, after the basketball adventure and before hiking the tiger leaping gorge.

Image timeline, trip illustrator

* Images: location, time, trip point
* Family, friends, language, data structures, UI
* Arriving in Xi’an
* Living in Xi’an
* Traveling to Pingyao and Inner Mongolia and northern Shaanxi(Yulin, Yanan- dry river, very dry, cave dwellers. Carvings. Barren, expressive land.)
* Chengdu with betsy by train (hardseat there? Sleeper back? Indian food then getting on the train and feeling much more prepared, much more appointed than on the way out. )
* Henan with Sean and Todd and Owen and betsy
* My parents visiting with my siblings
* Traveling to Yunnan
* Traveling to Beijing
* Traveling to California
* Then Minnesota
* Then Guatemala
* Then Chicago
* Then back to China Beijing.
* Then to Chicago (Valparaiso)
* Then Chicago
* Then Children

Cloistered times: Erik’s cabin prepping for the LSAT, Xi’an studying, Beijing studying Chinese and writing and then preparing for the GRE, year at Valparaiso, COVID-19 year writing and learning to code.

Tipping the Candle: When your practice needs practice

Happanstance. Intuitive development; article about experiential self-exploratory career types.

06/14/2021

Has been a gorgeous blue sky and billowy, pillow cloud kind of day, Helena— now 2 and a robust towheaded brute— and I are out in the yard and she is ambling over inquisitively toward our small garden plot, bee-lining, in fact, straight at a recently planted maroon and forest-green shock of leaf-blades.

“Do NOT pick my Chard!” I preemptively scold, nearly adding “or I will spank your bottom,” though I do not ultimately add that last part because I know how deadly serious I am, and I sense how deeply uncomfortable it would feel to threaten a child with violence over a salad.

Little backstory, recently she has been insisting on picking the buds and leaves off all of our botanicals almost as fast as we plant them. I, being somewhat more experienced with these kinds of things, find this approach to gardening messy and self-defeating.

We had a similar difference of opinion just the other day about whether or not it was appropriate to re-pot a goodly amount of loamy topsoil into my tantalizingly sweating mason jar of chilled water.

Years ago, before I had kids, I was once at a brunch get-together where I observed one of my friends, who was already the father of three, being a little short with one of his girls over some issue with a cup of orange juice or something. At the time I remember feeling kind of surprised at how impatient or even almost unkindly you were addressing your angelic little Tomte. Maybe, he’s having a particularly stressful day I had thought at the time. Now I realize he definitely was having at least a partially stressful day because, you know, he had children and he was likely not being mean to his child at all, but was, in fact, exerting incredible, if not saintlike-level patience, artfully teasing out and expanding just a bit more your reservoir of that most precious of parental commodities, that greedily gobbled up resource that well before this cup of juice or even this very morning had been pulled and stretched as thin as a gossamer shroud though still somehow holding— together and true through some miraculous act of superhuman effort. Love?

I also now realize that our children are in essence sociopaths that we have been charged with by fate to reform as penance for our own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is certainly not to say don’t have children, but just, you know, brace yourself… for love.

Best,

06/22/2021

Khrungbin, Phish, Miles Davis, 1970s Stevie Wonder, Fela Kuti, Sufjan Stevens *Carrie & Lowell*, *Convocations,* Nick Cave *Ghosteen*, Radiohead, Chopin, Serge Gainsburg, Parcels,