

Gabrielle Rerra

Stare at the Laptop and Survive Another Day

OR

Weekly Dispatches from The Most Boring Apocalypse

Cast of Characters

Me - the enigma that is me

Simon - a conglomeration of friends and acquaintances

The Irishman - an all knowing mystical figure who guides my journey through the universe; a north star

Dr. B - A friendly neighborhood dentist

Chivas Regal - an attractive man who I am not sure if I want to make out with or suffocate. A drunk.

Brody Malone - NCAA Champion Gymnast from rural Georgia. An Olympian.

The Ex - an Ex

The Car Guy - My old boss

The Football Player - My current boss

John Gotti - My bosses's boss

Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) - An Interesting Place.

Green T-Shirt - An Unfortunate Situation.

George Washington - Pick up a history book.

USA gymnastics incident - Google it

Thursday 1

I need a miracle, a shot of ketamine or a trip overseas.

I'm writing this bent over my stove for some reason. I want to stay standing cause maybe that will make go back to work.

Maybe I'll light myself on fire. Who knows? The world is full of unpleasant surprises.

This morning, I got pissed off about a call I had. I audibly groaned and cursed someone out. Good thing I was muted.

I live one step above prison Martha Stewart. Three rooms. 22 hours in. 2 hours of recreation. Could be worse. Could be better. Im obsessed with prisons because this winter feels like one.

I went to the fridge all irritated. Grabbed the 18 pack of eggs I got from Costco last week.

I stood in the middle of my living room and threw an egg at the wall. I threw another.

One right after another like pellets in a BB gun.

Each yolk exploding. Each shell breaking into two distinct halves and falling to the ground. All eighteen of them. I dropped the empty carton by my feet.

It did not feel as cathartic as I would have liked.

I'm angry but not angry enough to cause any real damage. Angry but responsible enough to not punch a hole in the wall.

This low grade resentment is lowering my life expectancy.

At least I'm keeping the landlord happy.

I sat in my office chair for a few minutes. Then I used some all purpose cleaner and paper towels and accepted defeat.

I was kind of mad at myself for wasting the eggs, but I had other frozen food to hold me over until the snow stops.

I haven't seen another human being in five days. And the humans I do know, call me to act irrate, boss me around, and outsource their responsibilities to me.

Who eggs at there own property? There own apartment? The apartment that they pay rent for?

Hopefully a medical professional can tell me that I am clinically insane so I have a real reason to be who I am.

I went to the kitchen and considered throwing a couple plates around. Maybe that would satiate me and feel like a more fitting tantrum. Couples always throw plates when they fight. It would have been a waste, though. Plates are more expensive than eggs.

Instead, I made more coffee that didn't keep me awake. At this point, I just need an it in an IV.

I did have to take two more calls after that- which was extremely annoying. I didn't have to speak in either of them so I got to do my two favorite hobbies - play with slime and look out the window.

I am slowly becoming the lurking women in the window.

The Irishman once told me that: "We used to be giants. So when did we stop?"

Giants- as in epic beings.

For me, we stopped being giants when being alive became - stare at the laptop and survive another day.

Malaysia seems so care free now.

Business hours ended and then it was dark. The house was frigid. The phone was dry.

Sometimes, Simon and I FaceTime in the evening, but they were probably doing something more important.

I could have nodded out as soon as I shut the laptop but I bullied myself into a bodyweight workout. It was only thirty minutes. A year ago, I probably would have laughed at how easy it was. But now, it was better than nothing.

I heated up the Kung Pao chicken frozen mix from Trader Joe's. Just enough food for one meal for one person. Trader Joe's is truly out here saving the lives of those who live alone. God bless.

As I ate at the empty kitchen table, I sat and thought about the times in school where we sat around the rectangular wooden tables for meals. Eight of us. We used to be so loud at diner. All of us shouting over each other. Talking about what happened on Scandal that week or gossiping about our plans for winter break. So brash.

But we will never be those kids again.

And I won't kid myself into believing those days were paradise. I've always been kind of deranged.

There just seemed to be more joy ahead. We were carefree and optimistic. At the time, I had this idea that I would be more important.

Why do I have to wake up and deal with my life tomorrow. Even on a Friday.

After diner, I turned on Sleepless in Seattle to try to relax. But agitation washed over me and I couldn't focus or seem to care about the movie. I went to my Pinterest to look for something more interesting to waste my time with. Nothing fixed it.

This twinge of agitation has never left me alone.

The twing telling you to hate yourself. To improve yourself. To be productive. Be more. Be better. All that self-improvement nonsense.

I used to cope with the twinge by having 2,000 commitments a day to distract myself from myself. Any day without a completely booked calendar was a failure. The modern world will let you keep me spinning plates if you let it. Well - it used to.

Whether that be with the jobs, the classes, the bars, the restaurants, the boyfriend, the trips, the workouts, the shopping, the concerts, the friends, the internet or something else.

And that all went away. And I saw all that remained. And I was horrified.

The Irishman once told me to: "stop trying to sound smart, and start trying to tell the truth."

Here I am. Doing that. I suppose.

Who are you when the performance of yourself stops? When the red curtains close?

Because that's a question I have never been able to answer for sure.

For a couple of decades - I was the court jester for an amused crowd.

But now, that mandatory isolation has transformed into chosen isolation- I'm a reclouse.

Thursday 2

People only like you when you are making them money.

Good thing I was logged on earlier than usual this morning. I got a message at 8:57am that I was now added to a 9am status meeting with The Football Player and John Gotti.

Another day to open the laptop and look out the window. Maybe throw darts at my dart board.

It was sketchy that I was being added to this meeting so last minute. I am the one usually organizing meetings like this.

I am an assistant for a commercial real estate agents. I have had a few different ones in the past. All men over the age of 40. One from Louisville. One from Minnesota. I had The Car Guy up until a month ago.

But The Car Guy got promoted. And The Football Player got promoted. So here we are.

The Football Player is a tall, fat ginger- an offensive lineman type. Everyone here acts like playing Division 1 football is a career credential.

We have no rapport and are mutually short with each other.

I spend my time doing the following: managing The Football Player's personal and professional calendars, managing his travel when there was travel, making powerpoint presentations for him to present- and for him to act like he made, answering his calls/emails and my own calls/emails, sending gifts to current clients, and cold calling people to become clients. I also take notes in The Football Player's meetings. I act as the side attraction to his show when necessary.

And yes - I am very good at this job that I hate very much.

Nothing was abnormal about this meeting. All the agents were just catching up the boss - John Gotti- on each of there upcoming deals. Everyone referred to each other by there last names. I work in a frat house. I noticed that I was the only one of my tenure there.

We could be in the middle of a zombie apocalypse and we would still be talking about sales projections.

Then it was the Football Player's turn, and he started to talk about his deal with a hospital in Indiana - and John Gotti asked a bunch of questions. About the size of the hospital. The number of floors. The acerage. And he didn't know anything. He was BSing and deflecting.

What I knew, that everyone else on this call did not know, is that I had sent him notes to prepare for this upcoming deal the night before.

It has been said that when humans lived in hunter gatherer societies - men only accounted for twenty percent of the food supply by hunted game. While women accounted for eighty percent of the food supply by picking nuts, plants and grains.

Some things never change.

How many times have I heard agents say that "We are hunters. We hunt."

How many times have I heard agents say that "I'm going to be the quarterback of this deal."

Sales is full of insecure people trying to get strangers to love them - because they do not believe that anyone else in there life does.

Strangers haven't disappointed us yet.

The meeting ended uneventfully. A fucking waste of time. Who even added me to this? I hate being on meetings that I do not speak on. If I am not speaking in this meeting...why am I in the meeting?

Since I was in high school, I have had this desperate desire for men to tell me I am smart. Because, I don't believe it myself.

Too bad that shit never works. I have literally broken my metaphorical back researching, writing and editing an errorless forty page research paper about the Importance of Propaganda in Stalin Era Russia so my ninety year old history professor could put some coffee stains on it, underline it and write a few nice, yet illegible, words at the bottom in red ink.

When I do get praised - the high is so fleeting. Not even fleeting. It is met with a sense of sadness. Achievement demons.

In the Soviet Union there was never any incentive to reduce the number of employees at a company, as companies were not profit driven. American society has always thought we are so advanced society compared the Soviets - who had useless jobs because they valued labor and the prolitateriat so much. But the same thing happens here.

With some forethought and a smart software purchase, I could a hundred percent be automated out of this job.

The American Promise has always been "work will set you free."

Oh wait.

That's somewhere else.

An hour later, John Gotti called me on my personal phone. I was frightened, because I have never spoken directly with John Gotti. I have only listened to him.

To be honest, I am not even sure how I got my number - because I use my corporate phone for each and every work related task. But, important people have a way of figuring things out.

I couldn't help but feel awkward and embarrassed. Or think that I was in trouble. Like the adult version of getting sent to the principal's office. But what could I have done? I had so little to do daily, that I doubt I could be in trouble for anything.

John Gotti, in a deep but slightly friendly voice, asked how my day was going. Was this a test? My cheeks were getting warm.

I get embarrassed easily and often. One time, we went on a work outing to go bowling. Which seems harmless - I know. But I had acrylic nails on and I physically could not bowl without ripping my nails out of my physical hands. But instead of sitting it out, and making small talk with my coworkers as they waited their turn - Simon and I wandered around outside the strip mall for the duration of the outing.

Then after the small talk, John Gotti asked me what I knew about the Indiana Hospital. I gave him a few over-arching details - the client's background, where the headquarters was, how many buildings they were planning to remodel.

John Gotti said - "Hmmm. That's all very interesting. Why didn't you mention that in the meeting?"

What kind of shit is that.

Obviously - it is not my job to upstage my boss. In front of his boss.

Does he think I was born this morning?

Maybe if someone wanted to make out with me in high school, I would not have built my whole career around making average-looking men as much money as possible - hoping that I get whatever scraps are left behind.

I could be a zookeeper or an anthropologist or something.

I said some bullshit about how I sent the notes to The Football Player, and since he had the notes, I didn't want to interrupt him. I tried not to sound scared but I definitely sounded scared.

John Gotti said "We both know that you made The Football Player's client presentation last week. " He paused "This may be news to you - but you have one job. Do not let my employees

ask you for any more than that one job without my written permission. I will send you a description of your specific responsibilities after we get off the phone.”

Truly, I don't even work that much. So his employee's really must not be doing anything.

John Gotti paused again, and then said “My employee's need to do the work that we pay them to do. Not to outsource that work to you. And to others your tenure.”

Then he quickly thanked me for my time and hung up.

I get called out for doing what my boss tells me is my job! What?

Recently, I even got called out for being myself.

The Car Guy broke me down via Zoom the day before he got promoted. I couldn't tell if it was pre-meditated or not. He asked “how are you-work aside?” and all I said is that it had been a rough year.

Not like I even revealed that much. That's all I said.

After he, uncharacteristically sternly, said “you dont seem the same.”

Then both of us didn't speak for at least ten seconds. That's a negotiation tactic - who ever speaks first relinquishes there power in the negotiation.

Then he said “Am I wrong?”

I said no. And that I lived alone.

But in that moment, it felt like I was getting my appendix removed while wide awake. The pain originated in my abdomen before reaching all my other extremities.

He starts going on and on about the anger he has and can't seem to manage. He started having panic attacks - which had never happened before. Being overwhelmed by all his young kids. Then he talked a lot about being out of the house for ten years and now its none of the of the office, or client diners or trips to Vegas.

The whole time he spoke I was truly trying to pay attention to him and be sympathetic. But it was hard to - when the whole conversation felt like I was getting caught. Like “hahaha bitch, you can work and perform and be on top of your shit...but I CAUGHT YOU being miserable and depressed. You can't hide from me.”

Obviously - he said none of that- and he wasnt accusatory - but I thought “wow I am apparently not that good at hiding my feelings.”

My nose was running - the precursor to crying. I didn't want to look weak.

My stomach was still killing me.

Then he told this story that he tells whenever he needs to appear deep. When The Car Guy was a kid, he was fiery, somewhat angry and impossible to control. So, his parents sent him weekly to talk to a blind pastor in the basement of their church.

The moral of the story is - that after many visits to the blind pastor - he tells The Car Guy that "If you will forget it in five years, then it doesn't matter today."

Which - yes - is valid advice.

However, how will I forget being left without a familiar face for ten days at a time. Or the three different diseases trying to kill me. Or the military tanks in the streets.

Will I even be on Earth in five years?

Then The Car Guy kept talking and talking. He went on a tangent about keeping himself busy and trying to work out more. He was pleasant about it in the end and said "this is only between us."

Part of me thought it was commendable that he asked if I was okay.

Another part of me thought- "this man only asked if I was okay, so he could emotionally bleed all over me."

Nonetheless, the conversation absolutely wrecked me. After, I laid face down on my bed and the tears left wet dots on my gray pillow case. Then I ate a Trader Joe's frozen pizza.

And The Car Guy was the nice one! Imagine how the rest of my time with The Football player will go.

All the shit we do just to change the numbers on a few screens and, occasionally, hold a piece of untearable paper

I dont know what will bring me peace.

But I do know what won't. This checking off all the little boxes on my achievement list. Running through the list--for my entire life. Prestigious school to other prestigious school to seemingly prestigious job.

"Successful" people are just driven by the emptiness at the center of there beings.

This job is what I finished my degree for? This is what I read all that 19th century Russian literature for?

I suppose so. Can't wait to do it all again tomorrow.

Thursday 3

The Irishman once said that “Life is tragedy to those who think and a comedy to those who feel.” Too bad I think often and feel nothing. My usual, daily state is anesthetized. Or novocane.

I always leave shit until the last minute. One time I let a UTI go so far that I had 104 degree fever and was almost put on dialysis. I’ve never been one for preventative medicine. Our country is not either.

Today was the first time I saw a dentist in seven years.

Simon was in town for their birthday this weekend and my top right molar was killing me. The tooth would wiggle with each bite when we ate fajitas in my neighborhood. I couldn’t chew on the right side of my mouth - popping Aleve every few hours to numb the pain.

It was reminiscent of when I was an impatient kid. I would take dental floss, tying it to my tooth and then around a door handle. Then slam the door. I have always been a masochist.

While Simon was here - I didn’t want to complain and ruin the weekend - they flew all the way from Chicago. They brought this specialty Chicago liquor - which helped numb the pain.

But I was quick to book an appointment for this week- in a brick building next to a liquor store that I could walk to. So I went to the appointment today.

I walked into the third floor office around noon. It looked like nothing had changed since the 70s. Low ceilings and wood paneling.

The male hygienist sat me down and got me all set up. I thought to myself “They have male hygienists? How progressive!” But also...unsettling.

Then, who I would come to learn as Dr. B floated into the partitioned section with my plastic medical lounge chair.

Dr. B was very tall and very slender. He had a facemask, a face shield and a hat on, so I had no idea what he looked like. He was this conspicuous figure.

Dr. B wore Nike Jordan 11s. That’s fresh. Especially for a Dentist.

He addressed me in Spanish first and then I answered in Spanish.

Immediately we could both tell that that conversation sounded very DuoLingo. It was a nice gesture on his end though - he seemed to understand his clientel.

He switched to English. "You have such a pretty name." You know he started off on the right foot with me.

From his hands I could tell he was probably Indian- but the accent was that of someone who spent time in many different places. Not quite British. But had clearly been born somewhere other than the United States. An accent of a worldly person.

Dr. B looked inside of my mouth approximately five seconds. In an extremely polite and reassuring way - he told me that my mouth was a god damn wreck. Not only did I have one wisdom tooth that was completely out of my mouth - I needed two root canals and eleven fillings. And I needed surgery to remove all my other wisdom teeth.

I swear I brush! Twice a day! I don't consume Watermelon Sour Patch Kids for breakfast, lunch and diner!

What has my Phillips Sonicare electric toothbrush been doing all these years!

Dr.B said - with the calmness of Barack Obama or George Washington that "You haven't eaten that much ...right? We going to take your heart rate, and blood pressure. Then I'm going to give you Novocane and let it sit in for five minutes. And then we are going to pull your tooth."

Me: "Right now?"

Dr. B: "Right now."

I internally freaked the fuck out.

I thought -"Excuse me-WHAT?!? Are you on meth?!? You are just going to pull it! Right now! In this very moment?!? In this very chair?!? Is this the normal protocol? I don't need to book another appointment?! This place has wood paneling! Do I trust a medical professional who would allow there office to have wood paneling? Audacity must be on sale this year!"

No time like the present, I guess.

I emailed The Football Player "Hi - I am having an emergency tooth removal and will be offline for an hour." I was being an ass-kisser. As if I was busy enough to be away from the computer for an hour. An hour would probably contribute next to nothing. His kids have been getting sick recently - and I just repeat my brilliantly stated mantra "If my boss is not online, I am not online."

I didn't ask for teeth. I didn't ask to have this self loathing secretary-like role.

Dr. B left the room.

I stared at the oak colored ceiling fan above my plastic covered examination chair. How many times this year have I laid on my back - on the ground, on the couch, in my bed - and prayed that the ceiling fan would fall on me. Add some god damn spice to this dull ass year.

The male hygenist took my vitals.

My teeth are small, uneven and have gaps. I had braces, but braces don't change the size of your teeth.

When you are suppose to smile in pictures, I dont do anything, because my forced smile shows my small teeth, gums and my chipmunk cheeks. I am repulsed by myself when I see pictures of me forcing a smile.

In American culture, your teeth are a direct representation of your economic status. What do we think of when we think of a beautiful smile? Those large white smiles like Tom Cruise or Julia Roberts, TV anchors and meterologists and now IG Girls seem to have. As Cardi says, she "got a bag and fixed my teeth" when she gained her fame and notoriety. Yes, I have looked into Veneers, but its a 10,000 dollar process that needs to be redone every 7 years.

Nice Teeth = Young and Beautiful.

What do we typically think of people who have visibly missing teeth? That they are dirty, unhygienic and do meth.

My head understands that it has become extremely common for normal people to get cosmetic dentistry in the past several years. Using aggressive teeth whitening and veneers like people in Hollywood.

My heart says-"How am I suppose to be beautiful when I don't even meet the minimum requirements? Or I cant even smile in a picture? I can't even be a politician with my current teeth."

I truly do not photograph well. I know - We all are so overly self-image critical. Especially when we live in this photographed world where every moment of our waking hours seems to be documented by a photo. Or image of ourselves on a Zoom call.

Now, not only are my teeth heinous - but they are now unfunctional. Great.

Dr. B put the ruler sized needle into the back of my gum. He floated away to another chair.

By this point, I had a crush on Dr. B. He was tall but I didnt know what he looked like - so he could look like a medicinal Dev Patel or Zayn Malik. He was calm. He had a great job. He was reassuring.

I am truly trying and truly failing to stop projecting things onto people and learn to see people for their circumstances. They say that women date like venture capitalists and men date like stock brokers. I was ready to invest in Dr. B.

Dr. B was like Brody Malone - the 21 year old World Champion winning Gymnast. He grew up in Georgia doing rodeo and now goes to Stanford and is an engineering major. His biceps are the size of my fucking thighs. He's like 5'7". Truly a short king.

My favorite thing about Brody is that he does this absolutely spectacular routine - like on high bar. Perfect execution. Unbelievable form. Sticks the landing and does not move.

Most men start yelling and being all manly like "LETSSSS GOOOOO" all ecstatic.

Meanwhile, Brody will just walk off the mat straight faced and emotionless. Like nothing happened. Like he was walking to the damn bus.

Even when he won fucking the fucking all-around national champion, he just smiled and didn't even say anything.

I need a man like that - someone who is fearless and can shut the fuck up. And goes to Stanford.

I like the men's gymnastics more than women's because, in the past, they have been less tortured physically, mentally and sexually. Women's hits too close to home.

After ten minutes of watching silent Scooby-Doo on the mounted corner television and trying to keep pace with the captions - Dr. B floated back to me. He powered the chair into a totally reclined position and leaned over me to start working.

Dr. B: You feel the Novocane right?

Me: It feels like I had a stroke on the right side of my face.

Like every teenager in 2012 - I thought that Frank Ocean's album Channel Orange was truly The Irishman's gift to Earth. I still like Frank a lot, so I suppose he has stood the test of time.

Frank's music paints pictures..The pinnacle was *Novocane* - Novocane describes meeting a woman who studying to be a dentist but doing porn to finance her studies.

Frank describes the numbness of drug heavy sexual encounters he has and compares it to the Novocane used by the girlfriend in her job as a dentist. Encounters that make him numb - but also wanting more.

Like my encounters with Chivas Regal.

There was poking. There was drilling. There was sanding. My mouth agape and drying out. I tried to keep my eyes closed, but when they were, all I could concentrate on was the noises of the drill and the suction machine. I blinked my eyes open and saw the pliers going in.

They left the tooth on the plastic medical tray next to the reclined chair. Dr. B powered the chair back up. It hardly hurt at all.

I could not keep my eyes off of the bloody tooth. It had visual magnetism. I swear.

Dr.B: Did you look at it? Did you see it? Take a picture of it!

Me: If I ask you to keep it - will you get me committed somewhere?

Dr B: Hahahahaha! You would not be the first to ask.

I wanted to keep the tooth because the Church sometimes keeps a tooth or a lock of hair of an important saint for display. Maybe when I get older - I'll be virtuous and be a saint!

But for now - I guess its really more "love the sin, hate the sinner."

I didn't even think twice. I took my phone out and took a photo. What is this the obsession with photographing everything.

Dr. B is big on praise. He kept being like - you're doing such a great job. You are doing so well. Thank you for being patient with the process.

Dr.B...you better not!!!

Dr. B precariously made me sit for a few minutes after. I continued to Watch Scobby Doo.

My tongue meandered to the back of my mouth - in which there was now a crater-sized hole. I covered my mouth with my facemask so I could keep doing it without everyone see me doing it.

Then, I booked one of my, seemingly plethora, future appointments with Dr. B and walked home.

Thursday 4

Christmas is soon. There is all that ugly dirty snow on the ground. It's that time of the year when I live in my hand-me-down North Face parka and repeatedly forget gloves.

I went to the liquor store to pick up a bottle of Espolon, two bottles of whiskey, and some Whiskey Sour mix because I was going to Chivas Regal's tonight.

I crossed the street. In front of me, I saw Green T-shirt getting carried by the shoulders and ankles across the street. He was being carried by two homeless-ish men. He was unconscious.

They put him on the pavement face down. In the middle of the damn sidewalk.

I ask the homeless-ish guys carrying Green T-shirt if he was okay.

Green T-Shirt was clearly not okay.

I asked "Do you want me to call someone? Do you want me to call 911?" The homeless-ish guy was all "Dont call the police! Don't be a rat! Why would you do that?"

Maybe he ODeD. Maybe he's just a drunk. Either way - he was face down on the pavement unconscious at 11am on a Thursday. In a T-shirt. Near a snow bank.

In that moment I didn't know what the right thing to do was. Cause, as I say often live by the mantra of "that is not my problem" or "Don't be a Hero."

As I have recently learned - being a hero is not appreciated. Because, apparently, being a hero at work is rewarded by more work.

But he looked dead! I didnt want his dead body or potentially dead body on my concious!

The Irishman was testing me. By re-encartating my father's former life to my face.

The Irishman loves to test me. Like the time I found a strangers Brazilian Passport right infront of my door - so blatantly obvious that it couldn't be ignored. And instead of ignoring it, I went an two hours out of my to way to return it to the Brazilian embassy.

He was also probably looking down on me, chuckling, too. I'm out here trying to be a drunk's savior with five bottles of alcohol in my freezing hands. Than going to go make out with another drunk later tonight.

The Irish truly do have a way with gallows humor.

Even though it was mid-day, I had no where to be. I realized I couldn't call 911 because my phone was so old it couldn't even make calls anymore. I stopped in the police station, which was only a few blocks away.

I have never called the police on anyone. Ever. But I have spent several hours hiding from the state police in a friend's closet.

We all know cops are not knights in shining armour by any means.

But this is the real world and I didn't know how to get in touch with just an ambulance without getting in touch with the police.

I didn't want to be a snitch. But I didn't want him to die!

I got buzzed into the station. My hands were nearly numb when I touched the metal door handle. It was so cold my cheeks were warm. I didn't want to drop the bottles.

The officer grunted at me to walk up to the desk. I told him the gist and the location four blocks away. Since Green TShirt was so close, he sent people - and said that I would probably see them on the walk back.

After, I hid behind the Toyota minivan until the EMT's arrived.

The EMTs where there and they cut his T-shirt off. They put Green T-Shirt on a stretcher - strapped him in and covered him with a white sheet. They Narcan'ed him in the nose a couple of times.

The homeless-ish man just told the EMTs that he was just a drunk.

Narcan only works on opioids.

They put him in the ambulance. This very pretty blonde cop while on the sidewalk asked "Is this man your father?" And I'm like "No! I just found him here!"

Long long ago, in a galaxy far far away - or in some different dimension - it probably was my father.

I suppose it is better to be drowned in medical bills than to be 6 feet under in a cardboard coffin box in a mass grave somewhere? Because that's what they do with unidentifiable dead bodies these days. Either that or direct cremation.

I've heard thats what they do with dead bodies now because the morgues are overflowing. Especially in Florida and other place that have a lot of nursing homes.

What will they do to mine?

Only in the United States would you feel like you could be ruining someone's life by calling an ambulance on them. I've heard one trip runs seven grand or so. In France, it's only like ten euros.

Part of me did feel quite like a snitch. Like a rat. Like the homeless guy said. He was probably breathing. I could have just left him alone. I don't want to meddle in things that I am not suppose to meddle in.

The EMT's worked so quickly that he was in the ambulance within three minutes.

Is this why my own father is in the cult? So this wasn't his fate? Depending on strangers for salvation? To be the savior and not the one who needs saving?

My father has been a leader in the cult for many years. Before I was even alive. Even when we went to normal church, it was his real religion. He used to go to the cult's meetings nearly every day. It was and is his tribe.

I used to think he was famous, because strangers always used to come up to us in public and say hi. At the movies or at Starbucks. The conversation was always very surface level.

As I got older, I went to a few cult meetings and learned about the cult second handedly. The cult has many rituals - including holding hands, saying the Lord's Prayer, sermon giving, praying, smoking cigarettes inside and drinking coffee.

Rituals are repetitive and annoying

One time I went to a cult meeting, to observe, when I was twelve. A handsome man with leading-man face was giving a sermon about how he thought he could have a few drinks on a date.

Then, two hours later, he bit a cop.

When I got in trouble, my dad would read to me from the cult's book of rules. My dad did not allow me to buy mouthwash because it had alcohol in it.

None of that nonsense ever stopped me. Drinking is an essential part of American life. Bowling is drinking with rented shoes on. Fishing is drinking on a boat. Hunting is drinking in the woods. And I am a participant in the tradition.

People in the cult have a disease.

But there is a new one. This one has killed a proportion equal to the population of Seattle in less than a year.

Imagine if someone just dropped a bomb on Seattle and the entire population died instantly. It would be a global disaster. It would be eternally memorialized and remembered. Like the day JFK was killed multiplied by ten million multiplied by another ten million.

Disease though, it's far more subtle. Easy for history to ignore. Easier to forget.

It's really pick your poison these days. Die by disease or stay alive long enough to kill yourself with drinking. Or some other form of self sabotage.

The Irishman once said "Maybe we will cry while sober as we think about the past being cruel."

Sober. Drunk. Alone.

I guess we are all looking to feel less. Maybe, we all need a miracle. A Christmas miracle. I'm not the only one.

Thursday 5

Men are the only problem that are also the solution.

Men seem to be the only problem that the Irishman cannot seem to give me guidance on. Some people say that God is a woman. That may be true for them. Unfortunately, it is not true for me.

I've had the whole week off for the holidays. The whole office shuts down for the week, so people can spend quality time with their families.

Instead, I've spent it hibernating in my bourgeoisie jail cell. Watching Shameless, sleeping and smoking legal weed.

Chivas Regal invited me over last night. His family lives very far away - so it made sense he was still in town.

I got all ready and shaved my legs and straightened my hair and tried to look like a cheap prostitute. That's what he likes. I wore these leather leggings and a black low neck top. I put on all this extra clear lipgloss to make it look like I had lip injections done.

Does Dr.B do lip injections? I should ask.

I can do a pretty good job of cosplaying as a female when I need to.

When I got to his house he saw me, looked me up and down, and said "How do you not get every guy you want?"

Good question. Probably because I'm fucking annoying.

Long ago, The Ex said - "Your personality is contagious. Your personality is the plague."

I always argued that Instagram was the first pandemic.

Chivas Regal said that we should go to this fancy seafood restaurant called Reel House together soon. Because he got his yearly bonus.

Chivas Regal was always saying shit that we should do like go the clubs once they open again, or go to one of those fancy AMC theaters with reclining seats, or go to Ikea. But we never do it. I don't care. Well, I don't want to care.

People want the picturesqueness of a relationship, not the relationship itself. People like the outside image of being in a relationship. Because people like attention. Because it makes them seem desirable to society.

But, they could give two shits about the actual person they are in a relationship with.

I refer to this concept as “The Girlfriend Experience.”

Chivas Regal has a beautiful apartment, with new appliances, marble countertops and a gorgeous rainfall shower. But he treats it like a spartan bunker with all these kettlebells and yoga mats and pull up bars everywhere.

Men have no taste. I think this is because of the decline in liberal arts education.

Why is this expensive ass apartment turned into a defacto gym? Do you think you are some Walmart version of Brody Malone?!

Every man I have ever met has been a tool. In there own unique way.

The thing I like about Chivas Regal is that we are comfortable around each other. Sometimes, I help him shave.

Chivas Regal poured two drinks from the full one of the full bottles of Chivas Regal that I brought. Which I knew was his favorite.

He turned on Silver Linings Playbook- because it's one of my favorite movies. It's nice when someone knows basic information about you.

We laid next to each other on the couch. We watched the movie and then a few stand up specials by Hannibal Burrese.

We both fell asleep. I woke up in the middle of the night and the fifth of whiskey was gone.

He wasn't on the couch anymore. He was lying on the of the bathroom floor.

This situationship shit is heaven and hell. But a slice of heaven is better than none of it at all.

There was no slice of heaven last summer when I stayed with The Ex for weeks at a time.

I always go through it in the summer anyway.

All we did was sit in his apartment for days at a time. There was no where to go. They put up a ten foot fence around his building. The whole town was boarded up. No restaurant was even open for delivery. There were cops parked at seemingly every intersection. After a few days, they were replaced by tanks.

He put together some Ikea furniture. I stopped trying to help because he was very particular. I watched a documentary about girls in a jail in Indiana.

He slept soundly. My dreams were full of that nine minute video from Minneapolis.

The only time we would leave the house was to go to Walmart. Walmart makes me suicidal.

One time, when The Ex was shopping, I stole his phone, ran off the sports section and read a bunch of texts that I already had a sneaking suspicion where there. She was older and co-signed his lease. Slept over at his house twice. Divorced.

I liked the picturesqueness of My Ex and I's relationship more than our actual relationship. We looked good together. He was handsome. He had a somewhat prestigious job in architecture. He was well traveled. He worked out regularly. That's what mattered to me at the time.

This is the relationship that you have, and everyone you know goes "Yes, I approve." or "Yes, that makes sense."

I ruined my own relationship just to hear false promises from Chivas Regal twice a month.

The Irishman once said- "Maybe the feeling just comes and it goes. Maybe the government got nothing to do with it."

What is the goal of all this nonsense anyway? Companionship? A guaranteed sexual partner? The Public Display of Affection that is a wedding? How has this become an end goal.

Rituals are annoying.

I don't hate the idea of being married, to satisfy society's expectations for adults. We call each other husband and wife. But I will never sign on the dotted line. I'll never promise half of my money or half of my stuff. If that makes me greedy, than I suppose I am greedy.

Humans have gotten married since the beginning of civilization - but it was never the biggest legal and financial decision that they would ever make in there lives.

In fact - in the United States - a civil marriage didn't even exist until the end of the nineteenth century.

So- if a married person were to tell me that- "It's not a marriage unless you sign on the dotted line"- I would just ask them if Mary and Joseph were married. Or if George Washington and Martha Washington were married. Or if anyone married before the year 1870 was even married. Then they would probably shut up.

I'm putting all those history classes to use somehow.

But also - why do I care if a married person say its not a marriage? There is a fifty percent chance that they will get divorced in there lifetime anyway.

Fifty percent. If there was a restaurant with a fifty percent chance of giving me food poisoning, trust and believe that I would not go to that restaurant. If there was a dentist who said that I had a fifty percent chance of not surviving the procedure, trust and believe I would not get that procedure.

If and when I get divorced - it will be hard enough emotionally to deal with. I'm going have to hire movers and move all my shit, find a new house and pay a security deposit for it. I'm not going to make it worse by paying all these expensive, money hungry divorce lawyers to get into a corny courtroom drama where both of us lose money.

Haven't we, as a society, figured out that there are more interesting, and potentially fun, ways other than marriage to ruin our lives? And our financial futures?

The Irishman once said - "Love is not designed for the cynical."

Than it's not designed for me.

Thursday 6

My body would be mostly decomposed before anyone else realized that I was dead. It would take a minimum of 10 days.

The coroner probably wouldn't even be able to tell what day I actually died.

Truly - not that many people text me. Even if Simon did, they would probably think that I was ghosting them. If I ignored my parents calls 5 or 6 times, then maybe they would find something suspicious.

I seem to meditate on the thought of my rotting body. Of the skin falling off my dead face. Especially after I close the laptop and put down the phone.

The Irishman once said - "In love and death, we don't decide"

Actually, it would probably take less than 10 days for someone to realize if I was dead. The Football Player would be the first to figure it out. When I didn't answer their calls. Or read their messages.

Another grey day where I woke up alone. Another day where I sat in front of the laptop to do work I could one-hundred percent be automated out of. Another day to sit in meetings where I take notes for people who are more important than me.

Again and again, I feel the agony of a 1950s housewife - without the suburban house, marriage or children. Trapped in the house alone with no where to go and no one to talk to.

Today, I closed the laptop at 4pm and went right to bed to sleep.

Sleeping is my way of fast forwarding my existence. To be anesthetized. To play dead. To be numb. Novocane - al natural.

The smallness makes this easy. I'm drained. It's as if I have leeches draining my blood and motivation out of my body. Like what they did to George Washington. It took me approximately one second to fall asleep. I didn't set an alarm. I woke up at 9pm.

There are worse habits. I'm lucky - I can soberly sleep over ten hours if time allows. But with some substances - I can do twelve or more.

I used to Xan out for the night. But can I Xan out for the year?

The thing about living alone is that you are left to your own devices. I always knew that if I was left to my own devices, I would lay in bed all day.

And now that I have been left to my own devices, that is exactly what I have been doing.

Awake at 9pm. A dry phone. A messy bedroom. A frozen Indian meal from Trader Joe's.

Why wake up and get out of bed when there is no one to see?

Why clean the house when no one is coming over?

Why take in the laundry when there is no real reason to have clean clothes?

Why answer the email when you won't get a response for at minimum two days?

Why be productive when you could waste the days?

Why even cry when there is no one there to consol you?

Well...at least there is a lot of TV to watch.

I tried to lay down and watch something. I don't have a real TV, so I had to lay in the same place again. Looked around on Youtube but nothing seemed interesting. Couldn't find a movie I wanted to see on Amazon that I didn't have to pay extra for - even though I already pay \$100 a year or whatever for Prime. Went back to Youtube. Half watched a video. Paused it to roll over and do nothing. Stare at the wall.

The internet is where we live now. But I don't want to live there. It's an unfree place.

Amazon, Google and Facebook know me better than I know myself. Even though I try to keep them at a distance.

Algorithms make our every choice from our sweaters to our spouses.

How are we free when we are Amazon or Google's marionettes? They pull the strings and we dance. As in- we buy.

And I haven't found a more loyal friend than my phone.

I needed a shower. I couldn't remember the last time I took a shower. Maybe three days ago?

While that is fucking disgusting - it asks the eternal question - if you smell, but no one is around to smell you, do you actually smell?

I laid on my back in bed. Part of me wanted to shower. But it was so cold outside. I would get out of the shower all wet and my small apartment would quickly turn into Siberia.

How did I get here? How.

My senior year of high school, I was in The Irishman's class titled "The Future." We read all the classic dystopian literature like 1984, A Clockwork Orange, The Road and the Handmaid's Tale.

Didn't know at the time that the class titled "The Future" would have been more accurately titled "Your future."

Back when I used to be interesting- I wanted to be lost in the world. It's a specific feeling. A city you've never been to. A city that no one you know has ever been to. A city you didn't even know existed until you were in college. Being a foreigner. An alien. Wanderer. But finding your footing anyway.

In Kuala Lumpur- there were three malls on one block but no functioning streetlights. We always went to the to malls for food. Malaysian mall game is unbelievable. But night markets were even better. Same shit but more lively. Lit up with neon signs and electric scooters playing music and vendors selling street noodles and beer. Like every night was Friday night. The city came alive in the nighttime.

At the night market, men sliced coconuts and used bowls to throw them high up in the sky and catch them in performance. They would thrown them between each other. Probably in hopes that more people would buy. "Malaysian Harlem globe trotters" I joked. My Australian friends laughed.

But being lost in the world had some type of optimism. That the world is a beautiful place full of interesting people or some corny nineteen year old shit.

Yes I was more selfish and self absorbed than. But things were predictable. Entire Industries didn't get canceled.

Sometimes, I can't stop thinking about the past. The past is certain.

Now its Morges. Fires. ICE detention centers. Overflowing ICU's. Trash in the ocean. Eight percent unemployment.

Will rock bottom be a solid foundation?

Who is to say.

It took brute strength and willpower to walk ten feet to the bathroom- where it took about ten years for the water to heat up to a near boil. If I'm going to be frigid after the shower, I am going to be warm in the process.

I had to keep my hand on the wall to keep me standing. It's interesting how doing nothing all day can make you so physically fatigued.

The twinge of self-hatred feels like a low grade fever in the background of every moment of every day. It rang strongly in the back of my head.

The more I write the more I feel like I'm helplessly stuck at the bottom of a well. I thought I could write myself out of a bad mood. Now I am even more agitated.

Should I start talking to the wall? Or should I just go to back to bed?

Thursday 7

Another day and another appointment with Dr.B. I had to wait forty five minutes to see him. He asked me some basic questions about my how my two previous fillings healed. He asked me when I was going to get my other three wisdom teeth out. Then, he proceeded to put Chicken Little on Netflix.

He came back into the room after five minutes or so to complain about how bad my insurance is. "You have worse dental insurance than what the state gives" he said. "But I'll give you BoGo - buy one filling, get one free"

BoGo! Like it was the Victoria Secret semi-annual sale!

Me (tonge-in-cheek): Dr.B! I'm paying all your bills! I hope your kids are in private school!

Dr. B (matching that energy): Actually they are! My wife wanted it! But I don't think it makes a difference until college.

Me: How old are they?

Dr.B: Four and six

Me: It makes a difference in high school

Dr.B: Interesting...where did you go?

I told him the name.

Dr. B: Good school

Ugh - if his pleasant demeanor and height weren't enough. Now somebody who is impressed by my academic credentials!

Than, as usual, he gave me two shots of novocane. "You numb so quick" he said, complementary.

Yes Dr.B! I am pretty good at that in fact! Maybe my antipsychotic drugs have finally kicked in! Maybe hanging around Chivas Regal is good for me after all. Maybe Frank Ocean was right!

Something unusual happened-that didn't happen last time. My jaw was tremoring. As if I was just thrown into a frozen-over lake after spending a half hour in a sauna.

Dr.B floated back into the room to start the filling. He drilled for approximately 5 seconds - but I was shaking. He firmly told me to stay still and reassured me that it was okay.

He drilled and drilled and drilled.

Blink 182 was playing on the radio and Dr.B started singing along to “All The Small Things” as if he was driving alone in his car.

I understand the whistle while you work thing. But Dr.B was performing! Like karaoke or something.

The hygienist laughed, shook her head and grinned. I tried to laugh with my mouth wide open, but it was more of a hacking gag.

Suddenly, another hygienist from across the room shouted --”Jessica is calling!!!!!!” Than the hygenist walked over to Dr.B and held the phone to his ear as he was full-on doing my cavity with both hands.

The screen said Jessica B. It must have been his wife. Of course Dr. B would have a white wife. Who else was buying him these fly shoes! She is the wife I aspire to be.

He listened to her. I couldn’t hear but Jessica seemed to be going on and on for a few minutes without interuption. Mind you he was fully still doing the cavity.

Dr. B: Jessica...I urge you to stop calling me during business hours.

Those are probably the most rude words that have ever left his mouth. The equivalent of swearing her out.

All the surrounding hygienists laughed- as if this happened with some sort of regularity. .

He finished taking the call and nodded to the hygienist that she could hang it up.

Dr. B (directed at me): “Welcome to the circus.”

Who let Dr.B be this calm but also this charismatic!?

The entire staff giggled.

Did this make me a regular? Is this my version of the Cheer’s bar, where everyone here knows your name?

All this cute mayhem couldn’t distract me from the fact the I was still completely freezing. I truly tried to stay still but the hygienist could tell I was shaking. She held my left arm down with her forearm. From my downward peripheral, I could even see my feet start to move up and down, in a small butterfly kick.

I was holding onto the armrests for dear life, trying to steady myself.

Dr. B finished the filling. He thanked me for my patience.

I tried to get up to leave.

My mind said “get out of this chair” over and over again. My body said “request denied.”

My legs rigidly jerked from stiff to relaxed. Hyperextended to bent.

My molars were full on grinding against each other- which should have been extremely painful, but, due to the novocane, I couldn't feel it at all.

My teeth were grinding so hard that I was scraping the entire inside of my cheek raw.

Blood was pouring into the back of my throat.

My breath was short.

My shivering was now more than shivering. It was full on convulsing.

My entire head was snapping from side to side.

I was sweating.

I was freezing.

I was grinding my teeth like I was on meth.

I was having a full blown fucking seizure.

Obviously, in the moment, I had no idea that it was a seizure.

But, I guarantee you it didn't take long for the entire office to figure out something was going seriously wrong.

Internally I was screaming out in desperation: What is happening! Why is this happening to me! What is going on! Who let this happen!! Who let this happen!! Who let this happen!!

How many times this year am I going to have to surrender to terror.

To face all of it all alone.

In my own brain.

And I couldn't calm myself down.

My mind played my USA Gymnastics incident on repeat. The women's.

Lying back in the same horizontal position. Man in scrubs. Staring up at the ceiling. In the dingy medical office. Sucked into a plastic chair.

((((who let this happen!)))

Scrubs. Ceiling. Plastic Chair.

Scrubs. Ceiling. Plastic Chair.

Scrubs. Ceiling. Plastic Chair.

No one was saving me than.

But I've had a great life. Better than most.

Dr. B pivoted and ran back into the room. Dr.B still had on his Jordans.

The hygienists were running all over the office in a frenzy. Obviously, this wasn't a normal occurrence. One ran to another room to grab the blood pressure machine.

By then, the entire office including the waiting room seemed to know what was going on. And the entire operation of the office was on pause.

Dr. B was rushedly rummaging through the cabinets but couldn't find whatever he was looking for. The hygienist held me down to put the blood pressure cuff on.

My head was still snapping from one side to another.

The hygienists tried to give me these chocolate covered cookies. I couldn't even open my mouth to eat them.

The blood from my chewed up cheek was dripping down my chin and onto my shirt.

Scrubs. Ceiling. Plastic Chair.

Part of me thought: Dying in a dentist office is probably one of the lamest ways to go out.

Part of me also thought: I'd rather die here than in an overrun ICU alone. Somewhere.

Dr. B stood behind me and put his hands on my shoulders. Was this allowed?

Dr B: It's okay. It's going to be okay. I'm sorry this is happening to you.

A few tears were dripping out the outside corner of my eyes. Blood was spilling out of my mouth with each breath. I was a god damn wreck.

Scrubs. Ceiling. Plastic Chair.

It's okay. It's going to be okay. I'm sorry this is happening to you.

It's okay. It's going to be okay. I'm sorry this is happening to you.

It's okay. It's going to be okay. I'm sorry this is happening to you.

Then, Dr. B started to take some deep breathes. Inhaling for five seconds. Exhaling for five seconds.

Dr. B.: Breathe with me.

So I did. We breathed together for a few minutes. Inhale for five seconds. Exhale for five seconds. Inhale for five seconds. Exhale for five seconds.

The hygienists were statufied in the corner of the room. They were in shock horror.

As was I.

We kept breathing together. I calmed down enough for the hygienist to take the blood pressure cuff off my arm. Eventually, I was able to get out of the chair.

Dr. B: Have you ever had a seizure before?

Me: A seizure?

Dr.B: So...this was your first?

I stood up and looked in the mirror to wipe the blood off of my face - even though it was all over my shirt. My eyes were still watery.

Dr. B: I don't know how this could have happened. I swear. We did the same thing we always do. The same amount of novocane. Nothing changed. I'm very sorry. I'm very, very, very sorry. Do you need a bottle of water? Or gatorade? I think we have crackers...if you think that will help you.

He sounded like a ten year old who got caught lying to there Mom about finishing their math homework.

In that moment, I realized I still had no idea what Dr.B looked like. If I saw him on the street, he would be unrecognizable. Like Batman.

I assured him that none of that would be necessary.

Dr.B kept apologizing profusely. He insisted on prescribing me vicodin - because of all the unintentional teeth grinding and bleeding from my mouth.

Recover from one painkiller induced incident with another painkiller.

Apparently, and unfortunately, we can't anesthetize ourselves forever. Even from the past. Discomfort will always find us. Physical and spiritual.

He probably saw that I had been crying. Which probably made him feel worse. I hoped he didn't blame himself.

I assured Dr.B that I was in sound body and mind. I paid with my Amex, because I couldn't pay outright, since it was too expensive. Booked another appointment for two weeks out and walked back home.

The Irishman once said "When your heart hurts, days like these are the antidote."

And I took the vicodin. And I slept for the rest of the afternoon. And then I woke up to write this all down.

Thursday 8

I keep having this recurring day dream - where I am hosting a party with all the people who have had a positive impact on me. In an opulent mansion - like Gatsby, or more recently, Nick Young from Crazy Rich Asians.

At the party, I remember everyone and see everyone as the best version of themselves.

Everyone is dressed glamorously and unusually. Not like a prom or a wedding. More like the Met Gala. Or - the people who do the Met Gala correctly, according to Ana Wintour's chosen theme for the year.

I'm talking everyone. From someone I met once for ten minutes to a lifelong family friend.

From my fifth grade teacher to the frank secretary I used to waste time with at work walking to the vending machines. From my church acquaintances to the group of kids from Louisiana I camped next to at a music festival. From my forensics lab partner, to my roommates in Malaysia. From my handsome Fedex man who is also a graffiti artist, to the jeweler who gave me a good deal on my birthday.

The party is loud but not that loud. People are drunk but not that drunk.

Unlike my wedding, or my funeral, I will have a chance to talk to everyone. And not for a minute - for a long, long time. As much time as we need.

And we will relive the glory days. How things were. How they used to be. How much fun we once had.

These are the things I think about as I played with my kinetic sand. Instead of working.

The Irishman once told me that - "I'll be all out lonely. If you all outgrow me."

Do we just outgrow people like we outgrow clothes?

I have always been fidgety. Give me a stapler - and I will waste all the staples stapling the same piece of paper over and over again. Give me a TV remote - and I will pull the batteries out and break the plastic cover. Give me a candle - I will start pouring the hot wax all over my hand, watching it cool and chip off.

I keep a few toys to keep this tick less destructive. Like a dart board. Like rubberballs. Like kinetic sand.

I would have asked for more of these type of things for Christmas. But I have surpassed the age where I am allowed to write a letter to Santa with my requests.

Now I get ugly ass slippers and silverware, from relatives, and I have to do this theatrical act to pretend I am happy I got them.

Gifts are rituals. Rituals are annoying.

The rituals of weddings and funerals are just preventative measures against the outward appearance of dying alone.

But is my rotting corpse all alone even that bad?

Women are more likely to die alone anyway. Men always die first. It's because they are too masculine to go to the doctor. Who is also probably a man.

Dying alone wouldn't be the worst thing if you have a bit of morphine and the delusion of an epic party with every person you ever loved.

As long as it's after about eighty years from now in a posh nursing home somewhere with a warm climate - like Sedona.

Why do I always have one foot in the grave?

There are many advantages of kinetic sand over traditional sand.

First, it sticks together, hence the name, which makes it much easier to use inside because it mitigates messes and doesn't get all over your skin.

Second, it molds without water. I have a brick mold, a king mold, a queen mold, a pillar mold, a circle mold, a scoop, a dull knife thing and rake.

Also, it can be other colors than just brown. Mine is purple.

I spend a considerable amount of time just weighing the sand between both hands. Then I use this little rake to make hatches.

I use the scoop to scoop up the sand than I throw it back into the bigger pile.

Then I use the make a brick mold to make a ton of rectangle bricks. I like when the sand falls out of the plastic mold in a perfectly smooth 3D rectangle.

I built a near perfect nine-by-nine brick pyramid with all the bricks.

I didn't want to destroy it just yet. I wanted to admire my soon to disappear work, kind of like an ice sculpture. Or a traditional sandcastle.

I started playing with a dollar bill left on my kitchen table from the morning Dunkin run.

So rare to touch actual money these days. Now it's a tap with a phone at the register. Or a tap of the plastic card. Or a electronic transfer of some type.

The only time I touch paper money is to buy and/or do substances.

I sat looking at the dollar. I held it in my hands and stare at George Washington for a long, long time. I had a one way staring contest with him. I wondered how much the wig cost.

Would George Washington be proud of us?

The answer is - of course not. But what would be the thing that disappoints him the most?

Well, so far, this year, it would probably an attempt by four thousand people to overthrow the government.

The government he gave up his absolute rein of. He could have been the first king in the new American Monoarchy if he wanted.

Or the fact, that there was a noose hanging infront of the Capitol.

Wow. This year is starting to look like a shittier version of the last.

Maybe rock bottom is a solid foundation. Who is to say.

I rubbed my thumb and index finger on the paper like I was shopping for a new cashmere sweater. Than I held it by the ends and tried to pull it apart. Obviously, it doesn't rip.

How many decisions have I let this piece of paper make for me?

Infinite.

To be real, if everyone had to stare at a piece of paper money, for one hour, for once in there lifetime - we would live in a much different world.

The human species are about to make our planet uninhabitable over an untearable piece of paper.

With no inherit value -not even linked to gold or another natural resource in anyway.

If we are living in a simulation - this is the dumbest simulation in the history of ever.

Then I looked at the back of the dollar. I looked at the pyramid on the back. I look at the pyramid of purple kinetic sand.

What the actual fuck! Is this the illuminati at work?!

Thursday 9

The Irishman once said “The hope and the hurt have lived inside of me. But, there is gold in the dirt.”

Finished *Problems*, by Jade Sharma in one day. I've read it five times, but it reads different after her death.

Got drunk on Vodka Sodas alone and have a solo silent disco with my fancy Bose headphones. Danced mostly to a playlist of female rappers like Missy, Nicki, Meghan and Princess Nokia.

Did some suggestive dancing on my fridge. Felt like this is what drinking is suppose to feel like - like a feeling I searched for for four years at school. Feel joy.

Left my apartment. Didn't bring my phone. Hungover but not that bad. Vodka soda in my stomach. Skinny bitch drinks don't completely kill me. Didn't bring music for distraction.

An early morning walk in socks and slides with no purpose. Not to walk a dog. Not to run. Not to exercise. Just a walk.

The overcast and fog was pleasant. Sometimes my neighborhood can look like a low-budget San Fransico and you can wear just a sweatshirt in the winter.

Saw a dog walker. Maybe I need a dog so I don't stay in the house for 5 days at a time and use the rain and snow as an excuse.

Walked up the hill with all the fancy houses. More that half a million for three rooms like mine. That could be a mansion in West Texas. I know because I looked it up on Zillow. USA Today says that Texas is changing and gentrifying. What city isn't. Even Pittsburgh is. But I don't know anyone in Texas.

Granted - I hardly know anyone here.

There were a few early morning runners. I came to here when I was in high school. We drove early in on a Saturday morning - and I remember seeing all these people running. At the time - I thought to myself “If I wasn't slammed with commitments from morning to night like a typical high schooler, I would not leave bed until 2pm.”

I walked by a basketball court and thought about how men use basketball, or sports, to bond. To fraternize. Like The Football Player or all the other people at work.

I am pathetic at basketball but I like basketball shoes and shorts and backpacks that Nike makes. No one I know here is good at basketball! Everyone of them are nerds just like me.

Went to a small park that looked over the river, the ships, and the buildings.

I saw a wild rabbit.

I love wild rabbits but have also eaten wild rabbits at an Italian restaurant.

Wild rabbits are cuter than domestic ones cause they art more fit. Because they have to forage for food. Also - they are light brown like ice coffee.

When I was in school, I used to babysit this six year old girl. She was very cute. The school was in the middle of nowhere - with fields and fields for seemingly miles. We even had a farm.

Her family lived in a small house but kept there pets mostly outside. She went to show me her domestic rabbits. She picked one up under its two front arms. I didn't have the heart to tell her it was dead.

Dead like the author from last night's book.

Eminem's first stage name was rabbit.

Rabbits are pray animals. They are always getting eaten by bigger, more important animals. The only superpower they have is to mate all the time.

In that way - I suppose we are twin flames.

So I started going on this rabbit safari. It was like when I was on safari in Kenya - but a lot less memorable and a lot quieter. And there wasn't a top down Land Rover.

Is this what madness looks like?

Thoreau said that having a strong inner life is important. Or just finding the interesting the ordinary and in nature. I would know more if I could sit down and read him. But I have to say - this was all very Thoreau of me.

Are morning people really more productive than night people? Or is that a myth?

At first - I started watching this super tiny baby rabbit. He would chew and look around. The scrunch of his nose was quite possibly the cutest thing on earth Cuter than the cutest puppy that ever existed.

I alternated between standing and squatting - trying to stay completely still and silent. Gripping my keys so they wouldn't jingle. As if I was playing freeze tag in 3rd grade gym class. Squatting hurt my thighs even though I could keep my heels on the ground. But it was a better view - because I could get a 360degree view. The tail, the ears, the chewing and the looking around.

What must it be like to not have thoughts about the past or the future?

I watched the baby rabbit for a long long time. Thought about how old he was. Maybe a few weeks. Tabla Rasa I suppose. I followed him into the mulch- and another rabbit -- a much bigger walked behind me. I was able to see both of them before moving.

I was studying them - but I don't know anything about animals except from Disney movies. Biology classes always focused on the makeup of the cell or something, or how flowers cant bloom in dark rooms.

After a while - I decided to leave but walked across a small path in the park. It looked like a romantic era painting that my father plays. The skyline in the background, The boats and the ferries in the midground. There was a lot of morning fog, and nearby planes seemed to be flying into no where. There was a rock in the foreground - which I sat on.

There were FOUR rabbits right in front of me.

Thought about their relationship to each other. A sibling situation? Parents and kids? They were all sitting in a row pretty equidistant from each other.

How picturesque.

Wanted to name them. I tried rapper names - like Juicy J or Common and Eminem - for cognitive dissonance. That didn't work.

I hate when people name pets "Charlie" or "Fluffy" or something unoriginal. I thought about naming them after different animals like Lions, Tigers, and Bears. But that didn't work.

There is nothing more American than having a pet. It's an essential part of American life - like drinking alone.

Sat on the rock and watched for a long time. Time is irrelevant if you don't have a clock.

What would a week be like if you didn't look at a clock the whole time. Probably better. More relaxed. Scandinavian.

There was this public jungle gym / workout area with pull up bars - not a playground but like a workout area. I've been working on my assisted pull up for forever. Figured I should do a few while I was there.

Did three sets of ten.

Then I went to the parallel bars and pretended to do Brody Malone's routine and with jumps and handstands.

I can kind do a handstand - but I cannot fathom doing it on the parallel bars. However, I could jump walk my hands down them a little. Started to work on a turn around on the bar. Try to face from one direction to another.

I don't have a man's upper body - obviously. Part of me was afraid to fall. Wouldnt matter - there weren't people for miles - waiting for for you to embarrass yourself in front of them.

That's the good thing about my neighborhood, there aren't always dumbasses walking around at all hours.

I walked to the Pier and looked at the boats. Read a plaque about all the immigrants that came. A lot now are from Central and Latin America. Funny how the United States ruins their countries with CIA coups and Banana Republics (not the store!)...And then they seek refuge in enemy territory. Same with the Laotians and Vietnamese.

I wish I was alive when society was more naive to the American experiment. To George Washington's graduate thesis. Now its a god damn mess.

It was still overcast, foggy drizzling and cold. My feet, socks and slides were wet from the rabbit safari.

I went to Dunkin to wake my ass up. The Dunkin I go to is the United Nations of Dunkins. The cashier could be indian, hispanic or chinese at any given time. Large ice coffees- two creams and two splendas. Tried to ignore the donuts that you want - the strawberry frosted ones I always got as a kid.

After, I went to the convenience store with a Keno table to get a gatorade to fix my hungover stomach. I usually keep an emergency gatorade on a hand - but I've been needing them more often lately.

I like scratch tickets on the weekends - but it seemed ratchet for a Thursday morning.

I read Vogue but I love scratch tickets. I am not a human beings. I'm probably from Mars.

By then, I was close to my house. I struggled to carry the coffee and gatorades. I walked by a hot guy with too much hair gel. We made eye contact for three seconds longer than normal strangers. I liked his vans. I thought "I promise I am more attractive than this" but in realities Im in hoodies for 90% of my life, so that outfit is probably an accurate presentation of my current look.

Made it home. Drank the entire gatorade. Felt revived. Washed my face and used a pore strip and tried to do a crossword because business hours hadn't started. The Football Player couldn't bother me yet.

Problems, the book I read in one day said this - its pretty much its thesis .

But anyone can find others to hide behind. Being alone, figuring out how to make the hours go, saitiating your own wrestling human heart, means that you never have to hide or be numb again.

This is the best line ever. This competes with anything The Irishman has ever told me.

I wish she didn't kill herself so we could get more lines like that.

And I had a version of peace that I had not experienced in a long time. Peace not found in activites that are alledgedly suppose to bring you peace - like medidation, therapy or rituals.

Peace that was one part unintentional, another part caused by my own actions.

Peace in realization that the Earth if filled with mostly dirt. But fortunately, there are a few slivers of gold to be found. Somewhere. Like some kind of life long eccentric scavenger hunt with minimal reward.

Peace and assurance that loneliness is made-up.

The Irishman was right when he tolde me - "You won't go lonely."

For today.