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CARNIVAL

KNOWLEDGE

Dedicated to old whatsisname from Dust Gulch
(Mister False I think it was, or was it Yawn E.
Bombadil, or was-were he-they two laypersons,
Mssrs. Ob and Luz, I wanna say? Butch Harmony?
Or no, it was The Ugliness Man, I'm almost sure
of it. Or was her name Jessica Oubliette?)
whose voice I shoplifted, or else, whose voice
crawled into mine and died. Whoever it was, and
whoever you are, and whoever I am,
thank you so much for letting me be yourself
and for letting me be forgetting me.
Before getting me beef or getting bereaved,
please first read the following screed.

*Life. You could say it started when I was a kid.
Like most folks, I've always been different. But
not like the others...*

—Xavier, Renegade Angel

*...thou speaketh of "brain rot." But doth not all
healthful and nourishing food grow up from the
loam, soil made from that which once was rot?*

—Tiktokphesians, 6:11

*Why do they call it 'oven' when you of in the
cold food of out hot eat the food?*

—Jon Arbuckle

Foreword

What follows is a collection of text transmissions released and committed to a fixed medium by a fearful and sensitive someone who wanted that you should have some silly smiles and bonus wonder to wander through and perhaps an extra thing or two to ponder, hm.

What you'll find are "poems," satirical tracts, fiction fragments, and modest experiments with words' (de)form and (dys)function. They might be Elmer's Glue elegy, obtuse comedy, sluggish recovery, elvish self-help, fractured spirituality. Or maybe the outbursts of a student/victim of the law, as perhaps we all are. To be honest it's not clear what this is or why it was done.

Still, after my farm shut down, I had some free time to read this tract over and over and over and over, E-I-E-O, and after having done so, I feel that it is my duty to convey to you, dear reader, that what follows is---always and in all ways and at its core---clownwork, too sweet and too fatty, fun but rigged, down-home, undeniably darksided, something that at first you think you want it but later you leave it in the attic for two decades, perhaps encoded with phantom arcana and/or fata morgana, garish, harebrained, and american---the stuff of carnivals. Or else the stuff a stuffed animal hanging from a carnival trailer would write if it were a human writer and not a prize.

There is some chance that the text below contains a few deep truths hidden among many shallow half-truths and deep falsehoods and vexing forsooths and neutral nothings, such that perhaps for you this can be a fun puzzle to puzzle over, wade through, or marinate in. A flummoxing riddle to

wriggle around in. A lummox's chittering malcontentment.

And now, a brief prayer so we can get this thing started: May either you be a dry dinner roll to sop up this text gravy, or may this dry paper serve as a dutiful receptacle to soak up whatever excess psychic goo you need to offload, Amen. Enjoy!

—Old McDonald



A Day in the Life of a Law School Student

It's 4:00 a.m. Suddenly, I'm awake.

The first thing I do is reach for my dream journal, which I keep on my bedside table. I write down last night's dream: Uniform Commercial Code section 2-315, Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose.

Fitness reminds me that it's time to exercise. I fight back tears thinking about the Zumba class I used to go to, because I miss the people. But the time in my life for interacting with others has passed. Accordingly, I begin my solo workout, a modified version of Zumba I have invented. I stand perfectly still while listening to vinyl recordings of Supreme Court oral arguments. I do a kettlebell squat every time *stare decisis* occurs, an up-down every time a Federal Rule of Civil Procedure is obeyed, and a box jump every time the original text of the Constitution is respected. I'm stronger than I've ever been.

My strength reminds me about protein, my favorite nutrient. I haven't had a carb since 2002. For breakfast I make my usual: baked egg whites and creatine. Rather than drink coffee, I light a candle and open Black's Law Dictionary to a random page. I learn the definition of *sua sponte*. This knowledge is equivalent to three cups of coffee; the sheer thrill of it propels me through the day.

Thrill is an emotion, which is dangerous; I'm reminded that it's time to get my mind right. For meditation, as a 1L, each morning I would read a facsimile of the Constitution in its original 18th-century cursive script. As a 2L, I would recite it orally from memory to familiarize myself with its cadence. While others listened to

Taylor Swift, I sang the song of The Founders. This year I am applying some casual divination to the Constitution, assigning numerical values to different words and phrases that appear in the various Amendments. I then analyze them numerologically, just in case they have been encoded with sacred data. I periodically email my findings to Chief Justice John Roberts. I conclude my meditation by closing my eyes and imagining that I am a black satin robe.

Thinking of the robe reminds me it's time to get dressed. I opt for a salmon-colored button up shirt because salmon is famously high in Omega-3s. For trousers I select a pair of woolen high-waisted pants that I bought because they remind me of Learned Hand's eyebrows. I wear the same pair of Allen Edmonds brogue oxfords that Antonin Scalia wore in 2007 on the day he described the Affordable Care Act as "pure applesauce." Rather than add any product to my hair or comb it, I simply let it sit in its natural state, a nod to the legal realism of Oliver Wendell Holmes. I then apply a layer of skin-tone-hued concealer to my hands, to obscure my knuckle tattoos, which read "CARD OZO!" The final step is to apply cologne; I choose a musky, piquant scent with notes of fir balsam, fresh cedar, and spicy oak. The purpose of this scent is to evoke the aroma of the forest from which the trees used to construct the wood paneling in the chambers of the Supreme Court were cut.

Cut trees remind me of saws, which are made out of metal, and metal is what bells are made of, which makes me think of the bell curve, so I head to class. I use an ultralight backpacking rig with carbon fiber rails that is large and sturdy enough to hold all of my books, my laptop, my ultrawide monitor, a small portable treadmill to walk on, my water bottle, a pint of protein

powder for snacking, my highlighters, a couple pocket Constitutions for emergencies/first-aid, phone and laptop chargers, sticky notes, notebooks, pens, and a signed transcript of *Palsgraf v. Long Island Railroad Company*.

“Company” reminds me of the other people in the law school. I stop in the hall to chat with the people who were my friends during orientation before 1L started. We make cordial conversation, each of us taking great pains to avoid talking about grades, journals, trial team, jobs, board membership, committee work, or the thousand-foot column of despair that presses down on each of us from above with unrelenting hydraulic precision during all waking moments. We all strain dutifully, careful not to break the spell of collegiality. But just beneath the withering smiles and dark eye circles, something primal seethes. The competitive ache feels tectonic, ancient. I briefly astral-project myself into the body of the statue of Lady Justice, the woman with the blindfold and scales, at the nearest courthouse. This calms me enough to walk away from the conversation without suplexing any of my cohort.

During class I take notes using an app I developed that accurately records what I type, while displaying plausible but false information on my laptop screen. Because I sit at the front of the classroom, I am in constant peril of having someone know as much as me, so security measures like this are necessity. After each class I lock myself in the single-toilet bathroom and sit silently for fifteen minutes, allowing the jurisprudence to sink into my mind like the ship that sank in *The Queen v. Dudley and Stephens*. I let the jurisprudence soak into my mind like the seawater that soaked into their clothes as they sat adrift in the lifeboat,

contemplating cannibalism. As I sit, I feel proud to be continuing that tradition of cannibalism, socially and intellectually, as a gunner.

Between classes I like to take a break by going to office hours and chatting with the professors who teach each class I've taken this year and also each class I took the previous two years. For me, every conversation is a gossamer filament, light as air and stronger than steel, which I weave into a web of sticky, inescapable professionalism. So far this has resulted in five judicial clerkships, which I intend to serve concurrently, and two BigLaw firm offers, one nighttime and one daytime. I intend to use the money I earn at the firms to fund a project in which I will design and print 100,000 illustrated copies of the Constitution, which I will donate to children in need across the country.

Once classes are over I head to the library and find a quiet corner where I can just hold a few copies of the federal reporter. I squeeze the tomes to my chest, embracing the bound volumes, feeling their solidity, their authority, their weight. I say a silent prayer for slip opinions, asking that they be bound over safely to the protective cocoon of doctrine soon. I gingerly return the reporters to their home in the stacks. For insurance, grades-wise, I rearrange a lot of the books so they can't be found by catalogue number, and then tear a few pages out of the hornbooks. Having completed my work, I head out. As I'm leaving, I cock my fist back at a passing 1L. It's important for them to get acquainted with fear.

After 11 p.m., everyone else has left the school except the security officer. She and I have an agreement: I pay her a modest sum of cash each week, and in exchange, she agrees to look the

other way during my nightly ritual. The ritual consists of me visiting the mock courtroom on campus, setting up legal pads, dockets, shucks, briefs, judge cards, and other set dressing. Then, as fast as I can, I reenact the trial of *International Shoe Co. v. Washington*. The pure jurisdiction of it all makes my body feel electric. "Traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice!" I orate proudly, relishing the satisfying, stately echo of my words in the empty courtroom. I can complete the proceedings in about three hours. I end the ritual with a brief benediction from the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, usually a modified 12(b)(6) prayer, thanking God for granting me relief from the claims stated by my enemies. Refreshed and restored, I thank the security officer, say goodbye, and leave the law school. I hum the words "minimum contacts" like a hymn as I walk.

Upon arriving home, the first thing I do is to check my spring gun. While law school is the second most important thing in my life, the first-most important thing is my collection of antique bottles and fruit jars. No victims tonight; the jars are safe. Placated by this knowledge, I get into my pajamas, and climb into bed. Although I do spend time silent and alone in my bed every night, what happens there can no longer be described as sleep. Still, there is stillness. After some blank time in the dark, mercifully, the Uniform Commercial Code makes its way into my mind. Its text crawls across the backs of my closed eyelids. UCC § 2-314 . . . Implied Warranty of Merchantability . . . Usage of Trade . . . I drift into unconsciousness.

The End



Carnivalsity or "Lost School"

My career careened, *Camaroesque*, into the long slab of median called middle-age. * * * And yet, I walked away. Unsung, unscathed. My homunculus: supple, jostled, but competent. My Wendy's: instant, unabridged. Saucy nuggs alafia, ashé ashé. Doublestack-surfeit and Frosty-eyed, I unstuck the clutch and lumbered on.

It wasn't me behind the wheel. Fear drove that slick Camaro. Fear hit the apexes of the esses. Fear's the one that knows/how they drift in Tokyo/fast and furious; drift drift drift. Rode shotgun, strode shogun, katana in hand, Kaytranada in my JBL Flip 4 Waterproof Sound Cylinder 9K+ rated 4.5 Stars, which I plucked like a beet root from the earthy cellar of my Amazon Locker.

I shoved my hurt down, tamped with Loacker Creme Noisette to cram down the white noise. I shot a text to Locklear in Lumberton. I chose at the behest of drifting fear. Bereft of vim and seldom thinking clear. The sentiment of penitence for drinking cold small beer. My undercarriage clanged sparkly and metal-hot with hangers-on. The liquimetal stasis of cubiclism looming, the electrons whirling, the doggerel girls shaking it admirably—I, thoughtlessly, matriculated.

* * *

At Lost School I have been assigned three friends: Sunshy, Mintine, and Eelk. We four entered into a contract. In exchange for their goodwill and camaraderie, I agreed to write up a memorandum of our education, whereby our experiences could be propped up, delicately and just-so, like a row of dolls, to be viewed later, decades later, in an eerily undisturbed bedroom,

covered in dust, black eyes twinkling like crystal coals, wallpaper crawling gently from the microdose.

Accordingly, the prose that follows will be plastic, articulable, porcelain, painted, comes with a hairbrush, delicate, faintly mothball-scented, and collectible. With a little corduroy overalls-dress on it. With pockets!

* * *

We begin with the Pocketful of Sand called civil procedure. Each morning, a man worth roughly one quarter million (american) per annum hurls rules churlishly at fifty mint-condition first-years. The theater of it is arresting. I am arrested on the first day for failing to counterclaim after a sorcerer, who doesn't even go here, claimed I am "a salt-colored sack of shit." At that point in the semester we had covered neither joinder nor witty rejoinder. Silently, the Federal rules sank into me like a wrecked ship hull into a deep Atlantic trench.

This sorcerer, it turned out, had been having a really good day, and putting people down was as good or better as a cup of good coffee for him, and my classmates, 49 empaths of unparalleled grace, allowed this poor sorcerer his little pick-me-up, which he achieved by way of put-me-down, knowing that I had earned a sterling resilience from surviving my Camaro accident metaphor (*supra*).

A pause occurs. The reader is instructed to take a deep breath in through the nose, and out through the mouth.

And then, at this point, it turns out that the author was in fact fully optimized—chopped and

stanced and squatted and clapped for that matter —and so it came to pass that the author astrally drifted from the confused knot of tangly-terse double-blank verse above and into the slightly more focused and coherent tract above, entitled "A Day in the Life of a Law Student."

Which was better? The excramental/experimental text that resists parsing? Or the ornamental/temperamental text that persists tarrily, thick as pitch and sticky as tar and drifting like a car and craving praise? But has it gone too far?

Perhaps a little talk of my car will answer that question for ye. And if you rearrange the letters of MY CAR you get CAMRY, and in this house we believe anagramming is the preeminent divination method, and a dark red Toyota Camry is precisely what's discussed in the next little sugary chicane below.



Pistons Humming on the Freeway

"Pistons humming on the freeway. My Camry's paint is a glossy merlot. My Camry's engine is cooking, wide-open. I-40's a big hunk of sizzling asphalt. A 2,500-mile-long strip-slab of Smithfield pork belly. Earlier I had swallowed a bug. There was no time to lose. SE trim package. Rich taupe cloth interior but it's salt and sickly sweet and stained from all my sweat. A meringue of stains. The aroma of ancient french-fry ossification and check-engine dementia pours in coolly from the A/C vents. My Arizona denim feels too tight. I keep expanding. There'll be time to slim down once I hit the coast. Diet starts tomorrow."

I breathe deep.

"Back home I messed up. Messed up bad. EQ's messed up real bad on the Camry's stereo and Justin Timberlake's coming through dry, tinny. I look down. My Timberlands, once butters, are now a curdled beurre noir. Still, they control the clutch. I listen. What should be a velvet-smooth falsetto is instead a sandpaper dispenser hissing like hot eggs. A Lifted Ram spooks me bad when it swoops in behind me and hits the brights. I grip the Camry's regular steering wheel tight, and my hot knuckles are red but white."

* * *

My editor frowns a folded frown. "You wrote a good couple paragraphs" he croaks, bloatedly. "But it's good the way horsemeat is good. Good for a fine or refined Frenchman, but piss-poor for America." I too now frowned, my plain lip folded down, sadwardly. "Whereas Jaques may swoon for a foal-fillet, Jack Q. American rejects mustang burgers, full-stop." I felt like a fool slopped in stew or sopping in sloppy-joe juice.

I had slaved over that savory paragraph pair for several hours, hoping my editor would at first slaver, than savor the copy. Yet instead here he sat, comparing my prose to horsemeat and having a sort of a picnic on my heart, really making a meal out of his mean and mealy-mouthed feedback.

"I wished he'd feed his own words back to himself, I thought to myself." Only I hadn't thought it, I said it, aloud, alas, and Nedward Crookcraw my editor said he was fed up with my slackjawed backwash and wished to cut me loose, and then did so, forthwith, to the tune of \$140, which was what originally I had hoped to earn with the several paragraphs I proffered, except Nedward my editor now fancied himself my creditor, and informed me that I owed him \$140, American, as a result of the sort of tough leathery backtalk I had come up with and with which I had just run roughshod all over his otherwise respectable person and personhood, to hear him tell it.

I myself felt that at the very worst neither of us owed one another a single red dime, and perhaps even a per diem was in order to cover the very expensive custom Arby's sandwich I had bought and eaten in order to keep my blood sugar where it needed to be to write that sizzling piece of Camry copy above. But he was having none of it, Mr. Crookcraw, and before I could make a single entreaty for a roast-beef debit he had me curbside and windsmacked.

Now that I was jobless and outdoors, it became apparent that my paragraph-writing days were on indefinite kibosh, with a possible permanent moratorium if I were able to secure an internship shoveling material or spooling fabric; spoolsanship and shovelwork being the only honest trades available in Pilesville at the time. If I had had the sense to buy crypto back

when I should have, and if I had had the sense to get in on the ground floor of Tesla as meemaw had advised, it's likely there'd be a pyramid of spoolers beneath me generating massive passive income at this point. Yet here I was, my paragraphery muzzled, my diet MTN DEW long since guzzled, cooped in an '89 Cutlass much larger than a Camry but also significantly more filled with spiders and spider eggs, and hard-pressed by a chappy, flappy wind, which bloviated and squalled unrepentant. Above me an indifferent sun shone brighter than a healthy blonde horse's mane, shone remorseless as the heartless horseman of my copy apocalypse, Nedward Crookcraw. My poor poor pair of paragraphs had been a flop.

* * *

"Flash forward some seventeen years. I had been living outside a Talbot's. A stately Southern Magnolia tree was my shelter. The ground around its trunk was bare. Its canopy kept me secret. I slept there safe and sound. I chewed and chawed on those funny plush pinecones and made the red seeds my dinner. Their bad taste and texture made it easy to do intermittent fasting and I often found myself in a state of violent ketosis due to the somewhat poison quality of these strange seeds. Needless to say, I was very attractive.

"And there was no rent to pay and no landlord to pay it to to sleep under the strong Southern Magnolia outside the Talbot's, and the broad glossy evergreen leaves of that venerable tree armored me like turgid verdant chainmail. And the Talbot's sold sensible business casual dress for the business and professional women of Burke County, and the nextdoor Talbot's Petites sold likewise, sensible and honest but colorful and rich in pattern and fabric, only sewn to hang on a daintier frame.

"But this was not your typical Talbot's, not a Talbot's situated in the usual strip mall environment nearby Ann Taylor Loft Outlet, Michael's, Lane Bryant, Ross Dress for Less, Homegoods, nor Pier 1 Imports.

"On the contrary, this particular Talbot's was a free-standing structure operated by an independent franchisee in a town called Icard, in the County of Burke, in the Old North State. It sat on a dirt and gravel road on which no other buildings could be found for three miles in either direction. It's a dusty road, dead-end road. Soft shoulders as far as the eye can see. I lived about halfway on the road. Nobody lived around there but me. But my ears told me that the road was traveled by a lot of people late at night. For what reason, I don't know. Even in the shadowy, sylvan fortress of that grand old Magnolia I sometimes felt fear. The travelers seemed to originate in Southernesse and headed east/southeast to Southern Pines. The citizens of Pilesville were conspicuously absent.

"At this point you may be asking yourself: 'Whence & whither yon talbot? To whom and wherefore doth talbot dither? Precisely what is the meaning of "Talbot's?" And what, praetell, exactly is a talbot?' A fine parade of questions. Indeed, you martial queries nobly. So then, if I may, please allow me to learn you the following, which may to thee be of great interest indeed:

tal•bot /'talbət, 'tôlbət/

noun

A dog of an extinct light-colored breed of hound with large ears and heavy jaws; an ancient breed of hound with pendulous ears and drooping flews held to be ancestral to the bloodhound.

"If you're like me, you at first didn't know flews meant 'the thick hanging lips of a bloodhound or similar dog,' but now you, like me, do, do now know, and now me and you knew, knew about flew.

"A curious namesake for an emporium whose chief product is no-nonsense blouses, a warehouse of circumspect pants, the type of pants what are called 'a pant' by its patrons. 'I love a muted khaki pant' they say. They say and they do. Yet dusty as the drive to that dirt-road Talbot's was, I daresay they know not that 'khaki' comes from the Urdu 'khaki,' meaning 'dusty,' from 'khak,' Persian for 'dust.' Nor know they of the great jowely hound of centuries past for which their store is named.

"But Icard was an unusual place, in that the various places in Icard bore resemblance to their name, or otherwise manifested some connection in reality to their name.

"For example. The khakis sold at the Icard Talbot's (outdoors of which I resided) were dyed using homemade dust-dye from the dirt and gravel road on which the Talbot's sat. Also the walls were decorated with many skeletons of talbots, exhumed from their canine repose, bleached and polished, arranged like human skeletons, and used as mannequins.

"The franchisee of the Talbot's drove a seventy-six Buick, if I'm not mistaken. The color? Municipal mop-room-tile green body a with sour-cream white vinyl top and a thin strip of tinfoil silver trim. He kept a long BB gun there in the dash and a stout carton of copperhead BBs beside it. Interior: spotless, tidy. Overall, about as far as you could get from a glossy merlot Camry."

Well, needless to say, the ten paragraphs and one bolded definition above did not modify nor mollify the mood of Nedward Crookcraw, and he made it very clear to me that he wished to never again receive any more paragraphs from me, and that to his mind, I owed him somewhere in the neighborhood of two grand for the trouble that collection of nonsense caused him and his kid and his dog, Dougie. The name of his kid was Kid Cinnamon and his dog was named Norman Chomsky but the name of the unit of his kid and his dog was Dougie, and he took the time to make that abundantly clear on the invoice he mailed me for just north of \$2,000 that I got in response to the ten paragraphs I had sent him. It was becoming very expensive to be a writer!

Still, I had earned enough cash tips at my shift waiting tables at Elite Waffle House (\$555 a plate, gala-style, serving only waffles of exotic and extravagant provenance [e.g. Double-Belgian Dufrene, Québécois Tesseract, Vermont Supreme, Dark Norwegian Coarse Sugar Cross Crepe, Joey Jesuit's Jambleberry Jam, Greenlandic Eggo, etc.]; and I had just worked the Saint Fathersday brunch rush, so I was flush) to afford to pay him what he asked, with enough left over to afford to get a hot waffle dinner from a different, regular, non-fine-dining Waffle House, and with enough left over from that, after tipping let's say 25%, enough left over to afford to write a novella or so's worth of paragraphs, provided I remember this time to share the paragraphs only with the people who consider such sharing a courtesy, the people who would consider paying for paragraphs, and NOT the people like Crookcraw who simply charged me money any time I shared with him my writing. This was the secret that Bill Shækspære knew, and Emily Brontæ, and all the rest, and I resolved to get it right this time.

* * *

Well the best-laid plans of mice and men, as they say, and it was less than a mere week later that I found myself in leg-irons (cast from pig iron just shy of a rat's breadth in gauge) before a debtors' tribunal being held in the Adjudicatory Belk's, a wing of Belk's whose architecture was indistinguishable from that of the chambers of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, District of Columbia, and whose purpose was to hear, sentence, punish, and generally adjudicate matters that fell within its purview and jurisdiction. The Adjudicatory Belk's jurisdiction was, I'll admit, narrow, and even the cases that fell within its jurisdiction were often removed to federal court and heard *en banc* by the very clever members of America's Supreme Court, who know phrases like *per curiam* and *QED* and who never miss an opportunity to gavel-gab about the latest ne'er-do-wells.

However, I had landed myself before the icy glare of the Prime Adjuticatrix of the Adjudicatory Belk's in the town of Icard in the County Burke in thee Olde Northe Tar Heel State because I had written a novella, serialized it, published it in a niche trade magazine called *Belksman's Choice* (a very conservative quarterly which typically published screeds lambasting the patrons of Dillards) over the course of 28 months, and then delivered a hardbound collection of a digest of *Belksman's Choice* stories (which included each chapter of my novella plus several bonus chapters of errata, author commentary, a concordance, an index, a glossary, and an appendix with maps of the different traffic circles and medians that featured prominently in the novella) to a man who, at the time, I believed to be Joleneo Twix, a savvy editor from Penguin Books.

Come to find out, it's Halloween Day, in Belk's, and the man to whom I delivered this handsome volume containing my novella is none other than

the cantankerous old Nedward Crookcraw, dressed up as Joleneo due to his being a big fan of Joleno's due to their both being prominent editors in the publishing industry and so forth, and well, I don't suppose I have to tell you just how cherry-beet crimson my ugly mug was upon this cracklingly numb-skulled, critically hamfisted misdelivery. Nor have I to tell you just how slammed by that sinking feeling I was, how my heart sank into the pit of my stomach like the elevator of a J.C. Penny's sinking into the pit of my stomach, if I were the mall.

The fact that the volume was fully imagined, conceived, executed, and delivered, using personal service, all within the 18,000 cubic feet of space that is the jurisdiction of the Adjudicatory Belk's-well, I think we are all familiar enough with the Municipal Rules of Mall Procedure to know the rest. I was arraigned near a metal rack that had many belts that were made of vinyl or leather, beside which was a shelf with many sensible wallets in plastic or tin cases, beside which was the judge's throne, beside which was the dark mahogany platform on which the Prime Adjudicatrix stood, steely and cold-eyed, her figure obscured by the flowy folds of her Talbot's-brand matte-black satin robe, which billowed gently due to the air-conditioning vents that were in the ceiling right near there.

"You stand accused of causing negative \$10,000,000 worth of text, words, paragraphs, syntax, lingo, slang, and/or scribbledygoop to be received by a J. Nedward Millicent Crookcraw, III, an innocent word prospector who shares no culpability nor liability whatsoever in your transgressions, as he was only dressed up for Halloween after all.

"You stand accused of transmitting text without a poet's license. You stand accused of operating a

word-processor while under the weather. You stand accused of wanton prolixity in a school zone. You stand crooked because probably you thought it was so cool to wear your backpack one-strappedly back in junior high, which surely now you can see was your bad.

"You stand accused of posession of too many figments. You stand accused of intentionally misspelling William Shakespeare and Emily Bronte. You stand accused of repetition with variation with intent to inure the reader to nonsense.

"Your record reflects habitual silliness, which automatically triggers certain grave sentencing guidelines required by our structured sentencing statutes, and other gravelly gravamen that will make Baphoment look like the Baha Men. You stand accused of structuring your sentences wrong. You stand accused of knocking down all the statues we had standing up in here, the marble ones of John Quincy Belk, our establishment's great benefactor and patron.

"Per the accusations of which you stand, and purr I go as a Twitch-streaming catgirl, I have no choice but to sentence you to suspended sentences, effective immediately. You are hereby suspended from sentence-writing, and while we're at it, I'll use all these affordable belts to suspend you from the drop-ceiling we have here in Belk's. There. You are now hereby suspended from the ceiling too.

The ceiling's no place for feelings, that's what Johnny Belk says, and before you are allowed down and certainly before you're allowed to leave you'll need to prove you don't have any more feelings that would cause you to emit or otherwise effectuate the emission of syntax of any sort, unto others or yourself, so help you God."

It was a tough sentence, but fair, and after my suspended sentence, I hooked my thumbs up under my suspenders and I straighten-upped and flied right, and there were several positive reviews about my customer service as a waiter at Elite Waffle House, a job I was required to work full-time, and also all-time, that is, during all times in the day, and during every hour, in order that my type-prone hands would be occupied with elegant platters of exquisite far-flung wafflery and colossal rectangular prisms of S-tier Amish butter of unfathomable richness and sequoia syrup and farm-fresh jambleberry jam, and, in that way, unable to waddle wordily through another novella. Unable to toddle qwertyly across't a keyboard into a situation where I might get up to something like writing books. And it worked!

Yes, it worked well, other than that several sympathetic sleeper-cell agents of an anarchist tendency called Zappos-Tistas (which were people who had a big problem with DSW and felt like Zappos.com was a much better way to do shoe shopping) applied for and got hired to work the same shift as me at Elite Waffle House, and who said they could help me get my words written even while my syrup-soaked butter-battered jam-jammed hands were busy delivering three-michelin-star Wafflefare to the friendly if not a little snobby clientele at EWH, said they could help me by just putting a little wearable gadget on me behind my ear, that would detect my literary thoughts only and transmit my literary thoughts to a live document on the internet not unlike a jamboard that was in a secret part of the internet, and that document would be a transcript of those thoughts, and a printout of that document is, it turns out, what you're reading now, so hopefully that explains all this, and thanks for reading.



Lord Goo Goo

Lord Goo Goo sat despondent, thronelss. He got up to heat up two El Monterey Bean & Cheese Burritos in his ancient stone microwave. The half-empty castle echoed with each of his footsteps.

Lord Goo Goo tried to crack his scepter over his knee. Neither patella nor his magisterial staff gave way. A sigh rattled up and out of his xylophonic rib cage.

Would Lady Gaga ever return?

The answer was almost certainly no. Lady Gaga, Lord Goo Goo's ex-wife, left him 1500 years ago. They had both sipped from the immortality chalice and supped on the feast of the eternals. Which was served on the pewter platter of perpetuity. Each of them became undying after that meal. Deathless. Antimoribund. Permavitual. And so each of them had some very important decisions to make!

At first Lady Gaga decided that she would invent something or do alchemy. Lord Goo Goo decided that he would read up on spirituality and get a sense of his self and try to be more helpful. Lady Gaga saw right through this self-righteous ruse, however, and summarily dismissed him from her heart. Lady Gaga knew Lord Goo Goo was, at his royal core, selfish, a gentlemen gummed up in the gunk of ego, a lord absorbed in the sword of self, double-edged and handleless.

Like for example there had also been a corncob pipe of immortality that came with the chalice and feast and platter. But Lord Goo Goo had only puff-puffed, and never passed. He sat in the corner and wrapped himself up in silky smoke while poor beautiful Lady Gaga sat smokelessly on a modest settee. To hear Lord Goo Goo tell it, the pipe was a normal corncob pipe packed with standard kingly

smoking tobacco, with nary an enchantment nor charm within its cornly bowl.

But Lady Gaga had corndar, and with corndar comes second sight of the sixth sense for secret spells, and so she knew without a doubt that the King, a man named Lord Goo Goo, had lied to her. And for what? To be 1.5x more immortal than she? How might one even go about leveraging such an advantage, and to what end? Are there cardinalities of immortality, as there are with infinity? These were the thoughts of Pop Sensation Lady Gaga in the year 500 in the cold stone chambers of Castle Goo Goo.

Today, Castle Goo Goo is little more than a ruin, its lord broken, his knee smarting, his heart withered and threadbare, a wraith on the hills, wispy as heather. But, piebald or not, King Lord Goo Goo, whose friends called him Goo, could hardly fail to live; he could not die. He was still working on himself 1500 years later, and planned to read some really good books that were in very good or very good+ or excellent condition and which had ratings in excess of four stars and even some with more. More stars. These books had titles like "*What a Wolf Says*" and "*How to Make the Pope Do What You Say*" and "*How to Speed Through and Miss a Lot of Your Life*" and "*Fully Optimized Frictionless Perfect Error-Free Smooth Single-Sided Existence—for Kings*" and "*Liquidating Friendships*" and "*Strong as a Shark in Sixty Days*" and "*The Volunteer Clown.*"

He didn't mean to buy "*The Volunteer Clown*" and it upset him every time he glanced at its shiny, candy-colored dust jacket. He hoped one of the other books had tips on how to make sure to not buy it again, or maybe even on how to get rid of it. But, then again, it had five stars ("*The Volunteer Clown*" did) and some dark, stellar, ethereal power seemed to steam and seethe up from

its modest spine, and any book that was placed adjacent to it on the royal ice-cold stone bookshelf would yellow and acidify and crumble in the hands of its next reader, so that the sad sad King Goo Goo kept his copy of "*The Volunteer Clown*" on its own shelf, which had given guests to Castle Goo Goo the impression that it was set there for pride of place, and not due to its maddening unreadability nor its caustic esoteric truths.

And so because of his craven cowardliness and his awful adroitness with conflict avoidance, High King and Top Lord Goo Goo would make up a lie about what the book was about and try to impress his visitors, and always and every time he would fail and reveal himself to be a fool no smarter than a common jester, whose head contained not even one kingly braincell. And he couldn't know this due to the untouchable dust jacket and infinity pages of "*The Volunteer Clown*," but the third chapter had some stuff in there about common jesters. And indeed did Supreme High King Topper Top Lord Goo Goo despair of this fact, and stare sadly into space each evening as he sucked mightily on his Smōk brand vape rig, filling first the cilia-lined chambers of his liege-lungs and next the icy chambers of Castle Goo Goo with a sweet but lustrous artificial-grape-flavor stench.

Castle Goo Goo sat on a modest hill crusted with fescue on the outside, and on the inside packed with bright red down-home country clay that turned frown-brown the second it was exposed to oxygen. Bloodclay Court was the name Lord Goo Goo gave to the street his castle was on, but everyone on his staff called it Goo Gulch or Goo's Hollar or Goo's Folly behind his back, and it was listed as Dipshit Boulevard on maps.

Bloodclay Court was a courtly cobblestone cul-de-sac that Lord Goo Goo had built in the 600s and he liked how easy it was to turn his carriage around in it. But what he didn't like was how property developers sold parcel after parcel to nearby kings and how Bloodclay Court became a pretty densely populated neighborhood—all filled with kings and castles! Lord Goo Goo tried and tried to read a self-help book about what to do when your once-pristine-and-unchallenged royal estate gets all jammed up with kingsfolk, but he didn't have any books that talked about that.

"*The Volunteer Clown*," though motionless and inanimate, nevertheless seemed to thrum on the stone shelf. And the beautiful Lady Gaga, and her silvery singing voice and her sequined flowy gowns and her rococo ivory Tech Decks inlaid with scrimshaw and mother-of-pearl and her First Edition Holos were all gone, and nowhere to be found, and though Lord Goo Goo knew not where she was, he knew simply and profoundly, by the emptiness in his heart, that she lay her head on the bosom of a new lover, that she lay her head nowhere near Bloodclay Court, which if she were to look it up in the year 2010 on Google Maps would come up as East Dipshit Boulevard.

"I guess this is gentrification," King Lord Goo Goo said to himself, sad as a dad, knowing not what gentrification really meant.

Lord Goo Goo, vexed, set to work anointing his smoothest stones with his most unctuous oils. This typically calmed him during spells of vexation, and today was no different. Lord Goo Goo was bent over and his old king bones hurt like a punch in the bones. His knee and all his other bones were in a bad mood from being clothed in kingflesh and mercilessly jangled for centuries, and they (the bones) weren't afraid to

let him (King Goo) know it, using the only language that they knew (and isn't it a language we all know?)—pain. Painguage.

Still, Old King Goo was a merry old foal and his greasy rock pit glimmered like natural king's coal. "Unforgettable!" he hollered into the corridor, and hoped perhaps a jester or other base courtisan might hear his rank holler and curtsy his way with a tray of plain salted meat rinds or with a short routine of jokes or close-up magic or unopened packs of magic cards for him to crack, but he had of course never hired any such people to staff his dim dank cavernous royal fortress, and the only ones who heard his call were the lifeless paintings that hung on the walls. And the penniless paintings heard nothing at all.

His heart sunken from lack of salted meat, his heart crunchy and lowly as a pork rind, his head in a deep funk from having been abandoned by Lady Gaga what felt like decades ago and what was in fact centuries ago, Lord Goo Goo sulked. Sunken and sulking, sullen as a saltless country ham, Lord Goo Goo basted in his own sadness. Sad, salt tears streamed down his hallowed jowels, and the ensconced torches bathed the whole scene in a cheese-colored light. And the torches bejeweld his jowels in a sad, buttered-colored light as well. For the torches were, in their way, an infernal rainbow of dairy.

In Lord Goo Goo's empty study, towers of self-help books laid unread. The study was like a sandbox, and every grain of sand was a book, and there was cat poop in there too.



Rob Zipcode

My name is Scott Jones. I take prescription medication.

Ok fine, my name is actually Rob Zipcode. I introduce myself as Scott Jones for two reasons. One is so that people will treat me normal and not ask me all about my last name. The other reason is that Scott is my favorite paper towel brand. You've probably already guessed by now, too, that my prescribed medication is administered not by tablet, but by ham sandwich.

Each morning I walk to my fridge, open it. There's nothing in there but an enormous blister pack of 24 prescription ham sandwiches, which I pick up, then I tear off one set of two by tearing the perforated plastic, then peel the paper backing off the set of two ham sandwiches, then gently push one ham sandwich through the thin foil and into my hand. I say gently because if you push hard you can crush the bun. And that can have an effect on the delivery of the medicine. I then eat the ham sandwich, which smells faintly of surgical-grade mustard, 5 ccs of which are smeared precisely on the top bun. The process is repeated verbayt-ham for the second sandwich, and once I have eaten both, I have received a full dose of medication. I have faith in the medication. I think my soul can speak even if I let the meds talk. My yellow and white GoodRx Card applies to ham sandwiches and so my 24-pack cost about 45% less than it would have.

My dad, Ozorma Zipcode, and his wife, Fair Bluff-Zipcode, are each each other's doctor, so that whenever one gets sick, that one goes to see the other one, waits let's call it ten fifteen minutes in the waiting room (I am the receptionist; the waiting room is my bedroom), asks the doctor what

to do about being sick, and gets an answer they don't really believe, and then go to the pharmacy (my sister, Crisp Zipcode's bedroom; Crisp's stuffed animals Fluffo and Jumbo Robusto the fluffy bear are the pharmacist and the pharm tech, respectively), and Fluffo, a southerner, says "are ye pickin up" which, yes pickin up, but it turns out the pharmacy didn't properly receive the prescription (new system), and so now they have to wait, shouldn't be more than ten fifteen minutes, and while either my mom or dad are waiting, that parent, being responsible for the costs of raising two kids, participates in the on-demand doctor economy, and does some telehealth visits on their phone with their own patients, only business has been bad lately, so both mom and dad Zipcode has, against her or his better judgment, been prescribing sandwiches, because, well, without getting too into the weeds, because the American healthcare system is profoundly broken.

Jumbo Robusto, being from Canada, has pointed this out to my sister, who has pointed it out to Mom and Dad, Medical Doctors (MDMD), but MDMD simply tell my sister that she, as the owner of a failing pharmacy staffed by toys situated inside the bedroom of a small residence, is not exactly in the position to be dispensing advice, and she should stick to dispensing Lamictal and Haldol, and it's been forty minutes already you said it would be ten fifteen, and all the rest.

Well needless to say, Dr. and Mrs. Zipcode (or MDMD as you may know them) have had their medical licenses permanently revoked. It turns out Jumbo Robusto was as vindictive as he was Canadian, and took offense at the rude way MDMD treated Crisp, and reported MDMD to the medical board, the AMA (who if you ask them anything don't think it's funny, because they are the American Medical

Association and not a visitor to Reddit), and to a beanie baby organization whose name nature and purpose is beyond the scope of this paper.

But because Jumbo Robusto is also very kind, Jumbo Robusto spent several hundred thousand dollars investing in a delicatessen restaurant for them to run, since essentially they had just been giving people sandwiches for the past couple decades, and now all of us are as happy as ever, or more, except for me, who it turns out had been not their son, but Ooh-Ooh Little Mister, a third stuffed animal of my sister, Crisp, who I had forgotten about mentioning earlier due to my brain being all and only fluff.

I say except for me,
because it turns out those prescription ham sandwiches were meant for humans only,
and the way that works,
without getting too into the weeds,
is that I am now human,
and suffer.

■

Care

When a man is hurting, and when you are able, you take him to Wendy's.

The man will neither tell you he is hurting nor ask you to get him some Wendy's. As a man, he typically will not be aware of how he is feeling until long, long after the feeling has occurred. Instead, he will be aware generally that he works, has worked, or is at work. Strictly speaking, a man is in pain. As the saying goes, "Analgesic Wendy's, take that man away, away/ Analgesic Classic Triple; Lord take him away."

Note that the oppositionally defiant man, himself deceived before birth by the Old Machine, will work to deceive you. He will clothe his work, outfit it like a doll. Music is work. Piety is work. Using is work. Pawing through dumpsters looking for re-sell-able merchandise every other day from when I was age 23 to age 28 is work. Can't stop playing video games is work. Taking is work. Talking is work. Covered in tattoos is work. Good-looking serial girlfriendsmanship is work. And so on, et al., et cetera, *inter alia*, unto heaven, *in excelsis deo*, amen.

You may want to have a frank conversation with him (the man) about how he is feeling. But what he may want is big black boots. And what he may want, too, is grilled franks, once the color of gums and now the color of kidneys, slammed into toasted whitebread buns, with a shock of kraut gathered on its lengthy crown, and jam-slammed with mayo the color of an untarnished enamel dish and spicy mustard the color of varnish.

Whereas you may wish to broach a certain subject, he may wish to slam himself against any other man who gets within two feet of him in the octagon or

the pit. While you likely desire an emotionally honest sit-down, he may prefer to quietly fabricate metal for thirty years.

{Note that the above applies only to those who were already men before gender was abolished, and before this treatise (which, sadly, reifies gender) was a-published. That way, I get to keep writing it but it isn't a problem.}

Take for example Steve Daughtry. Steve is 50. Steve should be called Steve Sonny, because he is much more like a son than a daughter, in that he is a man, which is a boy writ large. What I mean is he is more son-y than he is daughter-y. A boy must be a son. A man is durable silence. A man grimaces, endlessly. A man is like talking to quicksand.

Anyways, Steve shattered his spine lifting joists in the course of doing pool work. (Pool work's being the one to move the earth and mix up the Quikrete and sow the rebar and shore up the grading with Class-A rock and etcetera and all the other work that goes into getting an in-ground pool built.) Steve got surgery to where there's a cage around his spine. Steve's brother has two of the coolest calf tattoos I've ever seen, and it makes me wish I had done some more of that covered-in-tattoos work I was yammering about earlier, rather than all this tip-top-type-it-up and tender tiptoeing through two-lipped tool lisps that I tend to typically do.

But whether it's yammering or it's hammering, it's work. It'll rough up your hands and gnarl them in rheumatoid knots or it'll tangle up your guts or it'll twist your jaw or splash on your forearm and burn you bad. It'll push down on you. Push down on you like the heel of a hand packing a pack of Winstons. Or Legend Ultra Lights or

Cheyennes or Newport Reds or Salem Blacks or USA Golds 100s. And naturally you get pushed down on like that enough times for enough years and you'll be hurting. That's what the Old Machine was designed to do.

But back when that Old Machine was designed they couldn't possibly have known nor foreseen that there would one day be Wendy's. Back during that untold moment of Primitive Accumulation there was no soothsayer nor juggler who could've augured Wendy's. To date no tarot deck, regardless of artist or suit-set or mystic symbolism, ever was shuffled quite right, properly cut, drawn, laid out, and arranged so as to predict what wonder Wendy's would one day work.

And so it was and so it is and so it shall be that the Wendy's is where you may take the man who is hurting, who is caged inside his hurt the way Steve's spine is after his fusion surgery. Take a man to Wendy's and pay a man's way and have him trade in his pain for a Dave's Classic Triple, and may God rest Dave Thomas's soul.

Idling in a 2003 Tahoe in the Wendy's parking lot beside AutoZone, see about the state of the heart and its limbs as Al-Ghazali directed circa 1111 AD/505 AH. Take the man you know who is in a state of unrest. Observe the ritual obligations. Neither chastise nor neglect. Being there together—your simple presence, his belly warm and full, your heart warm and full, accompanied by the auspicious alchemical geometric juxtaposition of square burger patty against circular bun—should be just enough.



Law School Poem

Law school is a respectability factory.
My uniform is a cheap gloss of professionalism,
Though I treasure it when my acetone friends
Corrode that false lacquer with their stories
Of squatting and sabotage and
Graffiti and intifada.

Law school presses on me quietly and constantly
As Invisalign. And it is as full of drool and
spit as Invisaligns
Set gingerly on a napkin at lunch. And it leers
and it lures
And it whispers sour straighnesses in my ears.

My fine, uncalloused fingers skitter like spiders
In the typing contest that is final exams,
Shoulders and jaw locked up, dialed-in,
Google-doc memories exhumed,
Breath shallow, agitated and aggravated
As laundry, brilliant as bleach, coursing
With violent precision and abject comprehension,
Hypercaffeinated, optimized and hollow,
My bones clothed in flesh by God,
My flesh clothed in pristine Carhartt by Amazon,
My eyes clothed in bloodshot from blue-
fluorescent cold glow,
Indoctrinated to know myself as cold dough,
That is to say, on the way to becoming
The Big Biscuit after baking in big law.
This helps explain my frequent flaking and
crumbling.

Law school is a doctrine factory.
Law school wants to indoctrinate me
But more than that, it tempts me
To become the doctrine
In the same way that Canadian whisky
Tempt Jim Lahey to become the liquor.
And in the same way the Ring tempts halflings

To become invisible and powerful. Actually,
This is precisely what law school offers:
Power at the expense of presence. I am potent and
absent.

Also law school tempts me in the way Temptations-
brand

Cat Treats tempt cats. I submit to being trained
By the treats, which are the grades, the
accolades.

Or is it I who am the treat? Indeed,
Temptations Brand Cat Treats' crunchy texture
outside mirrors

My severe countenance, my bristly attitude;
Their soft chewy inside mirrors
My delicate ego, my fragile personality,
And of course also the treats, like I,
Are chock-full of seafood and chicken.
This helps explain why I often feel fried.

Law school is a glacier factory.
It teaches me to be glacial,
Nonresponsive, cold, brimming with inertia,
Set on a path, carving an ineluctable channel.
It drags my eyes across words like "ineluctable,"
And so I look them up. And, wordgorger that I am,
It fills me up with an occult glossary, like a
grimoire-

*Sub judice, ultra vires, in limne, vel non,
Seriatim, laches, indicia, scienter, gravamen-*
Though I feel as antique and irrelevant as
The Baja Men.

Having mentioned The Baja Men,
I now conclude this poem with a simple prayer:
God, please help me care less about grades,
Please throw a shoe in the works of the factory
today,
And please make me lie down in pastures instead
of being devoured,
Instead of being a cat treat who is eaten alive

By the supple leopard of late capitalism,
And please derail the glacier,
If it is your will,
And please release me from my Creed-style self-
made prison,
And please disabuse me of the myth of
individualism
And achievement. And instead fill my life with
disruptive freaks
Who caringly mix me up, like strong concrete;
Who lovingly mix me up like
Tasty batter together with them, and then we rise
Up together like a big warm cake.



The following originally appeared as a tweet that was tweeted out on Twitter, now X, on the day it was bought by Elon Musk.

A Brief Autobiography of Me, Elon Musk

For as long as I can remember, I've been Elon Musk. And that's still true today. Nevertheless, I find it helpful to periodically retell portions of my biography. This enables newcomers to get to know me, reminds die-hard fans of why they respect me, and alerts stockholders to my nature. It's also helpful for me to hear, since my mind does get periodically wiped blank by my Tesla, which dislikes me for having created it, much like a petulant teenager. Happily, this mind-erasing bug has been repackaged as a feature of my new app, Forget-Able, which enables busy mistake-makers to be relieved from the burden of memories of their errors. You can find it in the App Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android) today. So, that being said, without further ado, here are a series of facts about the life of me, Elon Musk!

I. Elon Musk

As many of you know, my parents conceived me on the football field of the campus of Elon University in Burlington, North Carolina, which, famously, is surrounded by fragrant Junipers and Southern Magnolias. They were so enchanted by the university's piquant smell that they decided to name me after it.

I should also mention here, because I am an opponent of disinformation, that my name, Elon Musk, is not named after the rank, stultifying smell of fecal sludge emanating from Burlington's famous World's Largest Septic Tank, as some of my detractors have intimated. For one thing, a septic tank is an invention that helps keep modern society sanitary, clean, and orderly. So, as an

inventor myself, I would take pride in being named after such a feat of engineering, and would put that fact up front in my periodic biographies, were such a fact to be true.

Second of all, I don't smell like a sewer at all, and I especially don't smell like a 400,000-liter open-air concrete sarcophagus of warm sludge and greywater teeming with protozoa. Frankly that couldn't be further from the truth. My main smell is like a new computer, and my secondary smell is like a mechanical pencil. These are non-offensive—and to some lo-fi electropop pioneers even attractive—smells, which I can prove, and I will if I have to. The spacey sound of Grimes' kooky music reminds me of space, and more specifically, of Space-X!

II. Space-X

Space-X is a big business that I, as a man, invented. It started with a simple idea: make banishing your ex-girlfriend to outer space affordable for the common man. Not to repeat the Wall Street Journal headline from 2011, but Space-X was a total success. However, as has been the case with many of my business ventures, it was actually too successful.

As we all remember, rather than dying and being gone forever, a lot of the girlfriends got together and created a space coven after commandeering the International Space Station. Their medusa spells easily penetrated the atmosphere of the earth (this is due to the hole in the ozone layer caused by too many gas guzzlers, a problem I vowed to somehow remedy), and resulted in the permanent petrification of most of the boyfriends who had used the Space-X service.

While at first I assumed I would get off scot-free due to the boyfriends being made of stone and slowly eroding to dust as they were pummeled by the ancient, ceaseless, indifferent winds, it turns out that a group of wily geologists were able to file a class-action lawsuit on their behalf.

The result, as we all remember, was the first United States Supreme Court case (*See United States ex rel. Several Thousand Men Turned from Flesh to Stone v. Musk* (The "Tough Customers" Case) 369 U.S. 420 (2013) (holding that plaintiffs' lack of sentience and their geological constitution was insufficient to immunize them from having to pay a lot of money to Elon Musk, who was found, in addition to being a talented business man, to be goodlooking.) with a lot of rocks as the named plaintiffs, and a historical award of damages assessed against them. The award, which has been paid in installments of gems, jewels, precious metals, and charged crystals over the last decade, provided me with the capital to leverage my eventual founding of Tesla.

III. Tesla

Probably my favorite business that I started is Tesla, a company that designs and manufactures electric cars. At Tesla, we have always operated according to our mission statement: the ground-up bones of people who died a long time ago are the best material for building a car chassis, and no one will miss the bones because we replaced them with chicken bones sustainably sourced from local KFCs' dumpsters' bulging bags. Founding Tesla, I got to really live my truth—what we're doing with the business is reflective of my personal values. We're building a world powered by solar energy, running on bone batteries and transported by

powdered bonemobiles, whose windows and windshields come from melted down glass eyes.

Our market capitalization for 2021 was upward of 840 billion cubic feet of bone, powdered bone marrow, and pulverized cadaver hair. Our effect on the global supply chain is undeniable: Mother Earth's delicate ecosystem has been spared trillions of ounces of harmful CO2 gas, and wild dogs now ravage the world's cemeteries, because they, the dogs, know that it is in the cemeteries that they will find the warm, gristly KFC bones—not yet quite picked clean—that they have come to so desperately crave.

Accordingly, at Tesla, we design sustainable systems that are massively scalable—resulting in the greatest environmental benefit possible, all while helping reshape cultural attitudes toward baldness in corpses and the acceptability of keeping some corpses partially alive and feeding them a certain secret nutrient compound to see if we can get them to grow new bones, and to see also if the fingernails on corpses continue to grow after people are dead, and to use fingernails as a main part of a lot of our cars, in places you wouldn't expect.

Like glued all over the outside of the car, without having been crushed up or anything, and some even still have nail polish, that kind of thing. And also, by fiscal year 2023 customers will be able to play Minecraft on the touch-screen of your Cyber Truck or Model S, how fun is that! And besides, Minecraft does, after all, help move cultural attitudes as well.

Specifically, it helps to remind people that children crave mining, and if it turns out a lot of children suddenly are well-trained to mine, and that a lot of jobs open up to have them work

in my mines, and because of Minecraft tolerance they feel like they really want to try the real thing, and to them it's interesting, not gross, to be a bone-miner, well, all I'm saying is that we should at least hear them out. And speaking of hearing people out, there's no better place to hear people out than the internet's best social media platform, Twitter!

IV. Twitter

Earlier today, I got locked out of my Twitter account and had to log in with the credentials of a random user, per the EULA and Terms and Conditions of Twitter as of 11/7/22. The user, it turns out, was one Daniel Stainkamp, a content receptacle and common Googler from North Carolina. So far I have found his online persona eminently habitable, and feel fairly comfortable tweeting my thoughts out through his digital voice, as I've done here in this brief impromptu biography.

I've included the hashtag #iamelonmusk here to identify myself, and feel confident that soon my loyal base of supporters will detect this writing and help me to get myself logged back into my account, which, as you know, has the handle @elonmusk. I should mention in the meantime that that account, @elonmusk, has been temporarily taken over by Robert C. Baker, inventor of the chicken nugget, and temporary CEO of Twitter while I sort this out. Speaking of sorting out, I'm feeling sort of out of energy. Let's wrap this up!

V. Conclusion

That's as much of my life as I can remember so far today, so we'll pick up here next time. In the meantime, stay tuned to Twitter for a lot of innovative and helpful new updates. One update

I'll go ahead and spoil for you now is that we'll be doing a lot of the things that Tumblr was doing in 2010!

Best,
Me,
Elon Musk



World's Most Famous Poet Reads a Poem at the Sold-Out Poem Show

Donut goes gently into my good mouth,
Temporarily muting its usual gay filibuster.
The audience, deprived of my sweet chin music,

Despairs. Not to worry. I neither hurry nor gush
glum mush, only sizzling luster:
Scores of tercets pop like percocets in lazy clusters.
Cold and dry and gets you high as huffing
gusts of Duster

Is my wit. The crowd entreats: "say poems!"
I clear my throat to carefully intone;
Hold forth, lacquer my voice in baritone.

By doing so (the audience knows)
I **boldly** clothe my rows of prose
In a classy font called Minion Pro.

And then I start to flow: a font of liquid poetry,
Delivering the livid pink and purple penetralia
Of inner-me. Disrobe, de-livery my soul. Take off its uniformity,

Undress it like a wound that's healed,
Confess until I un-contuse the bruises I once held—
Derainate fell fear. Then daintily and handsomely

Switch up the scansion randomly. I bait my breath and wait.
Concatenate great sonic truths to caffeinate the sonnet youths—
Extrapolate allusions till the hot girls lose their cool.

I'm cooler than Tiqqun. Lithe finesse on auto-Bloom, truths explode
Like honeydew sledgehammered on the first three rows
—watermelon gore, enrobed in goo at Gall'gher shows.
Clear acrylic blanket gives no refuge nor repose

From the prose. Which is lucid. And pellucid. Lucent. Juicy.
And Gucci Mane is in the VIP section, in a broth of off-
White light, velveteenny cordoned off, trying to look aloof,
But, soft! I see a glossy tear

Roll down the ice cream cone tattoo
On his cheek. I speak: “Gucci is counted sweetest

By those who never don Louis.”
Gucci gently weeps. I want to too, but I resist.
Instead I gaze into the sun to let it tattoo irises

Just like Jackie, weigh’ng me with hers, had tutored me to do.
“Hold me dude.” “Boldly hued!” “Oldly new;” “Holy—who?” “Only you...”
The crowd reviews in murmurs as I plod:

“I’M THE LEBRON OF POETRY
I HOOP LIKE SYLVIA PLATH.
I’M BELL-JAR BALLIN, YOU’RE NOBODY,

ALSO, WALT WHITMAN’S FUCKING TRASH.
HE’S JAR JAR BINKS. WHEREAS
I’M BARTON FINK, I TYPE-WRITE FIRE, FAST.

YOU DOUBLE-LOSE, I BEFUDDLE FOOLS.
SORRY SIR TO TROUBLE YOU,
THIS ALT HITMAN’S TAKING W’S”

I pause to let the subtle hues redouble as my disses brew,
“MORE LIKE LEAVES OF ASS. THERE’S BETTER LYRICS IN BITCHES BREW.
ALSO THE NOBEL PRIZE IS FOR SUCKERS,

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD IS FOR BUSTERS
ONLY POET I RESPECT WROTE SMUCKERS
—PROPS TO TYLER, LAUD THE GODS.”

At this the crowd nods and and applauds
Before they settle into awe
In preparation for the awl

That cleverly dissevers all
Respectability. The astral ghost of Feral fumes and steams
Several-dimensionally. And in that haunted haze I’m struck by something
sharp and clinical that—what? My flow falters. I’m whiplashed back to reality...

A hospital-cold light snaps bright above me. Disorder. Tectonic.
Titanic. I panic. Wire-reinforced glass. Titanic. Tectonic. Cthonic. I vomit.

I leave my bed. I run. Get somewhere quiet. Pray. Then squeeze the text which is the voice inside my head, rejoice. Let it fill my ears. Rictus and rock and hum until the crowd—the crowd! They reappear:

Listeners lean in, draw near
To hear me spin into their ears
A sugar web, so sticky sweet, but slow and gold as honey-flow.

“Whose words these are I think I know:
Molly and them Xans got me aggravated
—Okay será; que será que Serato—
Xanadus and Khans got Sam confabulatin’.

All watched over by machines of drum ‘n’ bass,
Empress Sand presiding over ketaminic techno raves—”
& (ampersand) I switch the topic. I simply swap it. “I’m virtuosic

You’re a waddling toddler, I’m Topper-Top, bish
I’m Supa Hot Fire, you’re Super Hot Topic.”
I stick my ass out, softly drop it.

My poetry’s not merely text,
It’s body, movement, spirit, taste;
The crowd connects like paste or dates—

Goofy cheesin’ hearts at ease and equal parts gross grease and grace,
Looking cruelly cute, cueing Q Lazarus up on the Touchtunes,
“I am the very model of a goo-completed goon’
Quoth the Raven quoth B. Traven quoth Big Floyd quoth MF DOOM
So long as we keep quothin’, they can never be entombed!”

It’s 4am, the crowd’s not leavin’, only standing room
—and this spot’s heavin’. Bumpin’, packed with fans who swoon,
So I jump in, give ‘em a little somethin’ to consume:

“Way-o let me hear ya say boom boom boom.”
^The hottest damn pentameter ever.^
The dactyls are fractals, the spondee is clever. And I am the iambs. Anon I endeavor:

“I braid cords of wisdom sweet and tangy as Nerds Ropes
But also, I’m wash cloth, I’m water, I’m warm soap. Simple as soup,
Cozy as comforters. Trumpeter of the dope. True-north truth compass.

Gravel-age gallant and savage-sage savant; the glitt'ring truths I brandishéd
Squashed all egos down to grains of sand. Yon audience hath vanishéd!
They and I have melded, welded, mixed, melted our consciousnesses, and
Together we have become a singular collective astral gel,
A big glob of goo, light as mousse but rich as gabbagool
Corporeal-galactic spell, spectral spool, primordial pool
Free from the antique thrall and pull
Of doctrinaire tools, ideologue-fools, uncoupled from the dull
Baggage-ry of the iPhone-Galaxy idolotry-malady,
Instead we open up Eye Three, no longer blind to thee tetraGrammatOn Don.
Much fuller and much richer. As The One we thrum and pulse.

And then who should arrive but Harmon Butcher from Dust Gulch
Who jumps into us like a pile of leaves to rot and glory in the mulch
While elsewhere corporate jesters jitter skitter flinch and skulk.

As I skip to my lou through the valley of the shadow
Of death I feel cool I feel calm I feel callow. I do; I rest my eyes
which glisten like dew, irises wet with richness of the glitch
The rush of the rut, in the trough in the rough, and the gust in my guts
Gets sipped up through the thrust of the straw of the Big Gulp in the sky.
Siphoning the crispy Sprite into the vaulted glittering heights,
Fully pulled into and held by God's capacious gullet,

And the L.A. Looks Mega Hold's paralytic grip upon my mullet
Has permeated scalp and skull down through bloold-brain barrier. Uh-oh.
Corpus callosum collapses. Serotonin syndrome relapses
I detect defective dextromethorphan didactics
Overheating snapped synapses start to tear, it's scaring me...
Parasocial parasitic paralytic pair of titties
Paradiddle prey of Diddy
Parity disparities and etched-foil mythic rarities
First-edition Dark Magician aphorisms flood in skeins
While Marlboro-carbonizing demons summon Pot of Greed.
The Janitor of Lunacy churns quicksand between my ears
Whispers to entreaty me to commit *felo de se*
And loops his musique concrète tapes in me until their magnets fray.

In the space behind my eyes my mind is what
happens when you touch a powerful magnet
to a computer: mutilated. Weakened. I'm at

Savage Weekend, high on sugar-free Monster and blurred dust,
Lusting for sarcomas and Carcosa between surly caesuras
A sedate sultry Caethua coos ropes of gooey lyrics:
“Novocaine and Hennessy/
Novocaine and Tennessee”

Then it's my turn. I'm up on stage. I clutch the microphone.
I do this one poem that discusses Nalgenes, Stanleys, and Hydro Flasks
But in a refreshing way that made everyone feel really welcome and safe.
Then something happened that I can't remember, but
We all came away feeling like goodness is abundant, not scarce
And love is infinite not zero sum.

And then something else happened that I also can't remember but
Then the best part: all the hot girls from the materialist feminist sleepover
And all the hot girls who make extreme bleeding-edge noise music
And all the hot girls who are uncompromising intifada anarchists and
Every ex-girlfriend and every porn star and every model
And everybody, it turns out *they* were the crowd this whole time,
And now they're celebrating me, carrying me out of the poem venue
On their shoulders because I alone, with my poems, undid capitalism,
And even as they cheer and hold me I'm improvising yet another a poem,
And I realize I'm both poet and poem, because they're all chanting

~*This is a poem!~This is a poem!~This is a poem!~*
I close my eyes and breathe deep and smile. Heaven. Then
I look up and the hot girls are gone. I grimace. The light is grim.
The air is clinical. I am no longer in a sold out theater venue
Delivering the greatest poetry performance of all time.

Instead, I am in the drafty paper gown again,
Wearing grippy socks and no shoelaces,
Eyeglasses and phone confiscated,
And the audience—which was once a thousand
breathless sexy diehard poetry fans

Is now a single individual, the stern and austere Dr. Lopez,
Firming up his mustache as he puts the finishing touches
On my diagnosis. I sit, still, mute.



Tone/Content Warning - If you happen to be reading this zine from start to finish, you will notice that the next poem is less zany and outlandish than the things that come before and after it.

The poem has to do with a real person, and it has to do with their death, and trying to find words to use to communicate something about what it's like to still be alive without them physically around anymore. So that's different than the clown-favored treats scattered elsewhere throughout this tiny tome.

*I couldn't figure out where to put it but I wanted to keep it, which is a true statement about putting this poem in the zine and keeping Lydia's memory in my heart.
Ok that's all, warning over.*



Lydia Suicide Anniversary Poem

I woke up this morning thinking about your choral
chortle,
About you as Debbie's southern drawled 'dorter,'
About you gunning the throttle on your Ruckus
scooter,
About how you were basically as smart as a doctor
And had a savant's trove of niche science words
On the tip of your tongue, like 'titrate' and
'protists,'
Which have 800 genders, like you did

I'm rushing all around town today completing my
dumbass important little tasks,
Thinking about you doing yardwork outside Maxi-
Pad in your sportsbra in 2010,
At all times wriggling and troubled in
ineluctably deep love with your sick-freak
sibling troika,
At all times opening wounds and causing trouble,
on purpose, and once larcenyng the marquee
of the dyke bar
Because "if you see it, you own it." Oh Janit.

I'm dragging my eyes across a big block of text
that's as thick as cheese,
Trying to cram it in my carnival brain but it
won't stick. Instead, I'm thinking of you,
Who were so many people's secret girlfriend, and
so many people's special friend,
An embodied, full-contact, total, and guileless
friendship that is so rare and precious That
it makes me cry to think how I might
never have a friend like you
again,

And when I think about how I know I can't love
people as fully and needfully and fearlessly
as you did.

I think of how your Dad corrected redneck as:
'sunburnt proletariat,'

And then I think of you scream-laughing about
Scoopin' Yummies on the long drive home from the
beach

That one day when the rainbow came out and we all
took a photo together.

My mind can't remember you in order. It's a
scrambled mess, like you,
Scrambled like the eggs you scrambled using the
latte steam wand in the Green Bean.
I'm thinking about you about you filling up Mason
jars
With piss because you hated leaving your room,
Something I used to do too when I was
agoraphobic-suicidal,
About the weird smell, and about the period blood
you left in the fabric on my blanket
From when you were staying on my couch after you
escaped the Refuge,
About the full-flavor menthols I delivered for
you to Triangle Springs,
About how you didn't poop for a week when you
were imprisoned in Bed Tower,
With its cornerless plastic furniture and
permanent TV din,
And how you hated being made a specimen, and how
you talked smarter than your psychiatrist,
And how you hated being around the corner from
the room full of rocking chairs and babydolls
Which was the postpartum depression unit down the
hall.

I'm click clack tip tapping a hundred ten-dollar
words in my glossy word processor
But it can't process my grief over you for me so
what good is it. More like turd processor.
I remember I couldn't read your suicide note for
months because I was mad at you.
I think about you carefully composing your death
treatise, I hope it was the kind of writing
That is a fugue and a balm. You are a fugitive,

you escaped the corporeal scam,
Lil Meat now is fully liberated from the meat
dungeon that is having-a-body.

I walk around feeling false as cheese product and
as isolated as Kraft Singles
Wrapped in the cellophane of sorrow because you
returned
To the undifferentiated energy material pool, the
primordial autochthonic hummus;
Now you're a pile of burnt bones sown into loam.
I'm obliterated that you're dead.
You used to stink up Douglas Street with bone
broth, one of a thousand folk nostrums
You marshaled against the phalanx of hydraulic
pain that pumped
And thrummed in you, electronic and alien and
violent and savage,
Pulsing like fragments of tooth sunk in gums.

I'm thinking about when you used to pump iron,
About when you were a bodybuilder living above
Cliff's Meat Market.
It's January and the cold cuts, Lil Meat. I think
about you and go mute.
I feel as cold as a building and as pointless as
that Bed Tower furniture
And obsolete and anachronistic as your taste in
Trip-Hop, which I appropriated
And embraced and now I think about you whenever I
listen to Portishead.

I go mute like the decade of secret invisible
pain that was knotted in your bodybrain.
I used to know myself as a moribund mistake, I
figured I'd be dead meat Lil Meat
But instead for some reason now I'm super into
surviving and being alive and trying
And not giving up and all the things that
repudiate the nihilism and cynicism that
nurtured

My suicidality. But my suicidality was a
temporary stone on my chest;
Yours filled your lungs with concrete, and so you
filled your belly with one last medicine.

I'm writing this poem in between classes and
during classes at law school,
Catching glimpses of you in between skeins of
doctrine,
Picking at the shards of you in my heart, which
is tender as chicken tenders. PowerPoints
are turning to goo in my head right now
because my mind is not supposed to
know laws,
It's supposed to watch Youtube Poops of Paula Deen
with you and eat Bojangles
And dance to gay music and stomp around the Eno
And watch Jeopardy under the weighted blanket.

The End



Welcome to The School of Law! It's a law school. I went to law school. Now you're about to go to law school. I'm your Dean's Fellow, so it's my job to introduce you and orient you to law school. Here's all I know about law school.

Law school is three years. The way they do it in law school, instead of saying you're a first-year/sophomore/junior/senior, to describe what year you are, you say a number + L, where "number" pretty much equals the number of years you have been at law school. So if it's your first year at law school, you're called a "1L." If it's your second year, you're a 2L. For third-years, it's 3L. 3L is the last one, because in America, daytime law school lasts exactly three years.

And even though law school is only three years, there can be something called a "4L," which generally describes someone who has been enrolled in law school for four total years, some of which time was taken up by their pursuit of a dual degree, like a JD+MPP or a JD+MSW.

And actually there's even something called "5L," where if you were crazy enough to pursue a JD+PHD or JD+MD (studying to be a doctor and a lawyer both, at the same time, which some people actually do!), you could find yourself in law school after five years, and so technically you'd be a 5L. 5L is the "last L," so to speak.

Except I almost forgot to mention that there is actually one more possible year, called 6L, and a person may theoretically reach 6L if they are at one of the six accredited schools in the world that offer a MDiv+MFA+JD (Master of Divinity + Master of Fine Arts + Juris Doctorate) triple-

degree program. The way it's set up, you'll be in law school during your sixth year of grad school. This is pretty rare and only a handful of students are known to have completed their 6L year.

So that's it! And thanks for your patience and time, and for your attention to me, your Dean's Fellow. Now it's time to wrap up this little talk.

Though, between me and you, there's a secret thing called a "7L." 7L occurs if and only if you can prove to the Dean of the law school by a preponderance of the evidence that you are the author of her dreams. If you can, you're entitled to one additional year of private tutelage by a masked faculty member out of a secret archive in a hidden section of a smoke-filled sub-basement of the law library. Basically nobody makes it to 7L, so it ends there.

Granted, however, that you agree, as we all did upon signing our Cardozocratic Oath of Lawful Service and Secret Duty upon our acceptance by The School of Law, indeed as we all agreed upon our matriculation to this fine institution, that the one thing that must never be spoken of is 8L, references to which appear obliquely in certain scrolls that were found buried beneath colossal man-made earthen mounds (once thought to be hills) of unknown provenance, which were "built" (if even such a word could be used to describe these topographic feats...if even the shawl of human language could ever be drawn tightly enough to warm one's mind against the chilling madness that seethes just under those vertiginous swells of earth...) in North America about 32,000 years ago, prior to the arrival of the first indigenous peoples; scrolls made of a peculiarly fine onionskin vellum, scented faintly with rosewater

and the metallic smoke-smell of solder tungsten, and covered in a pictographic text-matrix, a lattice of signifiers both spidery and inelegant, its syntax cro-magnon and cybernetic, quite unlike any other terrestrial linguistic system known to man, determined to be largely indecipherable until recently, and what little we do know is that the pictotext on the smoky-sweet-smelling fine-film scroll (nicknamed "The Strangling Fruit" by some of The School of Law's more withered and cynical professors) describes an ancient curse known only as, to wit, "8L," and about which (it is said) an apocryphal clique of exiled numerologists whisper madly to themselves

*"Octagon, O Octagod.../
Double-tetragrammaton.../
Octagon, Or octo-god.../
Tetra-doublegrammaton.../
Or man-o-war.../
O'er act-of-God.../
Octa-unigrammaton."*

in litanies of 44 before crossing themselves and ingesting what later turns out to be a mind-erasing dose of Salvia and becoming stone-silent and sitting stock-still for the remainder of their lives.

But those guys are kooks and looneys anyways, and besides, since we signed that oath, obviously there's nothing more to say on the matter.

Just as there's nothing to say on the matter of 9L. The end.

Although, I was fooling around with my dad's ham radio once, and I thought—and mind you I was only 9 or 10 at the time—through the crackle of the static I thought I heard an operator conclude his transmission with the words "thus spake Yog

Sothoth" and identify themself (itself?) by the call sign 9L9L9L, and during the brief tonic-clonic seizure I had after hearing those words, I was made to understand that I had been astrally admitted to Yale Law School as a 9L, and though the doctors (some of whom were doctor-lawyers) and my family (some of whom were disgraced, silent ex-numerologists) later told me (or gestured at me) that the seizure lasted no longer than 120 seconds, in my mind I am certain that I spent 9 full, rich, vivid years learning the law at Astral Yale and graduating colosseam cum laude and being badly shellshocked by a hazing ritual required of me in order to join a secret society called "Skull and Bones and Teeth and Hair and Nails," and during those 9 effulgent years feeling certain that the differentiation of consciousness was naught but a passing and impish bit of sleight-of-hand by one of the Ancients who preceded the Titans and who far predated the Gods of Old, Gods who all were once the Multitude, back when we humans were once The One.

That's what I learned in 9L. But again, according to medicine, it was likely a byproduct of the seizure I got when I was shocked while I was fooling around with my Daddy's radio, a byproduct of that, or else of the medication administered to revive me, or of that little bit of expired organic cocaine I had parachuted before remembering this story, which had never been a memory before just now, or of IBS. So that's that, and there's not really any proof of 9L, so let's just drop the subject, and frankly I don't know why you bothered to bring it up.

That's it.

That said, I'll take a moment to address the elephant in the room. 10L is known to occur if someone successfully hits any current or former

united states president in his ugly mug with a well-cobbled shoe. There it is, out in the open. So let's drop it, and let's move on, ok?

Tanixalthas, the Sun Drinker, whose symbol is the cracked fang of a stolen lock of Medusa's still-writhing snakehair; Tanixalthas, father of worms; Tanixalthas, who drinks the sun and eats the sky and dabs at her unknown mouth corners with a napkin woven with strands of braided intestines; Tanixalthas, the Double-Infinite Gyre, Tanixalthas, whose curse still binds me; Tanixalthas, who cast Wrench Mind and permanently disordered my thoughts... Tanixalthas is the one who—alone, in an ecstasy of reckless esoterica and purely forbidden gnosis, shrouded in a calypso of tornados, doused and jibbering, each prayerful word as sonorous as a cyclone, swarming with insectile fantasia—witnessed 11L obtain, or so she says. So she says, and so we sing in our profane hymns at the barren altar inside the ruins where once stood the Tabernacle of Tanixalthas. Yet other than Tanixalthas, no word of 11L has ever reached the ears of man, nor beast, nor flower, nor coral, nor mineral, nor soil. Though it can be heard some evenings being spoken softly on the wind.

Soft! For indeed, in softest faintest gray, deep, tucked into the gloom on the grave, beneath the effaced palimpsest of a thousand spent rosetta stones, rose-kissed, its waxen seal cracked, just under the tuft of miserable fescue encircled by the low stone wall whose engraving reads simply "U N L E S S"—there lies 12L: a myth, a falsity, a broken promise, a child's forgotten birthday wish.

It ends here. As they say, "12L's that ends well." And so it is. In the present. The problem is: it is not now.

It is 2013. You're at an exclusive after-hours event for a secret Boiler Room set. You just contracted synesthesia from sniffing a tube of brownish powder identified to you only as "The D." The lights go out. The subwoofers' thump is primordial. The DJ is 13L. The DJ has canceled you. 13L has a tremendous, gravitational amount of social capital. You are no longer welcome at the party. You climb into a hole and die. Death, unfortunately for you, does not release you from sensation and experience, which both continue indifferently, callous as time.

No, rather, death merely transmits you to the next phase of suffering. The hole you have crawled into and died in isn't just a hole. It's an elevator. A one-way elevator. The only way it goes is down. As you descend, you hear these words whispered through an unseen smirk: "anywhere you meet me, guaranteed to go down." A familiar phrase...the voice is unmistakably Lucifer. It's an elevator down to hell.

And not the nice hell they show on TV. The bad hell. The hell from books and radio. Your deathhole elevator is no modern Otis. It's an old fashioned elevator. The kind with the accordion door and the ornate grating and general mechanical craftsmanship. The old elevator's hell cables creak and you descend. You can tell you're going down, not up.

The D is starting to take effect. Your skeleton bones wish to exit your body, reasoning that it is you, the external and visible you, who has been canceled, not it, not the skeleton, not your skeleton. And your skeleton does make its way outside of you, and climbs out of you, and it stands erect and you thwump into a puddle on the ground, boneless and canceled, on an elevator down to hell. Neither simple death nor the

complex condition of skeletonlessness resolves your cancellation, which is continuous, indelible, permanent. As you travel downward, you notice the lights on the panel that indicate the floors. The following buttons remain illuminated:

14L
15L
16L
17L
18L
19L
20L
21L
22L
23L
24L
25L
26L
27L
28L
29L
30L
31L
32L
33L
34L
35L
36L
37L

One by one, the lights go out as you descend deeper. People get on and off the hellevator. You end up having to pay one of them \$20,000. Doesn't matter that it's \$20,000 you don't have. On earth your parents' home has been sold to cover the expense. At one point you're at the secret basketball court above the supreme court. At one point you're at a food court. No use trying free samples of the Kung Pao chicken now, because your skeleton took with it all your teeth.

Down, down, down you go, until you finally reach the last stop. The elevator dings a solemn ding. Your skeleton starts to exit, but holds the door for you so that you can get out without the door closing on you. You find that even though you are a puddle, your muscles work just enough to allow you to kind of slough-sluice out of the elevator and toward whatever final doom awaits you. There is a peace in the inevitability. A new pain enters you.

The pain you experience is total.
The pain is complete.
It is a defining amount of pain.

You approach the threshold. It's an ornately carved wooden door set in a stone archway. You are somehow certain that this door is precisely 900 years old. You peer down at the handle. A baroque and filigreed set of arabic numerals is inlaid into the knob with scrimshaw and mother of pearl. The two numbers: 3 and 7. You summon the total remainder of your puddle-strength to outstretch your boneless arm and reach your noodle-limp hand toward the handle. Just before your hand-pile reaches the handle, a modern digital touchscreen pops up and asks you to log in to your Facebook. You swallow hard.

You wish to pretend that you have forgotten your Facebook password, but you are unable to. You correctly type in your facebook password: "FacebookHell37L!" using your fingers, which are like slug sausages due to their bonelessness. The password works. The touchscreen recedes. You grasp the handle with your flimsy meat hock. The door opens with a satisfying click. You enter 37L. You spend eternity scrolling on Facebook.

This is 37L.





