



Life
you

Life, You

By Leighton Shelley

Trying to speak

But these words reach
reaching out...

Warm enough to see,
But could you ever be
There for me?

Wishing to stand together
Hold each other
But it won't get better
Never

Standing here in the open air
Showing I see, showing I care
Knowing it's not easy, knowing it isn't fair
Trying to dare to be there
Afraid I'm getting nowhere...

...

...

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- Trigger Warnings -

An Olive: Gore

Lost in What I Found: Depressive Episode

A Plastic Star: Suicidal Themes

(other things I might not have thought of?)

Thanks for reading.

- <3 -

Little Foam Cup

Little foam cup inside a mall:
This room is bigger than them all.

The ceiling stretches like an un-lit cavern,
The walls are so far, they lay beyond the shelving's horizon.
The lights wick and flicker like a medieval tavern
And the people are so few, you would think they are hiding.

Little foam cup inside a mall,
How long would it take to walk through every single one of its
halls?

The shelves are packed in, so stuffed with stuff.
There is so much stuff stuffed rough in this fluffed place,
puffing up from huffing more and more stuff, that I don't think
anyone could ever get enough of it.

Little foam cup, empty and weightless, inside a mall
Where is the exit, if there is one at all?

You can buy anything here, from toys to chandeliers,
To chocolates, toilets, torches and fears.
To munchies and touches and fevers and gore
To people and places and dreams and more
To everything anywhere you could ever look for,
But you would never, could never, find a door
Out of this giant, but honestly furnished store.

Little foam cup, inside a mall,
Where would you go if I threw you in a pail?

Would you be regurgitated, resuscitated, all to be sold again?
Would you be tossed away, forgotten like everything?

[Little foam cup, inside a mall,]

At least it is certain nothing would happen,

[Maybe here I'm just as small]

The world outside constantly suffering

[As you are in a landfill.]

From the strain of everything inside:

Vents are always
running.

Just Desserts

Once upon a time, I went to school forgetting my lunch. I called home and asked my mom what to do, and I remember her telling me,

"Tell your sister she needs to share her lunch."

I went to my sister to ask for some food, and as the spiteful¹ sister she was, she did not give me any food. She knew our mom had said she needed to. And she didn't care. Further, at the time, I thought she probably liked the idea of not granting me mercy, of having the power to casually insult me. She probably thought it was funny. In any case, she just shrugged me off. I cried, and did not eat anything for lunch.

When I returned home, I told my mom what happened. And she said,

"And she did that, even though I told you you would both get Ice-Cream after school when you got home?"

"He didn't tell me that!" my sister complained. I did not remember that part of the call I made with mom, and told them so.

"Well, you should have shared anyway," my mother told her, serving me, and not my sister, a bowl of Ice-Cream, after I got lunch.

We did not get Ice-Cream often. My sister cried, glared at me, and stormed upstairs to her room. My mother thought I would

¹ My perception, this is my memory: maybe not reality. I love my family, they love and accept me. I am lucky, and, have a history, which includes them.

be perfectly content with the Ice-Cream, the just desserts I had been served, the revenge I received in its "best" form: cold. But all I did was cry again. All I wanted was for us both to eat Ice-Cream.

"She doesn't get rewarded for that bad behavior," my mother said, "If you don't want it, leave it in the freezer."

I left it in the freezer for what felt like a long time before eating it. And when I finally did, it didn't taste good, and I cried some more.

Test

There is the cliff, and there is the fall
And at the bottom is the end of it all.
This moment will not last forever,
The questions all have an answer,
The Time is coming.

Tick, tick, tick, tick...

It is the moment of beginning, for the rest of your life,
It's all led to here, this final strife.
Have you prepared? Are you collected?
You're scared, "what might I have neglected
To study?"

The paper flips forward, desk by desk.
The test is delivered.

The Time has started.

"What do you got?" the test asks. *Ticking*

"I brought everything I have," I said, "That's all I have to give. "

Quickly

"That is not what ought to be said," the test condoned, "You are
to give me what I want, not just "all I have" ." *Hurry*

"But I can't give you what I don't have," I said, "That's all I have
to give." *Worry*

“Well, obviously. So, have you sought the lot of all I want?” the
test sighed, “If all you can give is what you have, you better
have what I want.” *Hesitation in this game*

“This is what I have,” I put my hand to the test. *Will mark*
missing spaces of

shame

“This?” *Are you sure?*

“Yes.” *Are you missing something, in your pockets?*

“This is little, this is very poor. Well, you can leave now:
there’s the door.” *It’s*

closing

in.

“A little, you say?” *Everything you invested*

“I do, now go on your way.” *Everything at stake*

“You arrogant ornament, I will stay!” *Frustrations*
building

“You should have tried to collect more things to bring, but now
it’s too late, and soon the bell will ring.” *This isn’t*
right...

“I did try!” *Did we cover this?*

“You lie. If that were true, I’m sure that you would have more
stuff.” *What is this?*

“I gave you everything I have, everything I am, and you say you
want more?”

The bell!

“All I am...” I cry, “Is all that I have to give.” *You’ve got to
get this!*

“You. Are. Not. Enough. Now, pack-up your stuff, you
impoverished huff of a stuff-gruffian student. One ought to be,
have been, more prudent.” *Your future...*

“That’s not fair! Why do this to me?” *Your childhood...*

“I don’t care, all I see is someone who didn’t bring me all the
stuff *I* wanted, *today, at this hour*: all these things
I decided
to decide

that students should be sorry for not having this
stuff.” *Your life..*

“Just choose differently! Give me a chance! Look at the stuff I
have, rather than just the stuff you fancy.” *All leading here,
to this moment...*

“No mercy: I’m purposefully, self-awarely picky, and you will be
dealt with swiftly. Hope you’re comfortable with simply the
stuff you have, because since you don’t have the stuff I want, you
won’t get what you want: have fun with your permanent poverty.”

It’s too late.

And then the bell rang, and the test flaunted off to the
evaluator’s desk.

Prospects

A small deer, a kid, it stands still. Quiet.

A moment before, the kid was grazing. The sweet, snapping grass folding and mushing in the mouth, tasty green. There was the ambience of the forest, which the kid was quite familiar with: The pit-pat-pattering of insect wings, fluttering. The trip-tap-tattering of small creatures, scampering. The chirp-chip-chattering of birds, singing. This was home.

But now, for this moment, the kid stopped. Its head had raised, but made no other move. It stays fixed, rigid... still. It is vexed, for this brief moment, by a sound: whooshes and gushes and whippings of air. By a feeling: warmth, pressing and fading in waves. By a scent: the subtle tinge in the nostrils, the smell of smoke. Fire.

Fire.

The moment ends, the kid rears its head and scampers in the direction of the rest of the stampede: the forest moves in unison to the choreography of disaster.

~~~

A dentist appointment, staring at the T.V. as I wait for my teeth to be done.

"Another forest fire has sprung up in our golden state," says the news reporter, "A tragic thing, that this is happening so often these days. Don't you think Grace?"

- Nick, pick stick. -

"Yes Adam, I feel deeply troubled by this. Is this one of those incidents caused by Climate Change, or this just due to our negligence of protecting nature?"

- Click, grit lick. -

“Haha, Grace, those are the same thing,” Adam corrects her,  
”Any-away, onto the weather. Mary?”

- Prick, prod, clink. -

“Hey Adam. Today, the weather is looking like heat stroke levels,” Mary says, “So we are coming down from the suffocation-heat levels of last week. Good thing we have air conditioners.”

- Tick, bit, spit. -

“That’s great to hear,” Adam smiles enthusiastically, “Oh, and fun fact: last week the last of the ice-caps have melted, so we’ll be seeing a further rise of house-prices soon. Lucky you, landowners! Now, for our next piece, a school sh-”

“All done,” the dentist grins through her face-mask, a soft smile seen in her eyes. It’s okay, another day another day.

Oligarch

Expert Keeper, Gate-Locker,  
Do let me enter  
With my dreams and desires.  
I aspire to all requires:  
Relying on your relief.

Noble Scholar, with the Medicine Altar,  
Do let me keep from Martyr,  
With my comfort and pleasure.  
If I measure to your every leisure,  
Luscious be my life.

Pardoner, I pray,  
Do let me stay  
With my safety and needs.  
I bleed in the pleading:  
Please, sustain me.

Doctor, Debtor, Money collector,  
Don't be my objector  
Of my strife, of my life.  
You hold a knife, rife with terror,  
Beggar, am I: for my vigor, I rely

On an Oligarch.

Called: Innovation

A grid of boxes  
Tied together with strings  
Many of their thoughts  
Taken from the little things.

They aren't pulled to the sky,  
To gaze at the ground,  
But only fastened together  
So that they can't move around.

The knots were made to bind the things it outdated,  
Rather than strung for creation anew.

The netting could foster a safety net,  
A joining cord to lovers,  
A bond to all,  
Rather than a binding to rotting graves.

To some it serves that heavenly route,  
To those safeties and pleasures unfound by touch,  
Freed by joining of strings,  
I love electricity  
For its illusion of escape.

I hate it is made but an illusion.

The strings are made to be something you buy,  
A thing to tie  
To the purchase and purchasing

Of molding boxes.

It is a lie that payment is freedom.  
Buying myself from an unjust slavery  
Isn't *just* by being my only *lawful* means of relief.  
And it isn't *true* if it's temporary,  
If the strings are maintained as necessary restraints  
To be bound to these heavily-used coffins.

No matter how many boxes it is connected to,  
The comfort of company is but bittersweet,  
Against the silent walls.

A cement-laid graveyard  
That could be a garden  
Woven with real Innovation.



For Our Lots

Good-luck little snail, good-luck little pinch-bug  
Good-luck little crawlers which have come from  
All the grass and dirt, where you were snug

Good-luck on the sidewalk, where the streetlamps hum  
And the car-tires drum on the streets which sum  
Up the world into a rubble rug  
And which, on all your freedoms, have pulled the plug  
To make way for the daily transport of our "some".

Good-luck little snail, good-luck little pinch-bug,  
And good-luck little crawlers, which we've deemed but  
waste-crumbs:  
The cost for our lots.

Modern ~

Life is a product you direct and haul  
Urban sprawl, the creator of all -

“We grew so tall, thinking we could ball-up  
Everything that lived, we wanted to make part of the mall  
Or destroy it’s life, or make it’s redemption stalled-

Calling everyone, wandering these walls!  
A fall will quake ruins which will appall us  
And display our utter gall  
Of thinking we could hold, sustain, remain in all-”

This waste, literal; Unprofitable, it poisons. We’re so rich, we  
put the future in debt.  
Yet, everything turns to rubble, ruins, abandoned it will age to  
100 years old. I’m a tourist of these undead-ruins of the future:  
I’m living history.

*And even this perpetuates the same neglect of the world:  
thinking of myself as separated from this destruction. ‘Tourist’  
of my own life, of my own world. I do not live, I do not  
contribute to the encouragement of the community. Of life.*

*(As of now, I am still mostly a silent leecher. If you  
can read this, I have now been able to do otherwise.)*

*I only consume this world as temporary. It is my passing life, a suspended liminal space<sup>2</sup>: the world has become designed for non-human purposes. Realize the significance of capitalism: we design our homes, our streets, our plumbing, our cities, our world... not for the sake of people. Not for the sake of life; Green used but to wash-out the suffocating concrete: decoration. Trees... are decoration.*

*People are workers, or 'useless'. Pretty, ugly. Ab, Normal. Fit, fat. We describe people in terms of their utility to... to...*

*So, I do not live here. I cannot live here, the world I've so-far been a part of has been designed in antithesis to life. I live somewhere else, always far away. So far away.*

*Life... what does that even mean?*

*Am I wrong again? Saying 'I do not live here' ?*

---

<sup>2</sup> Making this footnote on 6-21-24, a year after writing this piece. Just recently, I discovered someone else formalized this idea: Marc Augé's Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity. It was wonderful to read, and I highly recommend it.

## Special

When a door squeaks,

It squeaks in the same way as any other door.

Besides that of the frequency, tone, etc. marking some distinctions.

Besides that of the sound coming from a different object.

Each makes a sound in the same way,

Sound is not special to anything.

When a door squeaks,

It makes a sound in the same way as anything else.

Besides that of the sound sounding different

Besides that significance which separates objects

Significance generated by us:

We are what make the difference.

between a raindrop

and a pebble,

And a planet.

Sound is not special to the object,

In any way that doesn't make other objects special in the same way.

When a door squeaks,

It makes a sound in as much a special way,

As your voice.

It's scraping drawl, as it opens into a familiar room,

Speaks sincerely.

What do you think of consciousness?

I imagine a box, with my consciousness as the air that fills it.  
It swirls in invisible colors, mixing all its forms, uniform and  
isolated motions are all possessors of the box at the same time,

And there isn't a box

if I focus. It takes time, letting go of  
restraints.

If consciousness is material, a product-no, not something  
created/separate from-

If consciousness *is* a physical phenomenon  
Then it is a system of collisions.

Physics is special to you,  
In the same way it is special to  
A door,  
A raindrop,  
And a pebble,  
And the universe.

When a person thinks,  
They think in as much a special way...

## Space as Place

I can move my head,  
And go no-where,  
But I can also stay motionless,  
And move here and there.

I can walk around,  
And see myself in the same space:  
There is no difference  
Without difference in place.

Space, the place, as the name: the meaning of here.  
It is this room, or that one,  
Or out there, under the sun.  
It is in the park, while it's sunny,  
Which can change to a space of rain,  
The sunny place is gone.

I was sitting in my garden, near a bush.  
Things changed to summer,  
And so I found myself sitting near a rose.  
Things changed to Autumn,  
And so I found myself sitting near wilting thorns.

I was sitting in a classroom  
Until the bell rang.  
Then, I was just sitting in a busy room.

Transportation is conceptual,  
Displacement is peculiar.

Collaboration; Wholeness is Illusory

Permission to speak

Speak

Please I want to speak all the

Time I don't have

Any time

To speak

I stay here straying silent and wish to speak and feel free abit

my voice is muddled in the noise

And the silence

Silencing grasp of something at my neck

And tongue

Holding me down

To time I don't have

Any time

Wishes work wonders null, none come hither at all

But which are sought and taken for ourselves

And eaten for their juices

There is so much to tell

What words can be put

To the voice I wish to speak

If I have no mouth to sound it?

I am on a tirade

A storm

A gesture of wriggling wanton

Ticks are my measure  
I take them for a ride  
Our mind is a mesh  
Which we are tangled together in

The body  
The spirit  
The ego of reflection

We both see  
hear  
taste  
Touch  
Talk to one another  
I see myself in their gaze  
Their fear  
And pain  
And joy

Snap snap snap I can't tell which thoughts are mine  
If any  
Of either one

There is nothing I am unaware of  
But what moves my body  
And my thoughts

And the me which talks here in this poem

I am constantly struggling with



The words to speak  
Of confusion

When confusion can only be illustrated clearly  
Through a fog  
A mist  
A sea of darkness

The pauses I perform  
To waver on my writing  
I can't tell if they are kept  
By them or me

~~I must clarify the speakers of this piece~~—————~~I~~  
need clarify nothing  
~~In the footnotes~~—————~~Confusion is~~  
implicit, Unsolvable  
~~Because otherwise "I" will be lost~~—————~~Beautiful, I as "we"~~  
will forever be  
~~And that is the only thing which can keep this a fog~~—————~~A mystery~~  
to "me"  
~~Rather than~~  
~~An abyss~~—————~~I am complete~~

~~Hopefully~~ my words were clear enough  
And mine

We were very excited to write      We were very excited to write  
for some reason                      for some reason  
What happens when your body becomes more than your own?

I enjoy the company

As do I

Or maybe I/we are delusional

Or hopeful

Of animism that isn't there

But I think we could both use a good friend.

## Format

I could go less surreal  
And deal myself out in a more  
Appealing format such as:  
And introduction, begins,  
To transition easily to other things,  
Then ending, flying on wings, into the sunset.  
No no no no  
That's sane.

I'm tired of restrictions  
Of limits  
Of typical things

I'll keep the typos I  
want, thank you

I want to pull on the strings  
Of these puppets I'm using  
And keep pulling on them so tight  
That they break, and the puppets themselves come to life  
And dance and scream and run away  
With their own agency.  
I want my jarring suddenness to shake  
People's bodies, toss them around  
The room and push them off the cliff.  
I hope you like the free-fall plan  
I've set up for you:  
There isn't one.

## Butterfly Effect

If a butterfly can make a storm,  
How many of my snaps have snapped necks?  
How many backs have I cracked by stepping on cracks in the  
cement?

I worry every word I utter  
Clutters someone else's worries  
Contributing to the accumulation of despair.  
I worry other people think I glare  
When I care,  
And try.

But maybe a good thing spreads the same,  
Leaping around and back again to where it came,  
Karma could be a joyful contagion.

Silence and neglect are actions in-off themselves, too.  
In-action is impossible.

So, I can't give up.  
If all it takes is a butterfly,  
I've gotta plant some flowers,  
And kill some bad bugs.  
mosquitoes

\*Fuck you

## Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes suck musky-toes  
Goes and eat plastic mores, why don't you?

Y'know pollution? It'd be fantastic  
If you went emphatically, magically, and/or tactically extinct.  
It would not be sadly or tragically found by anyone anywhere  
ever around.

Everyone would think your stink was better off dead than had  
your red-drinking, skin-picking, malaria-dripping,  
good-for-nothing excuse for a living thing survived the human  
apocalypse.

Oh? What's that, ass-hat?

*"Animals like to eat me, I pollinate plants, wa wa wa"*

Boohoo you buggy buffoon, you're not special, exceptional, or  
valuable in any way.

You're as replaceable as a toilet-paper roll after someone got  
the flu from you.

You're as worthless as a turd-petting zoo.

You are so parasitically pestilent and putrid, that I know  
nothing else in nature, but **you**, that's ever been brewed to be, as  
goo, less likable than sewage,

You gag-inducing, tongue-tweaking wing-beating blood-brain.

You're what a cross between a leech and a fly would be, if leeches  
were uglier, and flies were even MORE invasive and annoying  
than they already are.

You are what a Dracula-bee would be, if Dracula didn't have any charisma, and bees were Authoritarian Fascists that wanted the world to end. Like Dracula.

You are, to animals, the type of food everyone eats, because it's there, but no-one likes: like how we think of reception-desk mints, and left-leftovers at the very bottom of the freezer. Yes, that is mold, but if you don't eat it now, then...

Fuck you, mosquitoes.

And fuck you, musky toes<sup>3</sup>, why you gotta be so stinky?

---

<sup>3</sup> For anyone reading this who likes musky toes, I apologize. Musky toes are not comparable to mosquitoes in any way, and I am truly sorry for implying otherwise. <3

## Block Game

Creation of a world,  
Desolation of the spawn  
Hitting wood digging dirt kill the sheep make a bed  
The night is coming  
Digging down.

Monsters are near enough to fear nightmares, you can't sleep.  
Waiting, worried, wondering about a whooshing sound,  
The music kicking in.

Day breaks, time to stake out a house to build.  
Get some logs, build the walls, place the bed again.  
Dig some stairs down, basements are fun,  
The mining phase has just begun.

Stone, coal, iron, pickaxe, torches,  
Lighting down, digging around, all to the deepest darkness that  
can be found.  
Monster spawner, mineshafts, dark corners,  
Spooky sounds spring your spine,  
What is this red stuff? And some blue! That's new, right?  
Lava lines the cave walls-  
A diamond!  
Looking for, yes! Some more  
Time to go back.

And repeat.  
A spawner?  
And repeat.

A mineshaft?

And repeat.

Obsidian, portal?

And repeat.

And repeat.

Block stacking, interlocking,

Craft-picking brick-types

Thinking what to place where

To go how to get

All the stuff!

What a world to wake-up to-

What's that hissing sound?

...

Electricity is another object, a real material.

Is it?



## Walk In The Rain

I knew there would be no risk of other people being outside, so I went for a walk in the rain two weeks ago. Everything the rain touched turned into a nicer, softer, and true version of its previous self. The only noises were the sounds of cars racing by, and the clapping rain on the cement. The rain reveals everything, washing away the dirt to reveal beautiful, clean, blacks and grays. Everything looks darker when it's wet, let alone with the clouds blocking the setting sun. The smells, too, are different in the rain. The tapping on my umbrella seemed to conform with the beat of my footsteps that day, almost like the water was walking beside me, holding my hand.

Before the lockdown started, I would never have had the incentive to walk outside in the rain. Now, there is something so beautiful about the emptiness of the streets. The soundless sidewalks seemed soothed by my feet, rather than exhausted. The rain hid the faults of the sidewalk and evened the uneven points with small puddles. Ironic how one of the reasons for those cracks is the rain itself, washing away the weakest edges to create deeper fallacies.

The wind helped the rain form patterns of splashes on the road. Like waves the rain swayed back and forth upon the surfaces it touched. It was almost as if the wind was making the rain laugh, tickling the rain to make it shutter in fits of giggles.

I couldn't feel the wind in my hair that night, as I was told to wear a mask when I went outside. I made one out of cardboard, a robot interpretation of myself. Painted with white, navy blue, and sky blue, I wore a mask to protect myself. I spent a long time

on that mask, hoping to complete it before the rain stopped;  
before the doors of my home closed me inside once again.

“Come back, rain,” I waved goodbye. On my porch, I took off my mask and opened the door. Before closing it behind me, I felt the wind in my hair, and the wet patches of rain on my jeans. The wind gave me those patches of rain, and that last gust was as if the wind spoke back:

“Come back, too.”

It's About...

It's about working

It's about playing

It's about seeing, about being seen

It's about

Can you see the open air? Can you find the heart to care?

Can you find the eyes to stare at-

It's about drive, and passion

It's about relief, and dying

It's about

Screaming I hear so much sound, all the time constantly

ringing this feeling can I find the

Words?

-

I dream of a place where I can float to, and be welcome. A

wonder-land of fantasy, nothing needed by me.

Do you have a heart, like mine? Beating together, our weathered

crime

In The Sapphire Apts

Music, mosaic ambience  
Audio escape, delivered  
Realms complete, surround,  
I am taken.

Wind and Winding  
Time spent finding  
Some means of satisfaction  
I am absorbed.

All Around, fill  
Founded belief  
Hope in a dream  
I am comforted.

Wanderlust, lost  
Journeyer of silence  
Soul deprived  
I was empty.

Now, I hear  
It's a clear  
Dearness, beauty by ear  
I am happy.

Dear, this gift  
Given by Patty Pets  
Upon my gleeful head:  
I am alive.

## An Olive

Today was sandwich day, and everyone in the town was supposed to make a sandwich for Lunch. I was going to make my sandwich different than my neighbors, though. I had switched bone for bread as a container, blood for mayonnaise to make it moist, human tissue for other-meat for fullness, and an eye for an olive as decoration. I couldn't wait to see what the others thought of my new and IMPROVED sandwich to everyone in town.

They would be jealous of my creativity, and so I gave my sandwich to the judge. They didn't like the olive on top, to start with.

## Streetside Wandering

The world, so big, distant. The horizon is so far, and the street so long. Where to go from here?

Sun is coming down, more distant from home, all alone, than ever before.

The street lights flicker into brightness, humming yellow lights on the cement. The world is tinged in the yellow glow, after seeing it becomes all you know.

Don't know where here is, but with a phone: everything will be fine in a street sign.

Where will this road lead, take, the wandering? Walled in on both sides. Cars often pass by, their yellow headlights complementary, their red back-lights dissenting, disparaging. Red, at night, is not a nice light.

The moon is out today, kept muffled by the clouds. They look like stretched cotton, wrapping it around.

The houses look all the same, their roofs only in view by the brick-walls built. A yellow street-light snaps, right above walking. Stopped, by the darkness.

It starts to flicker again, spurring walking again. You're a big kid now, you are bigger than that!

The street goes on and on, rising in a hill. It's hard to see far, now.

The yellow looks wrong, fringing out everywhere. It's spread across the street. Was it always this bright? There aren't any stars.

It smells familiar, as always: the scent of asphalt. It's reminiscent of recess, of rubber hand-balls. And the smell of

cars, smoked gasoline. The dirt, too, kicked some by the cars, the wind having blown dust to the everywhere. There isn't much rain yet.

Turning over the hill, a park comes into sight. What would it be like, to play at night?

A car, engines popping, zooms along the street.

The metal playground smells like rust, similar to a tool-shed, minus the stored gasoline. It reminds me of out-door storage boxes, with toys covered in spider webs, and spiders.

The metal looks bright in yellow, but dull in color. The yellow is dull to the rainbow array: slides, steps, turning wheels. There's a swing-set, a sand pit. Trees hovering, growing, draping it's arm over the set, casting shadows which waved with the wind.

Shadows against the yellow light.

The light above cracks, freezing motion. Stand, frozen, no movement, rigid, fighting against the soft wind. No light but far-away lamps, across the street. It's cold, skin rough, bumpy against the cloth cotton jacket, hands chilled to ache at the bone.

The street is very, very long. Lined by brown, rough-bricked walls, with the tips of house-roofs poking above. It is the only thing to be seen 'till nothing can be seen anymore.

A car passes by, the clacking thrum of it's metal hum, the scraping rubber, wisping quickly away, past the unlit streetlight, where stood, rigid.

Heart-beat battering against the skin, cement more flat than comfortable: feet are starting to ache. And it's cold, shivering, felt in the stomach.

What... where to go from here? Where's here?  
Where's a street sign?



## Still

That empty feeling inside at the end of the day, when I feel satisfied. I lay down, but it isn't time to sleep yet. I know, because I am not sleeping. I simply lay there, staring at the dark surroundings which comfort me. *'What will I do next?'* I wonder, *'Is there something else?'* I struggle longer, longer, longer, floating away in the abyss of my thoughts. Still... waiting... longer...

Longer, still, until I find myself in a state of restlessness. I'm not awake, not asleep, only watching. *'Are my eyes closed?'* I check. I feel them open. They were closed. But there is no difference in what I see, now, with them open.

The shades of my surroundings swirl to the rhythm of my thoughts. *'Why can't I sleep?'* I ask myself, *'Is there something wrong?'* I lay, ever stiller, for longer still.

*'What should I do? Nothing?'* I think, *'Waiting... longer... still...'*

*'I'll find something',* I hope, *'Something further, still, to distract the expanse. There must be more, still, to dream.'*

The night goes on, with 'change' as the exception of the rule of black. Light grows, eventually at the end, so I can reflect on my night. *'Now, to rise',* I think, still laying there, *'To rise, and find new light.'*

But now, the darkness compelling, reveals a flaw with the light. Now, with eyes open, I see a world that I didn't make. With them closed, still, only the memory of the darkness remains. And,

the light which rose the world, is but the white hole in the black sky.

So I rise, using the world which light reveals to me, to close the curtains. *'A little longer, please'*, I ask, *'A little... wait a little... longer... still...'*

*'Still, now, so I can fill myself from emptiness, with emptiness, to fill itself.'*

And so I lay, resting, comforted by the darkness. Waiting, hoping the light will take longer, still, to reach me. Now, still, I can sleep, and dream of filling the void.

## Lost in What I Found

I found it I'm trapped I can't get out of the feeling anymore  
It's here I feel myself disappearing in its depths  
Oh god it's suffocating no it's it's freeing no loosening  
I'm being gutted out hollowed out on the inside  
I found the feeling oh nonononono  
Where is the way out please let me out of here please  
Oh god where can I go  
Help someone help please can't anyone hear me  
I'm screaming as loud as I can please can't anyone hear me  
No I'm alone there is no one here I can't escape  
I'm stuck that's what happened I felt the feeling too much, too  
clearly  
I can't get out anymore  
I'm lost to it this is all that there is now  
I hate this I feel I feel it  
I'm so scared  
I'm going to be alone forever  
No one is going to find me anymore  
I'm too far gone  
I know what the feeling is now  
I know what it is I wish I didn't know what it is  
I wish I never wished for this  
How much I wished for it  
Now I have it, know it  
It is inside me forever and it's gutting me out  
Twisting and squishing and stretching stretching  
I am stretching out forever  
My skin is being pressed against the walls, my eyes popping out  
of my sockets

I am spreading out the door and into the halls and then out of  
the building and scraping onto the cement I hate the cement so  
much I hate it it it it it  
It's so dry  
I'm stretching out forever  
The tension aching to snap  
Edging against the threshold of bursting me open  
It will never snap  
That is the horror  
I will stretch forever  
And never settle  
Upon an end.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It isn't real, but then, nothing is.

Nothing Like...

... existential dread  
Like if "Nothing" was something that said  
That you would never lead  
A perfect...

Rife in strife, (I rhyme again!)  
And made of stifling pressure  
To measure up  
For others leisures and pleasures

Nothing is existential dread  
Like a brick that speaks from bed:  
Hey, look here at what this person said  
And what this person wore, and that this person's dead  
And that you would never lead  
A perfect...

Ordered by metal-bordered paths  
Like sidewalks that board your mind from boredom  
But nothing comes back to tell you  
You are doing nothing anyway,  
You are giving your time away  
You will never do, and never say  
That thing you're waiting to do later today.  
And when the sky starts to turn grey  
The Nothing will come back to say  
That you would never lead  
A perfect...

What was this about?

How do we end

The rending, for-fending functioning of the sending

Of everyone everywhere to always be contending with  
brain-bending

Time-pending money-vending?<sup>5</sup>

And then Existentialism comes up to say

You would never lead a perfect life

And that's okay.

You will always be living your life, today,

And if you want things to stay this way,

Or if you want things to change, you may

Always start anytime, you are not a waste

You are yourself

You are you.

---

<sup>5</sup> UnEnding always Ending

Compliments

I like your sweater.

Well, not that I like your sweater as an object, like "I like your possession of an object".

I like how that sweater looks on you

Or, that I find that you look good in a sweater?

You look good in general

Always.

Not that goodness is something objective that you possess

I think you always look good.

Are looks too essentialist? I don't want to sound insincere, or surface-dwelling, or materialistic.

Um.

I like your hair

*Still materialistic*

I like how you do your hair

I like your...

I don't know how to do this.

...

I like the way you look in a sweater

Does that sound off?

I like your style

Why does it matter what I think? Am I being self-centered? Am I being silly?

I... I...

I owe compliments to your sweater

What the fuck no the sweater doesn't  
care about-

I owe compliments to you about your sweater

No, it's still about an object. And what's  
this about "owe"? I don't want to give  
compliments just because I owe them, I  
want to give compliments because I  
want to do it. Because I...

I want to flatter? Impress? No, I want to make them happy. I want  
to communicate that I want to make them happy. I want them to  
know I want to make them happy?

But it's also not that I'm just *saying* these things *to say them* to  
make them feel happy, I'm not *just saying them*, I **mean** them...

I want them to know I think about them positively? That must be  
it.

Right?

I'm being stupid. They wouldn't have any of the criticisms I just  
mentioned. They complement me like this. Easily, nonchalant.  
Why do I care about those thoughts?

...

I would like to give compliments about your sweater

I want to give you compliments all the time about all sorts of  
things.

I don't know how to give compliments.

So I've put them into a piece of paper.



Hopefully the gesture is conveyed.

Not that I have  
some expectations that you get some  
specific meaning from this or ...

this is fucking ~~frustrating~~.  
Impossible.

I gave up. I'm sorry.

Not sorry, enough, to do better,  
Apparently.

I'll do better,  
Eventually.

eventually.

Plastic Star, A Child's Performance

Hello bright little star  
Shining in my room,  
I often like to touch you,  
And wonder how you are.

I wish up to your sky,  
From this bed in which I lie,  
That, rather than tomorrow come anew,

-----\*

A flat wish, deflated,  
regular,  
The routine of thought  
It's own comfort.

Should I mention it? Is writing this, here, a mistake?  
Will other people understand why I put it here?  
Many might not. Many will not.

That's okay, it's okay  
To close my eyes, and feel, again,  
Knowing my world belongs to me.

Close your eyes: feel again,  
Knowing your world belongs to you.

## Hat

“Then I took my hunting hat out of my coat pocket and gave it to her.”

- J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye

Material, manifesting of difference,  
I am seen  
This small hat giving validation  
In a world made to make Discomfort  
This Comforts my reclusion, my exclusion  
Until I find other ways to make me feel alright.

With this hat, I can have something no-one else has.  
In a world which made me feel without Identity,  
I could wear a hat.  
And, even for this, some swiped me of it.

I didn't know what 'gay' meant until I was in highschool.  
I didn't know Trans people existed until college.  
I didn't know I could like clothes.  
I didn't know how much pain I was in.  
For that, I am Traumatized.

But, when I did learn,  
I looked at that hat.

At first, with anger, this thing I needed to feign my identity.  
And then, sadness,  
And then relief. It had done its job, protecting me until now.

Material manifestation of my early life, lived hollow,  
I'm glad to have you as a marker  
For me, moving on  
To better things.

## Wait

“Wait for me, like before. I need but time, nothing less and nothing more.”

“I can’t wait, not anymore. This has become something else, something difficult, a chore.”

“Just a little longer, I’ll be with you again—”

“It is too much a bother! I can’t remain.”

“Is there nothing I can say? Nothing I can do?”

“Well, there may... I can think of a few.”

“Tell me how, I’ll do whatever!”

“Be here, now, and nothing else will matter.”

“So you’ll still go? Go on without me?”

“Yes, and there... I’ll wait for you. I’ll wait for you.”

“Then I’ll—”

“Wait for me, too. Wait for me, do not hurry. Wait for me, do not worry. Do not be sorry that I’ve gone. Just wait for me, like I’ll wait for you.”

“Wait...”

“Wait.”

## Practical Philosophy

Coffee, a drink, sweetly silks my tongue.

Music, a tone, an ease on my ears.

Writing, release.

Video Games, Movies, Books, Internet,  
escape, necessary.

Pessimistic: Worst Case Scenario, change is impossible. So, I  
bare first-class privileged witness to the end.

Optimistic: The world today will be the ruins of the future.  
Life, whatever it may be, will grow upon our graves.

Hope: The future, built upon this past, *can* improve, and get  
better at encouraging life over accumulating power.

Proactive: Do you believe that we should create as much good and  
happiness in the world as possible? Do you think happiness is a  
good thing? Then YOU being happy is a GOOD thing. Again: You,  
being happy, is a GOOD THING.

Thanks for reading <3