



Alibaba Dildo Arbitrage
Syrianus

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Groupon & Viagra

Sitting at the bar up the street on a Wednesday night this past winter,

I considered the fact I have this distant cousin who, last I heard, was terminally ill, and not just a little bit terminally ill but extremely terminally ill;

last I heard she had at maximum nine months to live, but that was at least two years ago, and I could've sworn I saw her on social media the other week,

I'd been meaning to ask my mom about it for a month as we sat at Dana's bar behind the Speedway up the street where S,

the bartender, was telling us about Viagra, how men at her day job, she was a nurse, would always come in to ask for their pills,

then Jeff told us about a guy he met in California who bought one hundred thousand dollars worth of dildos from Alibaba

and sold them on Groupon for three hundred thousand

dollars.

I didn't even know Groupon still existed, I said, amazed.
This guy made two hundred grand selling dildos on it!

Jeff said.

S asked us about March Madness, but the Celtics were playing; she didn't even know the difference!

The bar's shots were seven dollars a piece,
which was more than we'd expected when Curt ordered
two consecutive rounds of shots,
silently assuming I'd pay the tab at the first bar we
attended that night.

Curt, clearly interested in sparking up further
conversation with S,
spoke with her about his friend who used Viagra and the
effects of Viagra,

which was technically an accurate anecdote,
one of our friends was a big-time Viagra user,
but Curt knew as well as I did that he used Viagra once,
too,

and that our so-called friend, even though our so-called
friend actually existed,
was actually a stand-in for Curt himself.

S's ass was, frankly, unbelievably large given the frame of her upper body and face.
Eventually, we discussed what it would be like to break your cock,
Curt didn't think it was possible, but, in fact, not only was it possible,
the fact of the matter was this: if you broke your cock there was no way to fix it.
I was almost positive a broken penis could never heal.

Explicable Graffiti

At approximately 3 pm on a Tuesday,
after leaving Dave's in-ground pool,
after volunteering at a local farmer's market
that seemed to employ volunteer high school students
for the majority of their labor force for my place of
employment,
I followed Bobby,
who sped in a zig zag fashion through the Byzantine
alleys of East Cranston,
to his mother's house on Arnold Ave.
As we exited our vehicles, noted the clubhouse next to
the garage was covered in graffiti,
that I didn't recall the clubhouse being quite that
defamed,
and Bobby said Yeah, it was probably Bird Brain,
in reference to his younger brother, Carlo.
We opened the door to the clubhouse and, in fact,
discovered Carlo himself and two of his friends,
all approximately thirteen years of age and one hundred
twenty pounds a piece,

passing a salt shaker sized blunt in a circle.
Carlo immediately implored Bobby to take a hit,
and when Bobby outright refused to take a hit his
attention turned to me,
saying Ayo, *hit this shit*.

Despite the fact Carlo was nearly twenty years my junior,
despite the fact it was mid-afternoon on a weekday,
I irrationally succumbed to a strong urge to impress an
approximately one hundred twenty pound,
extremely high thirteen year old boy,
to not 'be a bitch' like Bobby,
and I agreed to take a hit of the blunt in the clubhouse,
with three young men with a combined age of thirty nine,
a combined age that was, sadly, only eight years older
than I at the time.

I immediately found myself in an inadvisably high state,
and I'd come to regret smoking that blunt for the
following five hours.

Grilled Cheese Yet Aesthetic

At about one am on a nondescript
but frigid Saturday night
in the middle of winter,
it was last winter,
and I was standing up wearing a muted expression at
The Dorrance,
and I found myself intensely craving a grilled cheese
from Say Cheese.
I was intensely craving the purchase of a specialty grilled
cheese
from this place called Say Cheese.
There were five of us, including myself,
and everyone, excluding myself,
was relaying anecdotes,
laughing at these anecdotes,
which were admittedly somewhat amusing,
not incredibly amusing but somewhat amusing,
yet all I could think about was this grilled cheese -
I'd arrived at The Dorrance well after my peers,
having strongly considered staying in (it was frigid; I was

lethargic),
and I was drinking beer but failing to catch a buzz -
this grilled cheese was dominating all avenues of my
thought process,
despite the fact I wasn't particularly hungry.
The thought occurred to me that perhaps,
subconsciously,
I decided to go out for the sole purpose of prying open
this possibility
of purchasing a grilled cheese at Say Cheese,
as it was a frigid winter night,
and three of the four people in our group were minor
acquaintances at best.
I contributed no anecdotes of note to the conversation,
partially because my mind was so singularly focused on
the grilled cheese -
under normal circumstances, I would have definitely
relayed a few noteworthy anecdotes.
I can't wait to get some grilled cheese, I thought,
not craving a meal as much as craving the thrill of
purchasing a specialty meal at that hour.
This is capitalism at its most corrosive;

I could really go for a grilled cheese, I thought,
noting the female who sat next to me was as tall as I
was,
but I was standing up while she was sitting down.
At the first sign of the group preparing to disperse,
I hurriedly expressed my goodbyes and practically
sprinted down the block
to the entrance of Say Cheese.

Because of the employment of fresh ingredients the
sandwich took upward of twenty minutes to prepare;
I assumed the sandwich took upward of twenty minutes
to prepare due to the employment of fresh ingredients.
Eating the grilled cheese all I could think about was how
gluttonous,
how superfluous eating the grilled cheese was at that
time of night,
and I immediately began to regret buying the grilled
cheese.

Celtics vs Heat

The thought occurred to me - perhaps having parents who were alive, being surrounded by family who cared for me sincerely and loved me deeply was a serious burden, artistically speaking. If my parents were deceased, or if I somehow became estranged from my family, I'd probably be a better artist, I thought. All of these cousins and family events - they were killing me creatively, and at this point there was no doubt about that. I have such a great relationship with my family, and it's absolutely devastating me artistically, I thought. As the first quarter progressed everyone at the bar became gradually aware the Miami Heat were missing several key players, and we all agreed Miami - in their substantially attenuated state - should pose no real threat to the Celtics, who were playing at home.

However, things are rarely as they seem,
and predictions are more often than not totally pointless;
the Celtics, in fact, lost a surprisingly close game to the
Miami Heat,
as Curt and I sat next to Jack, smoking a mint flavored
hookah
and drinking the bar's extremely potent vodka sodas at a
pace of one per quarter.
Jeff arrived midway through the fourth quarter, and Curt
and I were, at that point,
fairly inebriated, yelling passionately at the mounted
television set as the Celtics slowly lost total control of
the game late;
at the conclusion of the game, the three of us decided to
go up the street;
at the arrival of the tab, which was delivered as I urinated
in the poorly mopped bathroom,
Curt became incensed. Wait, nine dollars for a vodka?!
he shouted in disbelief.
It was seven bucks, like, two weeks ago! he continued.
You guys have single-handedly shifted the supply and
demand of vodka in this place! Jeff said,

and both he and I began laughing hysterically;
Curt, however, remained irate.
But to be fair I agreed with Curt's assessment;
on Allens Avenue, in South Providence, in a strip mall
next to a bargain bin Chinese restaurant,
a saloon really had no business charging nine dollars for
a mid-level vodka,
even if the pour was more than generous -
plus a guy was murdered right outside the bar a little
over two years ago.

An Extremely Italian Bar & Lounge

L, K, and I were sitting outside of an extremely Italian bar and lounge,

and L and K were discussing what a dickhead N was as I sipped nonchalantly on a light beer, somewhat regretting going out for drinks, strenuously considering the fact I really needed to get my budget in order, sooner rather than later.

"He's *suuuuuchh* a dickhead," L said

"*Suuuuuuuuuch* a dickhead," K replied.

I'd just given myself somewhat of a drastic haircut and, in the interim, more than a few people had complimented me on the cut,

L and K both complimented me on my haircut as we sat at the extremely Italian lounge.

L said, "I like you hair, did you cut it?!"

and K agreed, more or less reiterating L's comments.

Having said that, I'd noticed the compliments, including L and K's,

were being relayed in a way that seemed to denigrate

how my hair was,
as if people were denigrating how I had had my hair as
much as they were actually complimenting my current
hair.
I'd only cut my hair by mistake, and I hated how short it
was -
I only meant to give myself a light trim but cut one strand
too short
and was subsequently forced into a full blown cut.
We sat outside at the extremely Italian lounge looking
onto Atwells Avenue.
To some extent, those who accept the utter irrelevance
of their existence become free to do as they please,
whereas those who fail to accept utter irrelevance
become doomed to become stars in their own eyes and
live lives of 'social people',
doomed to repackage this utter irrelevance
into utterly irrelevant episodes of micro-drama;
they become stars in the micro-soap operas of their
social circles;
they become entirely fueled by their own
micro-relevance,

their shifting roles and arcs in these micro-theaters,
and, of course, none of it can ever change the immutable
nature of our utter irrelevance,
and that immutability can only be suppressed for so long,
and at some point most of us stumble upon just that:
we come face to face with that unbearable fact right in its
unbearable, terrible face.

L, of course, was engaged in so much micro-drama that,
to her credit,
it may have well been macro-drama.

Her life could only be understood through drama,
the manufacturing of drama,
the distribution of drama,
the interpretation of drama,
the dissection of drama,
and, finally, the deconstruction of drama.

As objectionable as her methods were in concept, they
were,

if we're being honest with ourselves, equally admirable in
execution.

"N's *suuuuuuuch* a dickhead," L said,
delicately sipping from a glass of house white wine.

"Are you babysitting this weekend?" K asked pensively.

I felt a sudden, somewhat muted, urge to slit my wrists.

"*House* sitting. Yes," L said.

"Of course!" K replied,

"Well, I was thinking maybe we could ... *come over* one night?"

L glanced at me in an impish but good natured manner and said, "Of course!"

and I felt a sudden, somewhat muted, urge to slit my wrists.

My Favorite Restaurant!

We sat on the east side of the city where the waiter looked vaguely familiar, but vaguely familiar in a manner that, in my view at least, foreshadowed ominous events, in a way that caused me to irrationally speculate that this waiter possessed some of my darkest secrets, that he could now, if he so chose, irrevocably expose me in front of my so-called *girlfriend*, expose all, or at least a portion, of my darker recesses, my errant past, as he clearly, by way of body language and skittish eye contact, possessed my darkest secrets. There was something about dining out that gave rise to my most homicidal tendencies. Why do I feel like blowing up, not only myself, but this entire establishment right now? I thought, quaintly inquiring if my girlfriend found any of the listed appetizers appealing. It has to have something to do with capitalism, doesn't it?

The pernicious nature of exchanges and whatnot,
doesn't it? I thought,
quaintly agreeing to order the fish taco appetizer plate.
Yet I'm not nearly well-versed enough in the mechanics
of capitalism to draw that type of correlation,
one between pernicious cores of financial exchanges
and moderately priced,
bustling restaurants conjuring homicidal urges, I thought,
noting a quaint smile emerge on the face of our waiter as
he jotted down the order.
Upon noting the waiter's quaint smile, I came to the
conclusion he may not have actually possessed my
darkest secrets,
that we actually just shared a mutual acquaintance from
years past,
a girl I acted inappropriately toward on a particularly
heated night out,
and that was the most likely source of my - still mounting!
- anxiety.
I ordered a beer and attempted to calm my nerves;
my girlfriend sedulously studied the one page menu;
the restaurant was one of my favorite restaurants;

I never had a bad meal there.

Certain Stochastic Pangs of Conscience

I was unabashedly, on the precipice of a faltering
consciousness,
on the precipice of a fulfilled inebriation, ranting to Jen
about the plight of the poor,
how both my sister and I held inveterate sympathy for
slums of all sorts on a Saturday night.
Jess, Jeff's girlfriend, was randomly massaging my neck,
which was about as satisfying as it was baffling,
only because Jess openly despised me, and, for that
reason,
I really hadn't the slightest idea why she chose to
massage my neck,
but the massage was superb, and, during this massage,
I could sense Jen's eyes were on the verge of watering,
that she could sense my sincerity as I continued my
diatribe.
Jen worked in the same elementary school as my sister,
and I was putting in a good word after she noted such
nice things with regard to my sister.

I agreed with her statements regarding my sister,
and I made a point to reiterate both my sister's
sympathetic character as well as emphasize my own,
mainly, I wanted to emphasize that my sister's
noteworthy traits were indicative of a consistent gene
pool,
that caring about the less fortunate wasn't some
anomaly, distinct within our bloodline.
Now, in the abstract, during certain stochastic pangs of
conscience,
I absolutely cared about the poor and suffering,
despite the fact that I myself wasn't legally poor,
I'd incurred a reasonable amount of student debt and
was arguably suffering quite a bit,
yet, with that said, my actions themselves did almost
nothing to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and
suffering on any regular basis.
Jen was nearly in tears as I continued my inebriated
exegesis of my sympathies,
my sister's sympathies.
It's like, I've suffered, too, in my own way, I said
apparently convincingly,

yet it was also quite possible that I knew absolutely
nothing of veritable suffering,
that, in fact, I suffered only from a profound lack of
suffering,
suffered only via my awareness of this lack,
and the subsequent pity and the pervasive shame
attached to this lack of suffering.
Jen saw another side of me that night.
She barely knew me, but she saw an additional side of
me,
a side that was intensely sympathetic,
a side that was, at bottom, objectionable and
disingenuous.
It was possible that I didn't care about poor people at all.

Disingenuous, Overly Enthusiastic, Pandering

“You know my friend said she would totally fuck you if she didn’t have a boyfriend,” L said,
and my ears perked upward noticeably as the words “my friend” were uttered,
my eyes darted upward immediately as the words “totally fuck” were uttered;
I held a public pool stick that had most likely never been wiped down or thoroughly cleaned in my bare hands.
I was hunched over a public pool table in the process of losing my third straight game of pool by a wide margin,
wondering how my pool skills could fluctuate so violently, acutely cognizant of the fact I hadn’t fucked in quite some time,
feeling completely engulfed in a financial and emotional malaise that I speculated could easily endure for the remainder of my sentient life.
We were hanging out at a sports bar that had pool tables and pool cues
that definitely weren’t wiped down often,

and I had a thing about my hands being clean
because I felt like I involuntarily touched my face a lot.
L was wearing a turquoise blue dress that was a little
boxy around her thin frame,
and I felt fairly strongly she was a completely
untrustworthy person,
although I couldn't pin the feeling on any particular event,
but her general style of speech (disingenuous, overly
enthusiastic, pandering)
seemed to exude either a subdued nefariousness
or just a deep, probably irreversible, self-loathing.
"Oh yeah?" I said, now definitively holding up the game
of pool then asked,
"What's her name again?"
despite the fact I knew her friend's name,
but I said, *"What's her name again?"*
despite knowing her friend's name with a fair amount of
certainty.
L stated the name of her friend aloud and said, "I'm, um,
pretty sure you guys met before,"
of which I was aware, and I admitted that I'd actually
thought that was the case,

that I just wasn't one hundred percent sure what her name was,
and that was actually why I asked the question.
Yes, I actually admitted to disingenuously asking for her friend's name again.
To be honest, I didn't particularly like L,
although I didn't feel like I had a legitimate reason to dislike her.
I couldn't successfully pin my dislike to any particular event,
as she was always kind enough to me,
and that surface level kindness caused me to struggle with the fact I found myself instinctively disliking her.
Sometimes I asked myself why I found myself instinctively disliking L,
as I was always nice to her, and I was always polite.
I definitely kept my dislike latent, or at least I believed I did,
but how could I know for sure?
At the same time it was certainly possible, if not probable,
that L was actually talking large amounts of shit behind

my back,
noting an epic failure to keep my dislike latent,
and excoriating me for allowing my true feelings to seep
so shamelessly to the surface,
despite the fact I, personally, went around believing I
kept my dislike latent.
“Yeah, she’s cute,” I said, although I wasn’t all that
attracted to her friend.
L’s boyfriend was eyeing me,
seemingly increasingly eager to continue the game of
pool,
but also, possibly equally,
interested in the tabloid-like scenario L was clearly
encouraging.
Oh yeah, she definitely wanted me to bang her friend
who had a boyfriend,
that was clearly how she got off.
Me having sex with her friend, who had a boyfriend,
was preferable to her having the most mind blowing sex
of her life,
there was no doubt about that.

Frank's World View

The day began, the day before Thanksgiving,
with just a couple of beers at the Gray Barn but quickly
shifted to North Scituate,
and we sat in a living room with Jake the Snake as he
played us
extremely loud jazz through his studio quality speakers,
then, down the street at Guiseppe's,
Frank elaborated upon, over the complimentary bread
and extra virgin olive oil,
his increasingly pessimistic worldview following his close
friend and current bandmate rapidly succumbing to a
particularly debilitating form of liver cancer;
a girl who we knew on barely an acquaintance basis
informed us of her recent breast reduction,
and, inadvisably, we shared our sincere opinions on the
concept of breast reductions,
to which she abruptly left the bar,
and I said In retrospect, we should have been
significantly less honest - but it was too late.
Around last call we found ourselves in the small hallway

sized bar of Circe,
the night before Thanksgiving,
and we'd all had enough when I caught sight of a
particularly gigantic umbrella;
Wow, another nice umbrella! someone said,
possibly me,
as I hadn't bought an umbrella since 2012
in the Providence College student store at a predatory
price point,
covered in rain drops already,
for an overall paltry umbrella,
umbrellas were just ridiculously expensive, I thought,
so we put our heads together and devised a plan to steal
the umbrella;
I gently picked up the umbrella and fervently hugged it
against my right side,
and we made it out of the front door of Circe with the
umbrella
in a state of utter jubilation and ambled happily back to
the car!

Lucid Assessments of Intangible Feelings

Finalizing his divorce, Ron thought it would be a good idea to throw Dave a divorce party, yet, at the same time Kara, who Dave was having routine sex with at the time, had confided in me, unsolicited, the first time we met, that her friend Todd had been constantly telling her Dave was quote-unquote *bad news*, that “he, like, thinks Dave is just trying to fuck me, that he, like, doesn’t even care about me,” and I shrugged politely, feeling a little bad for Todd, who seemed like a pathetic loser, but not necessarily disagreeing with his quite lucid assessment of Dave. “I mean, he’s just sooooo in the friend zone,” Kara said, laughing, hesitantly using the fact that Todd was in the quote-unquote *friend zone* to discredit his,

quite possibly accurate, assessment of Dave.
At the divorce party, I'd arrived on time, while Kara was,
initially, nowhere to be found.
As I exited the bathroom,
after I peed,
I saw her, Kara, at the entrance and made brief but
definitive eye contact,
as she was wading through a cluster of people,
and I felt like, given the concentrated cluster of people
around the entrance,
I could probably delay the hello,
that maybe wading through the dense crowd of bodies to
say, "Oh, hi Kara,"
when I'd no doubt see her in a more comfortable
condition in a matter of minutes was unnecessary.
"You didn't say hi to me when you saw me walk in?" Kara
said, the first instant the opportunity arose.
An older, slightly built black guy wearing a Boston Bruins
hat,
a Boston Bruins t-shirt,
and a Boston Bruins backpack,
approached the two of us and said it was his birthday,

that he was forty five, and I said, "Happy birthday?"
unsure of what would be the most appropriate way to
address the comment.
He acknowledged the comment, then meandered to the
other side of the bar,
and I thought about how, regardless of race,
it was just really difficult to connect with certain people,
how sometimes, no matter how hard you try,
there's just no commonality, regardless of race,
and I moseyed back to the bar to buy a drink.
Kara, also moseying back to the bar, leaned into me,
both of us now leaning against the bar,
and asked me if I thought we should buy him a drink,
the birthday guy,
and we both looked across the bar.
I said, "But I don't know him,"
in a tone that was intended to convey that not knowing
him was a good enough reason not to buy him a drink,
to which she replied, "He's homeless, isn't he?"
to which I said "Why? Because he's black?"
to which she said "No! I mean. Do you think he is?"
"I don't know. Maybe he's just a big Bruins fan," I said,

and she made an incredulous face,
and I said, "What? Black people can't like hockey?"
Dave leaned against the bar now, too, and with little to no
background information said, "Yeah, put it on my tab!"
as we, all three of us, glanced again across the bar.
Before the drink could arrive, the guy chugged the rest of
his beer,
strapped on the second strap of his backpack, and left.

Vomiting Profusely

We stood at the amusement park in mid-June in oppressive heat and she said,
"It'll never work. If I vomited on you right now, would you still love me?"

"Well, I don't know about *vomit*," I said.

This situation was fundamentally triangular in essence,
that much was clear,
and her nerves were on the brink of getting the better of her,

that much was clear,
and I was dangerously ambivalent with regard to my capricious feelings and ethical responsibilities,
that much was clear.

"Oh nice, I love bumper cars!" I said,
standing in line for the bumper cars.

I was genuinely having a great time,
and the fact the day would inevitably have to end,
that other, equally enjoyable, days would also inevitably have to end,
tortured me relentlessly.

“You having a good time, though?”

“Oh ya!” she said, laughing nervously,
the nervous laughter communicating so much to me,
the nervous laughter communicating so much to me,
so many essential feelings that can never be accurately
simulated or recreated,
those moments end and even as you speak of them in
remembrance you eventually realize they no longer
exist,
that you’re fabricating as you go along,
that the people you cared for most are nothing but
memories,
and memories are simulations,
and simulations are sui generis!
Yet, in any case, all of those days had to end,
and they’d all torture me relentlessly
until I misremembered them all.
They’re just fleeting feelings now!

Annual Physicals

I had my second annual physical with Dr Ruggieri just a few months ago,
and thankfully the twenty five dollar co-pay was waived,
and I was a pound lighter than the previous year,
despite the fact I'd re-incorporated meat into my regular diet in August,
and Dr Ruggieri also touched my testicles;
he suggested, or I may have broached the topic,
that I go for bloodwork, it was first come, first serve,
and I wanted to get the bloodwork done,
I needed the bloodwork done,
and I didn't want to have to come back for the bloodwork,
so I walked down the hall, then I immediately walked back up the hall,
I didn't want to waste the whole morning
before my company holiday party taking blood,
but I could at least see if the line was really long, right?
So I walked back down the hall, then,
the thought of drinking alcohol for an entire day at the
company holiday party occurring to me,

I briskly turned around again and walked back up the hall;
no, I couldn't, there was no possible way I could have this bloodwork done today,
so I went home. For whatever reason,
I became totally flummoxed with regard to what to wear to the company holiday party,
as some items felt too fancy, while others felt too casual,
the amount of times I changed was absolutely absurd,
which would always occur in the event I didn't mentally decide upon one outfit
and commit without looking back, I'd fall into this cesspool of uncertainty;
I spritzed on some cologne, finally somewhat committed to my clothing,
I spritzed a little cologne up into the air to walk through and speckles of cologne went right into my right eye,
and I'd feel the irritation all the way to the holiday party.

Rotting Corpses

As Curt sat with a small stain on his Transformers t-shirt
distracted,
I couldn't help but reflect how I'd been glancing at the
exact same
rotting porcupine corpse on Route 146 for over a month
on my rides home from work,
how the porcupine corpse was taking so long to decay,
how it to this day hardly looked decayed at all when Curt
said,
sitting in the corner of the bar,
looking at the guy from across the bar,
I wanna beat the shit out of that guy, and we could do it,
but the only downside is, after he woke up,
I'm pretty sure he'd have us both killed,
to which I replied, leaning into the corner of the bar,
looking at the guy from across the bar, I don't know,
I wasn't that offended when he told me to go fuck myself.
Even prior to discovering the guy could ostensibly have
us murdered if we beat him up,
I remained surprisingly unoffended that he told me,

unsolicited,
to go fuck myself and had no interest in resorting to
physical violence,
at the time, I was in the midst of playing pool with an
attractive grandmother,
the most attractive grandmother I'd met to date,
and she was defeating me handily,
to the extent it should have been embarrassing,
but much like being told, unsolicited, to go fuck myself I
was surprisingly unconcerned about it,
I wasn't embarrassed at all.
Having lost the game of pool handily, I had to buy the
grandmother a beer,
but that was fine,
the days of being ill-tempered and petty, hot headed and
cheap,
they were clearly behind me,
it was almost as if, those days, they never existed.
The grandmother told me, for the third time that hour,
I physically resembled an immature guy who dated one
of her friends,
and I said That's impossible,

I'm actually incredibly mature,
as I witnessed, out of the corner of my eye,
Dave swirling two handfuls of barbecue wings into the
pan of party pizza,
placing the barbecue wings like pepperonis onto the
party pizza,
that's why he wasn't losing any of the weight he wanted.

Tiny Schlongs

On a Sunday afternoon, two days before the Providence College basketball game,
I was already a little drunk, and my friend Alex asked me via text
if I wanted to go to the Providence College basketball game,
it was that Tuesday, and I told him sure, I'd go (why not?),
but I was actually replying sarcastically because I was a little drunk,
but Alex took the reply seriously, not realizing I was drunk and poorly attempting sarcasm,
so, feeling bad and unsure of how to reply, I seriously acquiesced the request,
and with that in mind I left work at five pm sharp on Tuesday,
because I wanted to work out quickly before the game began,
so I entered my apartment then immediately exited my apartment after

changing into gym clothes, and as I walked from the staircase into the parking lot,
I live in an apartment located above six small businesses,
I saw what looked like an exposed torso in the middle of the lot,
it was about five thirty pm, so the businesses were still well trafficked,
and it was winter, so it was already pitch black,
and a young person's winter coat was hiked up to the nipple region,
and a young person's sweatpants were jacked down to the knee-joint area,
a young black kid in need of a haircut, eight years old or so,
had his tiny schlong exposed,
he was dispensing piss out of his tiny schlong into the middle of the parking lot in front of the six small businesses.
Sup? he said to me casually as I somewhat hesitantly walked by.
Sup, man? I replied in a conversational register,

attempting to avoid eye contact,
specifically attempting to avoid eye contact with his
penis,
but, at the same time, definitely noticing a strong stream
of steaming liquid
pouring onto the dark but well trafficked parking lot,
I performed a quick workout and arrived at
the Dunkin Donuts Center just in time to meet Alex for
the game.

Milwaukee Bucks 2017 Type Shit

Unfortunately, I had a loogie of mucus stuck in my throat while sitting in traffic, so I rolled my window down and spat the loogie but completely missed the window, and the loogie landed on my window buttons; I wiped my viscous spit with my fleece sleeve, and the person in the car adjacent definitely witnessed the whole thing.

When I got to the gym the Stairmaster I mounted fortuitously displayed the playoff game on the empty treadmill that sat in front of said Stairmaster, and it was all perfect, everything had fallen into place perfectly until some fuck mounted that specific treadmill, despite the fact there were eight other treadmills open, and I really wanted to catch the playoff game and soon realized my decision to go to the gym was completely misguided, and it goes without saying that three of my friends were working out at the gym,

and it goes without saying it would have been rude not to
say hello and chat for a couple of minutes,
and it goes without saying that they inquired if I was
around that night,
and, of course, I was totally around,
but I cut the conversation with all three of them just a
little short,
I truncated the conversation with all three of my
acquaintances,
because I wanted to get home and watch the remainder
of the playoff game,
but, at the same time, I had no interest in mentioning my
reasoning for leaving so swiftly,
mostly because I felt as though the question of why
would I go to the gym
if I wanted to watch this apparently very important playoff
game so fervently?
would have been raised,
that if my main priority was watching a playoff game
currently being played,
then why would I choose to go to the gym during the time
of the game?

The fact of the matter was I had no rational reason as to
why I needed to leave the gym in such a rush,
as it was the apparent the playoff game couldn't have
been that important to me
if I voluntarily chose to go to the gym while the playoff
game was being played.
I felt a little awkward on my ride home,
I felt like certain elements could never be reassembled,
at one time, these elements were ostensibly in place,
assembled appropriately,
that they had to have been in place at one time,
in perfect harmony,
with inscrutable geometry,
but it was doubtful these elements could ever be put
back there,
into place.

The Doorman at Tel Aviv

I wasn't about to wait in line to get into the new Tel Aviv
after we were denied entrance that past Tuesday
when there wasn't a single person on the patio, I said,
at that point it was a matter of principle,
as I felt as though I'd made my thoughts on that doorman
abundantly clear,
I wanted absolutely nothing to do with that doorman
going forward,
I'd rather drink under a bridge than try to get into Tel Aviv
again,
in fact, I couldn't wait for Tel Aviv to close,
and it would inevitably close,
so I could laugh in the doorman's face when I inevitably
saw him out elsewhere,
in fact, I couldn't wait to see him out at a bar, out of a job,
no longer wearing a ridiculous suit while working on the
Providence River,
the Providence River filled to its brim with quarter-empty
Capri Suns pouches
and bass with bad teeth,

no longer employed to inform innocent people
'Sorry, but you can't wear sneakers in here.
Sorry! Also, on the weekends, for the patio, make a
reservation. Thanks!'

I couldn't wait to see him out at a bar, out of a job,
while I wore sneakers and laughed, not necessarily at
him,
but laughed in a way that strongly implied I was indeed
laughing at him,
jobless, now drinking away his sorrows in a bar where
everyone wore sneakers.

With that being the case,
we met up with Gen at Pasha and she gave Curt a
container of leftover shrimp cocktail from work,
and, suddenly famished, I ate the shrimps in the middle
of the parking lot at Pasha and,
afterward, threw the doggie bag in the bushes,
where it would stay until at least the following Thursday,
Curt witnessed the doggie bag four times in a row on his
way to work,
and while chewing the shrimp in the parking lot,
while making liberal use of the cocktail sauce,

I noted the sauce was saving the meal, that the shrimp
itself was a little dry,
and I wondered if its arid quality was the reason that Gen
gave it to Curt in the first place.

A Somewhat Inexplicable Lack of Glee

There's a feeling I can't quite grasp when I engage in
summer activities in September
on a small boat with my Uncle fishing for bass stripers
the day is undeniably beautiful,
indistinguishable on its surface from a breathtaking day
in mid-July, or even late-August,
yet there's something unshakably solemn I can't seem to
grasp in the atmosphere.
It's still technically summer, but it no longer feels like
summer - mid-July feels majestic,
and I bask in its majesty;
there's something sacred about a late-August afternoon
that conjures the most profound reflections from me
annually,
yet a comparable September afternoon is blasé and
anticlimactic.
I feel indecent - somehow, impalpably, tainted by the fact
I'm on a boat in the month of September.
Sitting on the North Providence town beach on a perfect

Sunday afternoon,
I'm severely lacking in glee-my glee is dissipated;
I'm desperately searching for glee and discover none.
I think about wearing a fleece, how I should be wearing a
fleece in mid-September,
not shamelessly basking in the sun laying on the North
Providence town beach;
there aren't even any lifeguards on the beach-
I almost hope for an immediate twenty degree drop in
temperature. Why?
This sensation is impalpable, and I find it completely
intangible-
is it muscle memory from my youth, where school
traditionally (re)started in September,
and summer activities subsequently ceased?
My schedule is now indistinguishable from January
through December.
Summer extends from approximately June 21 through
September 21;
I should enjoy these mid-September Summer days,
view them as unanticipated gifts and pleasant surprises-
instead I feel a vague sense of shame, a touch of

embarrassment indulging in late Summer;
if I engage in the same acts in late-August I think If only
this moment could last forever-
I love this time of year, the twilight of summer!
If I perform the same act, under the same weather, less
than one month later,
in mid-September, the profundity's dissipated-
I no longer wish any of it could last forever;
I'm totally indifferent to the ephemera I perceive; I almost
want it to get cold.

We Have No Reason To Ever See Each Other Again

We were preparing to leave the party,
because we'd definitely stayed for an appropriate amount
of time,

without a doubt longer than the hosts expected of us,
and I'd had more than enough Absolut vodka to drink
and more than enough homemade paella to eat,
and I wasn't positive my comments about the baklava
were interpreted as ironically as I'd intended
when I said Bye! If I don't see you before you leave, have
a good trip!

Bye! If I don't see you before you leave, have a good trip!

This person, whom I'd just met,
who was admittedly physically attractive,
whom I'd conversed with for, at maximum, three minutes
about her history of living in California,
was now being told to Have A Good Trip if I didn't see
her.

Why?

There was absolutely no reason for us to see one

another before she left town,
and there would be no subsequent birthday parties
between our mutual acquaintances in the upcoming two
weeks,
or however long her trip was extending,
because I couldn't even remember how long she claimed
to be extending her trip.
In fact, I couldn't even remember her damn name,
yet, for some unforeseen reason,
I uttered the phrase *If I don't see you, have a good trip* as
I left the party.
Days later the phrase *If I don't see you, have a good trip*
still caused me to cringe in the most severe fashions,
caused me to reconsider my entire upcoming social
schedule,
caused me to contemplate removing myself from society
at large for an extended period of time.
Taking a pee,
looking benignly at myself in the mirror sitting above the
toilet,
the words *If I don't see you, have a good trip*
reverberated through my cranium,

causing me to just slightly shudder as I peed,
causing just a modicum of pee to miss the toilet.
It was precisely that type of utterly careless verbiage I so
arduously tried to avoid on a regular basis,
especially among females (fearing the wrath of
significant others),
but also among males (fearing the possibility of Making
Subsequent Plans).

Then again, it was possible she appreciated the
comment?

I'd admittedly been maybe slightly standoffish during the
dinner portion of the party,
the only portion of the party where we conversed,
so it was possible the parting comment redeemed my
first impression as a person slightly standoffish.

Granted, even at that,
it was a potential redemption from a person I'd most
likely never see again,
but it was nevertheless a potential redemption,
yet conversely, it was possible she didn't even recall the
parting comment at all.

Yes, it was entirely possible she'd indulged in one too

many drinks to recall anything from the tail end of the night,
and it was possible she didn't even remember who I was (which would be preferable!),
and it was possible no one in our vicinity even overheard the comment!
Yes! I could ask Tim.
He'd likely have some insight into the matter,
but, frankly, do I even want to know?

Gradually Reduced Frivolity

Curt texted me the words are you around out of the blue
at ten pm on a Friday night I'd assumed he was

depressed about

his latest breakup and wanted to meet up for a drink
after work,

when, in reality, he'd called out of work and started
drinking with his dad at two pm

and wanted to know if, at ten pm, I'd meet him at Hot
Club;

I immediately obliged.

Curt had previously engaged in sexual relations with a
bartender at Hot Club,

and, on her night off, she was mingling with a group of
us,

despite the fact Curt was intermittently asking her,
somewhat playfully (but with a frequency that undercut
his frivolity),

why she was being so moody, which she promptly
disagreed with;

in fact, the only thing making her moody, not that she

was moody,
was Curt intermittently asking her, only somewhat
playfully,
if she was, in fact, moody.
There's no way I'm having sex with Dominica tonight,
Curt said
as she generously bought us a round of drinks,
and I apathetically said Well, you never know...
and accepted a beer from Dominica, then politely,
reticently informed her I'd actually requested a vodka
as Curt asked if he'd told me about the girl he'd met the
other night,
a blonde from New York at a cigar bar in East
Greenwich;
he got her number yet held no physical interest in her
whatsoever,
all he could think about was the image of his
ex-girlfriend, and, morosely,
Curt speculated that he was asexual now,
that he was no longer capable of amorous interest in
either sex,
then he displayed pictures of his ex-girlfriend,

whom I'd met multiple times, on his phone.
Our friend Tony, who'd met Curt at Hot Club before I
arrived,
couldn't drive and had no money on him,
and he also didn't have a valid ID,
so we weren't sure if it would be possible go anywhere
else,
as Tony had a license that was suspended indefinitely,
a temporary license, a replacement for the temporary
license,
all three of which he'd left downtown at G-Pub on three
separate occasions.
Well, I guess we could go to G-Pub, suggested Curt,
and it seemed like the most logical choice-

Remembering D-Day Right Outside Normandy

On Memorial Day or Veteran's Day -

I always confuse the two -

Nick and Lisa invited me to Fat Belly's to day-drink, and I

was immediately amenable to the idea,

although it was admittedly slightly ill-advised,

as Lisa used to be good friends with a girl who was my

ex-girlfriend to a certain extent,

and their falling out was at least somewhat related to our
relationship,

although I vehemently denied any involvement,

despite the fact my denials were laughable,

as Lisa knew exactly what happened, and so did I.

Sitting in a large bar booth with a large group of people,

all of whom were drinking heavily (myself included),

I'd noted that one of Lisa's acquaintances seemed to find
me unamusing,

and initially her nonverbal disdain for me didn't

particularly bother me -

obviously not everyone is going to find you amusing,

and of course it would be ridiculous to think everyone will
like you,
much less find you amusing,
but at the same time I thought it would be nice if,
somehow, everyone on the planet could like me? -
if all of the attention available in the known universe
could be paid to me and me alone,
and also if everyone found me amusing as well?
I thought that would be nice.
The girl mentioned, not to me directly,
as she clearly found my personality innately distasteful,
but to the group as a whole,
that she was working on acquiring her masseuse
certification,
and I mentioned, just in passing,
that a handful of massage parlors around the city
allegedly offered so-called happy endings following their
massages,
that they whacked you off after the massage,
if you preferred.
After she'd apparently vehemently expressed her disdain
for me to a number of people in the venue,

I mentioned to Nick that I never insinuated *she* was in the business,
would be in the business, of performing happy endings, that I simply noted happy endings were, allegedly, an *aspect* of the massage industry, or at least that's what I'd heard! - not that I'd ever been whacked off after a massage myself, I mentioned to Nick. I mentioned to Nick that certain people in finance embezzle funds from time to time, that Lisa's friend could mention generic embezzlement around me, and I wouldn't be ipso facto offended, I wouldn't automatically assume she was insinuating / was personally embezzling funds! If anything, wouldn't that make it seem like I *was* personally embezzling funds. When Lisa's friend's boyfriend arrived she clearly informed him of the whole ordeal, and I left shortly following the arrival of said boyfriend.

The Necessity of Yacht Clubs

My friend Nate passed away nearly ten years ago and subsequently his tenth annual fundraiser at the East Providence Yacht Club was approaching, that upcoming Saturday actually, and Curt, having attained workers' comp for four weeks following the removal of a benign cyst from his right ring finger,

asked me if he could go too, and I said of course! Prior to leaving my apartment, Tim texted me asking if I'd be attending Nate's annual fundraiser, to which I told him my plan to meet with Curt prior, to which Tim suggested we all go together, which was fine, assuming Tim would make it to Curt's mother's by two pm, which he probably wouldn't.

I arrived at Curt's mother's house on Arnold Avenue and gingerly opened the unlocked front door, the house seemed completely empty as I meekly whispered Curt? and overheard what sounded like loud belching,

so I tiptoed toward the kitchen,
unsure if Curt's younger brother was home alone,
and, upon entering the kitchen,
found Curt in an arm cast and oversized windbreaker
pacing in circles around the island in his mother's
kitchen,
belching aloud repeatedly.
We both immediately agreed waiting for Tim would be
cumbersome

On Urban Milieus

I only truly feel like myself when I reside in urban milieus
yet,
on balance, I prefer solitude;
in suburban and rural areas I feel my personality
dissipate,
and a pervasive sense of emptiness envelops me-
in urban areas I feel at home;
a pervasive sense of jubilation envelops me, yet, on
balance,
I prefer solitude. But I also prefer to reside in urban
areas.
I have an intense fear of poltergeists and supernatural
phenomena,
but only when residing in rural milieus;
if residing in a city,
I have absolutely no concerns about ghosts or
supernatural phenomena;
I sleep extremely well.
From ages five through twenty-seven, while living in
suburban or rural milieus,

I was regularly haunted by the prospect of supernatural phenomena;
the only exceptions were the semesters I spent away at college,
where I lived in a densely populated area of campus -
I slept extremely well while away at college.
Ideally, I'd prefer to be amongst people -
but I'd prefer to avoid interacting with said people;
I want to be amongst a crowd of people, none of whom I
know personally,
and interact with none of them, except in the most
superficial of ways.
Ideally, I'll experience a profound solitude but also avoid
any possible loneliness.
My greatest fear is loneliness; my most profound
preference is solitude.
Some of the more logical amongst us would argue urban
milieus
and solitude are diametrically opposed,
but I find my most profound solitudes only when amongst
clusters of people,
all of whom I don't know personally,

none of whom I have any interest in speaking with -
except superficially.

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