

in my meadow upstairs, i build symphonies sampling the secured-beeping of car alarms that rise around me and Lu w each parked car we pass. that is exactly the type of place Austin Texas is.

i arrive at the origin story of every paranoid delusion i been had. so, bare w me. imagine my thoughts displayed before me, flashing nonlinearly a la the last half of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, imagine like when Shinji is trapped inside Eva Unit 001 and becomes one w his consciousness ... yall feel me. each of these images — and there are literally hundreds, simultaneously stacked — cutting, jumping back and forth. each image can be a dream, a memory, a sensation, for the sake of keeping track though, they often have been entirely fabricated situations using the above to build their own anxious environments. my brain creates these as a protective measure, running a number of scenarios so i can be wholly prepared for whatever i'm projecting myself walking into. it's a defensive mechanism ive cultivated subconsciously since a lil one, born from the warm springs of my anxiety, strengthened by my artistic sensibilities — for a long time til recently i described this as an “overactive” or “vivid” imagination, but ive come to terms w the line in the sand. zoom in on one of these fabrications: i'm runnin thoo the scenario, playing out alleem possibilities, and like i'm deep, welled-up, stuck in it. i get stuck on anything too long and i make myself believe issa reality, by which i mean i'm *living* it. once i'm in i'm in. i'm in playing out the worst case scenarios. preparation, and cuz i'm stuck i can only subconsciously get unstuck by ... i never get that far. i gotta stop myself from getting that far. anyway by this point my anxiety has risen to such a level that it threatens my comfortable reality — ive unlocked my multiverse. i wanna skrrt back home, first i need a definition for that.

a spotlight searching for, yet i skkrt i want no parts. literally like: me and Brain playing chess, and i cant tell what cuzz motives are. my subconscious is Bengt Ekerot from *The Seventh Seal*.

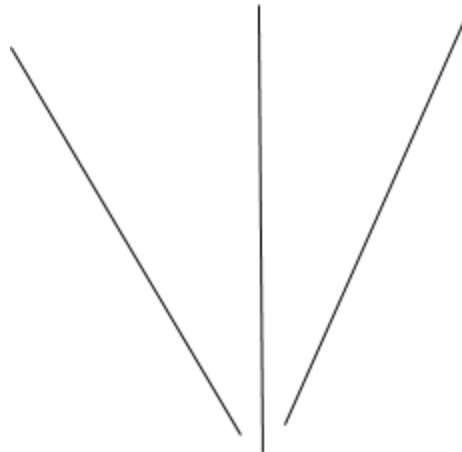
i often been thinking, why do i ~~want~~ need to feel special? why do i need to feel needed? flash thought i had: to a white population, i be feeling special but not in a desirable way. i just wanna be desired and not

left alone. right alone. aint been strong enough recently to defend against invaders.

imagine my thought process ass to mouth, interconnected, uninterrupted. there are three distinct ways my anxiety is manifesting rn, i'll list them from least to most abnormal:

- 1) sleeplessness,
- 2) big pissing mad times during said sleeplessness — quite literally tryna expel the anxiety from my body, and,
- 3) over-eating.

my being is built in three distinct structures. currently holding a feeling in which i'm inhabiting three bodies. my brain-body, my body-body, and my emotions, or emo-body. to function properly, they should work in conjunction, converge, like so:



lovely. however rn they overpower each other, especially my emotional body. they run on opposing tracks which fucks up functionality, and looks like:



i'm hilarious, cleaning my glasses w loose towels in the room, yet the towels aint raggedy, aged fa sho, and too coarse so my fingers applying force on force, likely to pop in the middle. i'm just eniggma, dont matter what i say.

when i'm high i hear differently, or rather specifically. i can pinpoint points at different distances. apparently when i'm alone i hold things. hammydown desert boots or longboi water bottle — it's like i just wanna have yall next to me! *fuckisyalltalmhout!*

heavy rains and whipping winds coming close to Florida. i'm just tryna get high and relax. i'm soft-twisting new growth. each time the bedroom door concerts the exterior hallway w moans and screeches i'm reminded of my place in the universe. asshole naked, how else i'm supposed to be. concentrating on breathing and heartbeats when i'm tryna sleep, feeling each nerve along my ulnar track up my left arm. the way i hold my phone and books and een notebooks i write in contributes to the disintegration. iont know, sumns gotta be pinched. cant lay on my stomach no more, back on back. is it pain, or whats pain? whats the differentiation if eighthings on Ten. damn i'm really disconnected rn huh? big loose, all

over space. three's company, at least all my bodies friendly w each other, eeenif they communicate on they own terms.

police lights like god steppin into the bedroom, the blinds the shins, the windowpanes steppin like only god can, lightshow nightshow. if theres a fire truck, two firefighters, two squad cars, several rubberneckers including myself — fully naked head to shoulders — tiddies out the window, hoping my glasses stay put — who should i call?

i eat sardines out the aluminum tin w blue corn tortilla chips and drip soybean oil on my bare feet and bedsheets. ask me any question. need to stretch my body out, *need-need*. Quemi says to remember the things you forget to remember. am i saying that right? why do i wanna be right?

spit tastes grey; on acid.

recently ive noticed a big misconception that i hate the rain. this obvi is rooted in my deep and heartfelt complaints about being stuck out in the rain ill-prepared. what iont fw is wet feet. wet feet wet glasses. riding the train w its pre-existing pitfalls w the addition of soaked socks is sensory overload. sumn that controls me, holds onto me until i achieve comfortability. and i'm near-sighted, so if my lenses drippin off my own personal portable windshield and the rain bunkin, i cant eeen clean em so i'll take em off and be lost in allat silver static. i want my steps to hit solid ground. issa control thing. if i have weather-resistant shoes and a stable umbrella i'm gucci. my comfort is everything.

some of the brownstones on 119th were imported from the Eastern Bloc. i must question what is considered *intelligence*, revisionist definitions, thinking of those labelled "normal"/"regular" and their perceived intelligence. two conversations on 119th, one about the Superbowl, the statistical readiness of each player — reminds me of my Dad, a former halfback in high school i do believe, my Dad who catches and vocalizes each penalty w coachly natural/actualness — the second conversation, maybe two blocks west, a group of youngboys congregated under the scaffolding of their building's entryway, one arguing they should stop referring to their set as Bloods and just go w [REDACTED]; besides, the

meaning different. i cant help noticing that two are in blue tech suites, one standing in red, some seated unconfirmed ... maybe there still is genuine connectivity, in the gutter where it matters ... thinking bout codes thinking bout secrets.

one side-mouthed *weeoorp* blaring behind holds me, and as much as i feel myself tugging myself round the shoulders spinning myself around tryna confirm that Them Boys aint hollin at me, i resist. 12 cant dominate me. that sound synthesizes w its environment to produce particular meanings —

tangent: somebody job was to create that siren sound. imagine if part of reparations was tapping Metro Boomin for the remix —

a white-haired Rasta crossing 120th going north on Amsterdam makes eye contact w me, i smile, he pats his hand over his heart. thats what i'm talmbout.

*i'm w my niggas niggin
and we dont really fit in ...
we get in where we fit in
circle back to the niggin*

the concept of getting in where you happen to fit in is cute yet has troubling real life implications. chiefly i'm thinking of how when you first move to an expensive city and just find a room, literally fitting into an open slot out here like Tetris w real bodies; sometimes i'd rather get-in-where-is-practical-and-happy, or whats best, i aint tryna argue w words, rather be outchere *doing* and talking less, often, lately, i aint tryna talk at all as experiment. whatever the implications. *i'm really nothing like yall niggas* — every rapper.

off the Blue Line coming down tryna decide if it truly is different off the California stop where i stomped ground 8 years ago, or if it's actually a projection. i was a different type of enigma. brain was, too. i'm on the 66 bus to Navy Pier, tryna hit the MoCA, allowing instead of forcing the memories to swallow me up. the bus is a lil tighter fit than i remember, makes me miss Chicago niggas, their tone their intonation, how they stretch out vowels hella hard, dropping *r*'s at the end of words, or bookending w an *h*. every single nigga here is musical. i remember the

McDonald's on State and Chicago, the committed community of shelterless surrounding it. from crust punks to drunks to junks.

'i got time for *you* ... it's 2:17, time for *you* to go,' from the Black McDonald's manager to the Black, shelterless, disheveled person teetering thoo the lines asking for change. am i wrong for thinking the manager should give *us* more slack, or am i out of pocket? whats felt is never out of pocket, i aint privy to allat history there. they dont press him, he still standing, wavering, a cashier softly says as she passes by him, 'please dont bother the customers.' i buy an extra small fry to give to the person asking for change outside, who is appreciative. one eye is blind, the color of the iris faded to a beautiful washed-out light blue that pops perfectly off slick brown skin. on Michigan Av across from the Art Institute, a kid asks me if i smoke weed. 'yeah.' 'i be havin, got some now bro.' 'i aint got no cash but thank you fam.' 'if you catch me out here lemme know bro.' he camouflages himself into a crowd of tourists by wearing a white Chicago flag t, brilliant. i lowkey love how people can read that i'm always interested in copping. i do put off that energy.

there are attributes of friendship that confirms the realness of the relationship. you must feel loved and truly supported. you can crash on couches for ambiguous amounts of time. they'll make you food and make your bed. they remind you, somewhat, of you. or at least who you wanna be.

being transported at 50mph, that is incredible. move thoo time. travel, rather. i have another thought. what if we tell companies to halt all production in the interest of waste management, right ... and the employees of said companies continue receiving salaries, are required to perform community service in their offtime instead, i mean, i'm just thinking / saying shit so someone smarter than me will be inspired.

i see much of the world ... or i mean thats broad. what i'm saying is there are widespread issues w communication. i dont know like,

as of late, my phone keep switching timezones. Chicago to New York, central standard to out east. as if my perception of time werent futup already, so at night i'm looking for stimulation⁵ tryna decide Time, what i got time for? play *Pokemon Y*, watch *PBS Newshour*, *NGE*, write a lil bit, smoke a lil sumn, snug, pack, spray up Souske, peep out the patio (which is just a blanket and rug over the dormant radiator facing the westward window) one last t, piss, eat, sleep, think. i dont know what i have time for. balance is lacking. it's all good feelings rn, though.

young nigga get some school money and what cuzz do w it? — besides the obvious, apartment furnishings, all-purpose cleaners, yellow sponges w the green scrubby sides, steel wool, trashbags, a 30-rack of toilet paper, WD-40, silver bolt-lock for the front door, *and what else!* — send bread to the gang #supportgang, send Thadds bread to get songs mixed in a professional studio. we all need to eat. where do my priorities lie? currently they lie in this move from Brooklyn to Harlem w my man, finally get our own cozy space to build up.

i'm curious to know how this memory foam mattress will register my thrashing about in the nighttime.

i must see the dirt cascading off my palms fingers and wrists when washing my hands⁸, need that visual confirmation, rubbing hands together like reaching for prayers, feeling friction, hearing the *skwelch* of soapy water suction, digging fingernails into palms, applying soap directly to nails. i'm honest w myself when i aint tryna shower. post-mental health days be hittin. it's not cute like some people be writing about. often i'm too deep inside to ever evacuate. finding the right words is difficult. punching my skull to stop the thoughts runnin. so anxious that i'm afraid. to text your mother father sibling and closest friends the thought that this is forever. the implications of that. smoking a one-hitter for praxis not pleasure, a reduction, as to make it thoo one final hour of retail work, eenif it does loosen the glue to my senses/sentences.

stop feeling guilty nigga. your people still riding for you.

nails decreasing in length cuz the gel pulled off and i'm waiting for a relationship check-in. bring up some shit i been hibernating on to my damn baby while they at work, bad move on my part. i promise to be more mindful and patient; i need to promise to put up action behind that shit i'm talking. feet feel solid . adversely, my splashing may or may not cause damage to the vessel. i must contain these projections. i must not put words in they mouth before they can prepare they own dishes. i must endure a lil anxiety. niggas gotta learn or stay stagnant.

i must believe that whole societies can get stuck to the past. how do you travel backwards without rumination?

i must consider the variables of walking w my damn baby on the sidewalk. firstly, slow my ass down — i be stridin, boppin, meditating like i be doing — secondly, match their marching, step nsync, thats deeper camaraderie eye-to-eye type beats — my attention falters, autobodypilot yawfeel me. my head space frees up for the first time during meditation move, moves thoo and amongst the atmosphere, aint about me though, stepping w gang / baby to let go ego. there he go.

i have some trauma from feeling misunderstood. i feel lonely and disconnected in infinitesimal ways thooout the days. this misunderstoodity manifesting all over the damn place. it's hard for me, or rather, i repeat myself; i shut down, make myself mad small; i become confused and self-conscious, which the latter two are definite danger signs that lead to panic attacks, and in worst cases, flashbacks which, *fuuuck* a flashback, they aint fun or romantic. i cant think of more now, best believe more exist. i must admit that this misunderstoodidness occurs despite my own knowledge of my own speech, how i be mumbling, running words ass-to-mouf, looking away, projecting. i know this; i'm knowing my truth. the loudest voices lowkey be doing the fucking most.

i must take the time to appreciate every stop i take. i'm in Vermont like a muhfucka. soft snow twankles under ankles. i try to describe my own bootcrunching, instead the Gihon River has its own ideas, running half-iced underneath me, a natural racket. i been describing the landscape to my niggas in groupchats as a literal tundra, while definitionally, it is not. trees all thoo this bitch. (Did i just call Mother Earth a bitch?) effect the same. what are words anyway? stupid ass nigga.

i stare at Gihon from behind a window thats behind a fence of leafless stick talk thats in front of a snow-covered bank, a surprisingly green grass perforating the white where the white has flown away. i'm looking at a map of Black and Brown neighborhoods in a big city, but instead of Black the white wills it green to map potential investments. actually some of the sticks is talking green too, rising high out the white, reaching into the sky, scraping whatever coming close. wondering about the functionality of scraping — will it destroy or re-seed? — and anyway it's semantics that hides the true nature of growth. i cant turn out the lights until it's too Black to see the green, until Gihon turns from fast-moving Brown to fast-moving Black, both Black and Brown speeding in that same direction. movement at once so chaotic as to overwhelm me until the realization of order, that it flows one way, maybe, that there was sumn to follow; this made me feel like the river understood where the fuck i'm coming from.

i am in a situation: i am isolated to the real world, or what i'm saying is i'm isolated to tangibility.

theres this internal struggle of whether to capture the Gihon in writing or w video. i must question what it is that i wanna create. how can i create a thing that already exists? would it be more effective to point yall in the direction of the thing that already exists, to skrrt round the connection between capture and conquer folded into the creases of my brain? without any social media i must be intentional w my creations, like actually make-make sumn, rather than make a 15-30 second recording w a location tag that passively announces that i have *seen* a thing and this is the *thing*. tryna be intentional bout who i'm telling, if circles is now small. (small worlds be smackin lowkey, dont sleep on my size.) i must question intentionality. a recording for the sake of memory? the CDC said in 2017 that Alzheimer's rates rose 55% from '99-2014; i'm too shook to search new statistics. what do i do anything for? i never properly plan for futures. i piss in the dark to keep that grayed-out cohesion from room to bathroom. i look at Gihon bunkin, folding, crumpling in on itself like the hemispheres of my brain stretched out yet keeping its secrets. it's like me out there, moving; some ripples aint got no business being understood.

i imagine this manuscript contained in this cute ass lil green Fabriano notebook to be like scraps saved in the fridge. like, i'm saying you take several meals youve had the last few whatevers, some of your favorite foods, store them properly and concisely in a scrap fridge until it's full. you empty your scraps, or rather you reassess the scraps, make a brand new feast. like yall ever been stupid high and poor and cooked all the loose foods you had? it's like that. hot water cornbread living. make a brand new feast for a broader, hungry audience to enjoy. there is no prepwork. there is no pre-conception. there is only savoring. each lil bite built atop the other to present sumn grander, i.e. an emergent property, if i used that term correctly.

the snow is actually nice, despite my previous feeling about being out up in it. snowflakes wink kisses of light at me. if this purity is temporary i must take more walks. snow up to the ankle of my pants. i walk towards this Maplefields gas station down Pearl St, when i heal-tap-stomp the snow on the porch and tug the door handles it's locked on both sides. one employee at the counter quite obviously looking hard the opposite direction. it's cool, i'm

uncomfortable being visible in allis white anyway. i'm high i'm a lil paranoid and i'm chillin and very lowkey sawty that i'm snackless. an old white dude scares me when i look down and look up. 'good evening!' — me. 'good evening.' seeing white faces w elongated eyes in each and every footprint.

grey skies steady spitting white. woke up w my bank account doubly overdrawn.

me, Cindy, Jo, and Jova looking in each others studios cuz we starting to clique-up and wanna be closer to one another. *POC Crawling: A Memoir*. Jova says, 'the way each of your studios smells tells me a lil bit of your personalities.' she is so sweet and i feel trusted and seen in front of her smiling. seen though not exploited. my room smells like pre-rolls hiding in a stainless steel tupperware and unsteeped mint tea bags. thats a read if i ever been read.

i live in a box on an island.

today

floss

stretch

read *Mrs. Dalloway*

smoke weed only after dark

schedule dentist appt for Myrrhp

~~smarthistory videos~~

sort mail and clean clothes

wash cutting board / dish rack

listen to new music

therapy

i usually operate in extremes, and it's difficult to operate any liminal spaces. for example like i will feel like i said sumn wrong to Myrrhp if they like telling me about some uncomfortability or miscommunication; i have the ability to recognize humor of anything, so i'll try to do or say sumn silly like, *fuck that, am i right?*, concluding w a dap which will be denied and i'm then confused by this denial and rejection.⁴ sumn specific about rejection or misconnection of humor, of abandonment. so i'll opt to stop talking cuz wtf can i say or do if ive upset my person? yet not talking, in my case, is a definite signal that i'm either upset or confused, which makes Myrrhp feel guilty, all of which produces a negative feedback loop that then threatens to crash or crush any positive feelings surrounding the both of us. i dont know how to *not* have my feelings hurt. i dont possess the ability to fake shit.

in the Uber, asking my honeyman to put my phone in the lil cutie backpack — i immediately notice the impulse to grab for phone, the impulse to access information, just wondering what architecture style the Philadelphia City Hall is. inferring what i already know. noting the ionic pillars and rose windows. i have some expanding to do fa sho.

the first thing thats immediately most noticeable without my phone is the music playing loudly in my head. currently listening to Trippie Redd's *Black Magic*, specifically the lines

*yeeeeeeaaaauuh — hey
woke up one day like fuck it
i feel like turning nothin into somethin*

beginning to feel a connection i been searching for for a few years and a strong collab between my brain and body. these Trippie lyrics seem to have some specificity to em, like my brainbody know how i'm feeling and is speaking directly at me. it's metropolitan-busy up top. offtimes three-much to sort thoo, yet brain recognize what i'm feeling and things at the front of the mind, and the algorithm suggesting, thoo music or flashing words or images etc, to place me on a proper track. shout outs to my niggas up there. watching my person sketch President Sarmiento of Argentina at the Rodin Museum. red colored pencil, contrast w blue for shadows in lines that offer

the eye directionality. been tryna keep them inspired, glad to see it's working.

when it's dark out i can only see me. radboix my person turns head left, asks if all i'm doing on this Greyhound bus is watching the outside. 'thats what i'm doing!' we're in love — a bigger fact than has ever been spoken. you imitate the ones you love, and if yall stepping right yall might move w the same signatures.

there are fingers and arms growing outta my head like Giorno Giovanna's lil ladybug broach from that Notorious B.I.G. episode. i grab for a few of them if i need a hug or sumn to hold onto.

sampled words from Ken Burns's Country Music, Episode 2

as the depression deepens
appeared in the play
hollers, harmonies

recently making it a point to look the homeless in the eyes when they asking for money on the train. a man from Bedford Av in Brooklyn gets on sauntering, speaking clearly, shaking a coffee can to fill in gaps in his speech. i look cuzzo in his eyes, subtle gesture like, *i aint got it*, turn my palms up, soften my face, shrug slightly. 'thank you brother. have a nice day.' 'good luck fam.' hand to his heart he passes in between the cars to run his speech for another audience.

RIP Pop Smoke. seems like young rappers been dropping quickly the past couple years. where are Hip Hop's elders? who was the last rapper to die of natural causes? has there been any? seems like if youre a rapper youre more likely to die a violent death — projection fa sho, just reacting out of pain from

another nigga taken away too early — or at least your chances sky rocket. in my head i'm hoping Pop Smoke, Nipsey, JuiceWRLD, et al only saw their favorite moments and loved ones as life flashed and faded before them.

rappers specifically, and Hip Hop in general, have been main contributing factors keeping my artistic practices alive. when asked about the writers who have influenced me, those who've made me realize that i must write, it's almost always a spitfire list of rappers like

Gucci Mane
Lil B
Gangsta Boo
Young Thug
Cam'Ron
OutKast
E-40
Missy Elliot
MF DOOM

and that's just off the cuff. Hip Hop is my cultural practice, permeating through everything i'm doing.

all my practices are sample-based. i'm making a beat in FL Studios (prolly version 10). i pull up the Fruity Slicer, load sumn from the *samples* folder, cut that mf thang, arrange. i make videos by screengrabbing portions of rap videos, chop up and arrange the frames. rn tryna capture the joy of niggas loving all over each other, all of each other. a slow joy. big sampling.

the writing is the same. essentially, i'm freestyling, then taking bars from the freestyle and arrange em to get the flow the way i want it. i'm sampling moments from my own life, sampling what i see hear feel read smell taste and make a beat outta that. in this way like i'm saying the mediums of my practice are concisely in conversation. under the umbrella the rain all the same.

'the chaos aint harmful.' — Tone.

at this narcan/naloxone training at the bookstore. the most interesting slide of this presentation is personcentric. *THE WORDS WE USE MATTER*. i ask the

question, ‘can your body become resistant or immune to naloxone?’ the answer: not that we’re aware of. the answer is followed by a few subtle head nods from the crowd.

The words we use matter

Potentially stigmatizing language	More compassionate, person-centered language
Addict	Person who uses (or injects) drugs
Substance abuser	Person living with a substance use disorder
Junkie / Dope fiend / Tecato(a)	Substance use or possibly misuse
Substance abuse	Currently abstaining; making changes to drug use
Clean	Patient / Participant / Client
Doctor shopper / Drug seeker	Medications for addiction treatment
Replacement / substitution therapy	Would you consider? / Can you try to avoid
You should / shouldn't	

NEGRO SCREAMING

‘evolution takes a long time ... oh we standing now ... when you name sumn you lose [bruise] ... iont wanna say nothing definitive.’ — obscured quotations from Tone.

speaking, at times. tryna record my niggas as to just solidify a nigga’s existence.

‘whats old thats good? ... never is always better ... we’re progressive people.’

‘Lil nigga disabilities.’

‘whats that song that Method Man says *hominy grits*?’

niggas stay between jobs, i.e., in the cut.

‘these shells dont taste like Velveeta.’

niggas out here aint spatchcocking shit.

today

~~send submissions~~

~~wash bath and dish towels~~

~~stretch~~

~~vitamins~~

~~write down/purge open tabs~~

~~submit Creative Capital application~~

~~read *Annotations*~~

~~deep clean phone~~

~~floss~~

~~buy plant to hang in window~~

~~transfer bread to savings / fill out and email direct deposit form~~

a white woman w baboonish lipstick apologizes to me when i look up hearing her voice. 'i'm sorry. i hate when i cant find my friends.' feelat. the VIP lounge at the Armory show is big cap cuz aint shit for free — wheres that next-next level VIP, i'm wondering. i spend \$10 on a cappuccino and a chocolate chip cookie, both drier than i'd like. a racially-ambiguous lightskin person tells me i look familiar halfway thoo writing that last sentence. 'are you in the Entertainment industry?' 'not really but i'm around.' 'feel like ive seen you in Miami, in the last three months?' 'never been to Florida.' 'London? Williamsburg? Bushwick?' the conversation falls off from there. reflecting on a booth i walked past an hour prior, a video by an Iraqi artist playing amongst polished steel sculptures. a white woman says, after the gallery's rep tells her that the name of the town the artist is from is named Sulaymaniyah, 'now that he's an artist he can escape all the craziness.' — maybe craziness wasnt it; maybe wildness; maybe dangerousness, but all dog whistling. 'actually, he still lives there,' says the gallery's rep. 'oh. really?' the disbelief and shock in the woman's voice is palpable, and i have to walk away. 'yes. he travels but he goes back quite a lot.' she cant wrap her head around loving your culture so deeply you would risk your physicality to fight for and preserve it. a person by one of the lil snack kiosks has an ass so astounding it has its own gravitational pull; like i'm lead further and further towards that place ive already been.

today

~~write work schedule on calendar~~

wash clothes

go to Paula Cooper or the Met

work

stretch

dishes

read *The Pearl*

buy soil

groceries

watch plant care videos

meet myrrhp after work

wake up to a message from Myrrhp saying i cant meet them for their doctor's appointment because the office is setting up new coronavirus procedures. nobody is to accompany a patient to appointments if they aint patients themselves. i spend like a half hour at Fine Fare w the zippered blue tote bag my mans Will gifted the crib. it's bussin out the brim w a gallon of whole milk, two cans of black beans, two cans of white albacore in oil, two cans of sardines (one in mustard, one in hot sauce), a sweet potato, hand soap, frozen broccoli, some sage-infused pork sausage, chicken broth, some full-fat greek yogurt, natural creamy peanut butter, and a can of Bustello. i get to the register, unload my grocery purse. total comes to round \$45. when i slide my chipped credit card in the reader the cashier tells me the payment aint going thoo because it's "over-credit". a second attempt changes not a damn thing. the person who re-bags my purse throws his hands in the air in exasperation, fully frustrated at having wasted his few precious seconds on a broke boy like me. my credit card's bank, it turns out, changed my credit limit in the last few hours, so it just is what it is. a notification flashes across my phone saying the novel coronavirus is now a global pandemic, according to the World Health Organization. deflated; stuck on the couch for now. i'm not too too scared but the timing of each of these events aint helping.

ive been throwing my eyes on hands in public places. there are fewer hands wrapped around subway polls. a black-leather gloved-hand eeeneoe aint no way it's cold enough for allat. a woman substitutes restaurant napkins for gloves, her own faux force field.

i'm listening to *Lo Mein* off the new Uzi album, bobbing double what my feet doing in these Jim Goldberg Vans.

me and coworkers starting to feel a way about having to come into the bookstore if the virus is bunkin like they say it is. solidarity matters in times like this.¹²

the governor declared a state of emergency in New York today, which is a solid distraction from the ambient rage building from the minutia surrounding me. still at the bookstore downstairs boxing books to return to publishers until the manager or executive director decides if our safety is more important than their profits. what will it take? will we get sick pay or get a stipend so i can pay my rent? imma hourly worker, nigga cant afford not

to work — literally cannot afford, as much joy as it would give me to hold down uptown w shinji and Myhrrper and have that time to myself. thats a true blessing. texting my niggas reminding them to appreciate how history develops. theyll make straight-to-Netflix documentaries about allis, the sobering genre. grandkids will wonder what it was like. a friend from the cafe emails the managing director on my encouragement to ask whats hannin w protecting hourly workers, like concerns over getting paid and allat, including the cafe staff.

admin:

Hi Everyone,

We wanted to share some of the new practices we'd like cafe staff to do during the work day. We know this is a strange time but we're trying to think of as many ways to keep everyone as healthy as possible even if it feels like overkill sometimes. This will also be posted on the (infamous) pantry wall for your reference. Please respond to this email to let me know you saw it.

--Café tables and chairs should get wiped down with disinfectant after every use. Maghan has ordered more supplies, but let us know if you need something specific.

--Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be available for customers in case they'd like to use them. Especially hand sanitizer at the counter (this has been hard to come by but we have more on order).

--We've moved the water bottle & cups, honey, and simple syrup behind the counter for you to distribute to customers. The idea is to limit the # of people touching each of these items. Try to be aware of other items that could be served the same way.

--Soap dispensers, single use paper towels and hand sanitizer must be refilled at all times. Please make sure bathrooms are fine. If they need resupplying and you don't have time, ask bookstore staff or Maghan to help.

--Periodically wipe down any door handles, elevator buttons, etc. throughout the work day.

--I've asked ____ to look into a way to sanitize the ipad and we're ordering a new credit card reader.

We're also getting some lotion since we know everyone's washing their hands a million times a day. We'll also be asking bookstore, library, and

admin staff to do similar tasks. Let me know if you need anything and thank you! If anything!

All best

cafe employee's response:

Thanks for this! These sound like good protective measures. I appreciate the addition of the lotion.

I just wanted to ask if you have any idea of a contingency plan in the case of closure of the Center with regards to sick pay for hourly employees. I'm hearing news of a citywide quarantine starting tonight or tomorrow from friends who work for the city. With businesses being forced to close, a lot of us hourly workers are put in a very risky position financially. Even if the operations of the city grind to halt, landlords will still be expecting rent. With the government stalling on releasing a sick pay package for hourly workers I think it is fair for us to be very nervous. I know for myself it would be really helpful for my own planning and peace of mind to know what the plan is regarding this, whether or not it will be possible for sick pay to be provided. It might be helpful to my coworkers as well.

Thank you so much, I'm sorry to be a bother but I would so appreciate any insight you may have into this situation.

Best

admin's response:

Hi -- we understand what a hard time this is going to be for people. I've talked with -- and -- and if we have to close we are planning to honor your hours and will continue to pay you all. I know you don't always work the same shifts so we will have to work out all the logistics. These are strange times, so stay healthy and safe.

All best

shout outs to the bookstore, so we'll see. texting Momma and Chris making sure everything good — KC also declared a state of emergency today; although, there are only four confirmed cases in the metro area. shit spreading fast though. i call my Daddy after i hop off the 2 train. walking east towards the crib. a slight drizzle persists, and this Blazer's jacket's hood aint

nothing to write home about, half my hair stretching outside its limitations. itll do what it do. worried briefly wondering if my Dads got a compromised immune system since he got a kidney transplant a few years back. plus he works at a hospital. in some realities you can play and some would be silly to ignore. he sounding and feeling good, jovial as ever, and i trust he'll do what he need to do.

i got orange rinds drying everywhere round the house. on the downtown 4/5, fantasizing about pulling this mini-sanitizer bottle out my pocket and the nigga next to me throws his hand out, then the nigga next to him, and so on — would love to hold the whole car down if i'm able. work for a few hours and towards the end we get this email to the booksellers:

Hello all,

The decision from — is that we will remain open in the bookstore and closely monitor further developments with the outbreak. We are also going to slightly restrict hours. New hours will be:

Tues - Sat 10:30 - 8

Sun - Mon 10:30 - 6

I will make adjustments on the schedule so please look there sometime this evening or tomorrow. I hope to get everything changed by then.

If you have concerns about this at all--and, truly, any concerns--please email me privately or text me or call me or communicate with me in whatever way you feel most comfortable.

If you cannot make it to work in any fashion other than taking a crowded subway train, please let me know.

In general, please communicate with me.

Thanks

my response after i sit in it for a few hours:

Hey --, here are some concerns i have about the Center being open this weekend:

- the only transportation i have to get to work is the 4/5 from 125th, or possibly a bus to the 2/3. the commute is starting to concern me because of possible exposure, & the commutes are an hour each way and it feels unnecessary to expose myself that much when there's barely enough business to justify.

- also, & this could be a projection on my part, but the fact that administration decided to stay open right before the weekend seems unfair, & the fact that they could potentially WFH seems especially unfair. additionally, i can only read them cutting hours for the weekend as a device to save a few dollars, as they would ultimately pay us less than if they would have closed & paid us our original hours.

i really appreciate you letting me know i stay home tomorrow in exactness for the hours i worked today. i mostly wanted to communicate my concerns to you & so you can communicate them to administration.

appreciate y'all

theres no justification for keeping the store open. we provide no essential services. the library aint even open to the public. yfm plus, even the NYPL closed all branches. the store cancelled events thoo April. plus, if all admin staff is expected or has the option to work from home, whats the point in endangering the hourly staff? oh right! i should be grateful i am even employed. oh thats right, i'm just a cog in this, expendable if not reliable. we not essential to them haa? lil fodder, stay smolderin.

shout outs to my manager Ben though for holding us down, letting us know we still gettin paid for the foreseeable, but the question is like *whhyyy* do we have to fight for this shit? how am i not supposed to take this personally?

in the morning, the manager texts the booksellers:

(1) Hello crew: sending this quickly so forgive me if it is incomplete. The schedule is made and adjusted to accommodate changes hours.

(2) that said, I am expecting nobody to come to work who feels unsafe doing so. And I am prepared for nobody to show up!

(3) I have voiced my opposition to keeping the building open while admin staff are given the option of working from home. I have voiced this to --. I will continue to do so in escalating tones as the situation develops. I have been unhappy with the responses and the way this has been handled

(4) I am going to keep hours on the official schedule to record when people would ordinarily be here, how much they'd work, etc. we have to treat this like calling in sick. But I don't want you thinking that because I have you down for hours I am expecting you to be here

(5) if you cannot come in, it is best to send something to me in writing because at this point I want to forward these concerns directly to management. Or if you feel comfortable writing directly to -- and --, please do so. I believe that they will be most responsive to hearing the health concerns we all share

(6) but I don't want people to be concerned at the moment about not coming in. I will continue to log hours for everyone and provide that cover as long as I can until the situation improves or worsens to the point of closure. I do believe that objections to being open (if you have those objections) should be lodged quickly though

The end

smoking and looking at my plants, wanting to do right by them. i wanna get a lot done today in the crib. Myrrhper organizes some of the clothes we use as temporary rugs. i drop off a fat load of laundry. good start. on the block today my local plug thanks me for copping his final five dimes. 'bro, you be out here saving niggas,' — *dap!* — 'i got another job but they be cutting hours with all this going on.' i'm for the hood. shelves, aisles stripped clean at Target. produce is lackluster and low, no meat but for packages of braised tilapia. Costco going hamiltons. a procession of carts herded into snaking taxis.

nothing on the block has ~~slowed so far~~ closed so far. spend the morning sorting out information on the pandemic. refreshing my memories on applying for unemployment, gang might need it. hours lost, no sick pay. texting friends making sure they got food, some return the favor. texting my brother and parents w updates. the bookstore is officially closing for the next three or so weeks and we're getting paid. they'll reevaluate after that period passes. Myrrh writes a note for all the residents in our building in case anyone needs childcare during all this shit. two things i'm thinking. 1, this coronavirus has already held me down more than capitalism has in the past few years. nigga said to me, *yeah, stay yo ass home dont worry about work. i got*

bread for you my man. say dat. 2, i'm considering pulling up downtown this week if bars and restaurants finna be closed. how does this city feel shutdown like this? real trill emptiness. the voyeur in me has to know, will report back.

i walk west to The Set to see off Chazzy before his parents scoop up him and his partner for Connecticut. a long conversation w his fam the night before convinces him to be w his family and away from NYC at this particular time. glad he w his people — he was initially torn about going back, cuz of course he wants to, but his parents are older, his sister just-just had her second kid. good timing on his part. theres early rumors of a city-wide shelter-in-place mandate being announced within the next 48 hours. more texts from all around making sure i got food and that i'm good. i'm gucci, ran to the store yesterday for some yellow cornmeal. ran across the street earlier today to pick up a couple cans of tuna, canned salmon, peanut butter, two cans of red beans, a big boy bag of Doritos. tomorrow might run a few errands to grab new soil for the plants, epoxy, distilled water, see if i can happen upon a bottle of decent hand soap. day 4ish of social distancing and i'm tryna be ten toes w it, solid, shouldering any worry that may pass. i'm in my mental element rn. extending all my usefulness to everything that i can reach out and touch. keeping my family updated — damn also we need some rice; i make a mental note for that. depending on how i'm feeling could run downstairs to the bodega and grab some rice and a coconut water, a dime from one of my guys if anyone outside.

texting LL to make sure him and his are all good. they are. he's working from home w reduced pay, but w all the covids poppin he doesnt really have any strict deadlines, so he chilling. he taking this time to play some music, read more. aside from the economic hardships sure to follow these next few months, we agree that having a break from capitalism is invaluable and lowkey long overdue. a break from all the cappin. of course people will worry; of course, as they should, people will worry over the loss of jobs and childcare, healthcare, access to effective medical care — if only to get tested, i cant even think about or pretend to understand the anxiety people experience once they test positive. at least theres time to figure sumn out? time is invaluable and irreplaceable. i guess that latter could splinter a few

different directions. but i'm tryna keep optimistic for my circle at the veryvery least. texting more friends making sure they good, new praxis. i'm getting hit up to join group video chats thooout the next few weeks so people wont feel stir crazy inside their isolation. i'm skeptical of how useful itll be. at some point a bubble needs to pop. i'm malleable. me and Myrrhp walk down to Thomas Jefferson Park. barely anything on the surface has changed in East Harlem. a steakhouse on 116th is closed, but every other spot is available for takeout. a person walks past us in some Adidas w an orange accentuated the sole, his facemask a deep teal, matching his shirt. ice cream trucks jamming that racist song, parked on a diagonal across corners a block north of the park, nary a customer present, still jamming. in the park now i tell Myrrhp i need to run more, especially since the park has a flat track i could run around. reminiscing on St James Park in the BX, how its in/declines transforms a couple laps into intensive training. we meander, looking for the skate park. back at the crib i talk to my nigga Quemi for like 90 minutes, catching up, planning on laying out a manuscript i'm tryna self-publish. for 20 minutes of the conversation we try to figure out how the fuck the stock market works. what the fuck is a stock? what does it mean if the market crashes? we need to figure out how money really works. an article clears up some terms for us at least. i need to have her link me. cornbread and black beans tonight for dinner. i been burp talking because 1, it's like an internal organ massage, and 2, cuz when i'm high as hell and silly it's so motherfucking hilarious. this that Spongebob influence from my childhood. burping thoo *nigger* today and i cannot stop laughing.

when that inspiration bubble in me, it's helpful to move my bodybody to match my brain-bodys movements. telling Myrrhper i'll be all over the place soon. we gearing up to play *Mario Party* on the Switch — i'm finishing a chapter of *Cane* feeling inspired, feeling the need to pace the apartment, to wash dishes, tit-for-tat w each energy. the article Quemi read to me on the phone yesterday was from a Wikipedia article for "Stock Market Crash," defined as a "sudden decline of stock prices across a significant cross-section of a stock market, resulting in a significant loss of paper wealth." a stock is just a share of a company. paper wealth is wealth measured by monetary value, reflected in the price of assets. paper wealth is contrasted from whats called "real wealth" which is just physical assets. so like your real wealth

would be like your house versus your paper wealth which is like cash on hand? which the value of fluctuates more than your physical assets? i think i remember talking yesterday how we're confused about the differences in definition of what's *real* here. don't let em tell you they not capping. the more you know, i guess. talking w my nigga Tone yesterday about capping, about how capping aint necessarily indicative of a lie. a person could be telling they whole ass truth and still be capping. confidence plays a role. intentionality plays another.

i'm anxious and restless in the crib. bouncing confidence between high and zero. just one of them days yfm. putting away the air-dried dishes and considering folding some clothes. new life indoors. Ken Burns's *Country Music* on the TV as the sun retreats the scraped sky and street lights push 8-bit rainbows thoo the window stickers into the livingroom. pivoting in place, looking at all the books on the floor, the junky desk under the TV, the 2020 Census reminder. shinji peaking around door frames or the fridge tryna make a decision — what to do. how to fill time, how to shake the unshakeable.

routine is necessary for self-isolation, as well as the realization or the coming to terms w your personal anxieties and behaviors. i mean, i'm spending so much time w myself that it would be a shame if it wasn't quality, or i guess i'm saying it would be a missed opportunity to not sort thoo my bullshit. a blessing from Time. every morning i wake up, reach for my phone that i thankfully threw across the couch before bed. i stretch for a minimum of half an hour, making sure to push myself a bit more to feel every muscle i been neglecting. i eat breakfast, sometimes fully boys w eggs, toast, a lil arugula salad, cornbread, roasted vegetables, coffee; or some like today that's just half an apple w peanut butter and as much water as i can stomach. afterwards is my general productivity hours. i try to read for an hour — medicated or not — which inevitably leads to writing either this shit right here or like notes on my practice in a separate notebook. tryna get better at talkin about my work for the sake of grants i wanna apply for. my work is worth it.

*i aint finna walk a damn thing
less you pay me
that dont mean i'm lazy
i just know i'm worth it*

— Sada Baby, *Skubaru*

ive noticed from sheltering in my place the past week that my toilet paper consumption is OD, and that has to change. ive noticed that, what my brother my nigga Teej describes as the tyranny of choice, widely contributes to the proliferation of anxiety thooout my being and my day. i'm greatly overwhelmed w choice. all my queues are stocked and brimming, but i can never choose, cuz i'm hella controlling over my emotions, too much so, and i get caught up in the sheer number until i settle on some shit thats mindless or that ive seen before and can watch passively, sumn like *Love It or List It* on HGTV or like *Hey Arnold!* or *Evangelion* or *King of the Hill*, *Survivor*, all my etc's. the window in the bathroom is cracked and i can smell freshly ground pack, sparked, forcing fruit into my nostrils, replacing the latent shit smells, just as fresh. the plan today is to tackle some of this digital clutter that exists and perpetuates unnecessary anxiety in my life. clean out some hard drives, delete pictures off my phone, give everything a proper destination. listen to some music taking up space in my library and delete the shit that dont resonate. if it aint slapping, then why i'm putting my energy into it?