

Peccadilloes

"Okay, this one.

"ahem.."

"You got a voice?"

"No.

"Hey, my name's J. You can see that already, though, heheh. I'm a writer but I can't say where I'm employed or in what capacity. Not for confidentiality reasons, but because it's so amorphously freelance and unrecognized and actually untrue that there's really no good way for me to describe it. Novels; let's say I write novels, but fuck if I've ever finished one. If I had, I wouldn't be here, whiling my time away here, stroking my ego with this practise while my fulfillment is actually something aromantic that requires too much unsatisfying work. Not satisfying work that is actually really easy work like this is. See how easy this is? Just being out there?

"Yea, I live in Vancouver, British Columbia. You've probably seen me around, strutting as if with purpose, my hair jumping in the wind and my garb belying a phoney indifference that is, in fact, the suave characteristic I've cultivated.

"As you can see, I smoke. I hold them in my lips like this. Just held in place by the slightest jutting upon the moistness within. It puffs my lips out like this. It's like a pout with an excuse. Magnifies my lips, see? And I've got my classic bored-looking eyes, like I don't care that I'm killing myself. Like selfies annoy me no end, like I'd rather not have to take a picture of myself to send to someone, maybe you, or just for viewing by my future self. Like I'd rather not be preserved in any form even a recursive loop of self-recognition, nah, I'd rather be in the

moment, thinking to myself and walking around, thinking in a fleeting way about how I'm observed and how I'm observing what I'm observing. If I'm taking a picture of myself with a cigarette in my mouth the cigarette can't be doing its job right. It's not suitably nullifying my general discomfort that I don't have to bolster myself with a glance in the mirroring eye of my phone.

"But that's why we're here, isn't it? The Magic Mirror of our phones —yes, you're observed by others, not just me, but through me, I pass the final judgment for you, you need my mediation to gauge your place in this world, and you need to be able to see the faintest reflection of yourself as you do so, the shadow reality of yourself pouring yourself into some black water lagoon nobody fully understands, wading in the shallows, waiting for an iridescent, but real, hand to slip up above the dread surface where so far you've found nothing but refractions of real things, things bent in reality out of place from your sensation of them. There's the odd craigslist find (movie-star disappointment) but ultimately the lady of the lake is merely nature and we can't expect her here because we're in a mirage.

"But mirages hold significance in their lilt flutes, the flesh undulations of the Rorschach brain. I say these things like this because I'm a "writer" and my vision of things is deep and transcendent. In spite of my being here, that is.

"It all started with my smoking, is why it's so central, see: here, here and, here. Before that I was just a regular eyes on the prize academia sort. Well as much as an undergraduate can be while not inflating with an overconfidence and motivation that I, personally, hate. The stress of that life made me start smoking heavily, as you can see here,, here and here. It's something of a personality trait, hehehughchoUGH. hh-hmm. Pardon me. Anyway, beyond the visceral auditory phlegmatic representation of smoking's affect I discovered a new transcendency. I'd sit outside a library or a coffee shop, my head in my hands, still thinking all the while about what I looked like to outside observers, was it cool enough? this impulse was secondary though, to my stress copage. I'd have my head in my hands and I'd have a cigarette right in the crook between my index and middle finger, I like it there, it looks cool and an ability to hold a cigarette anywhere between any two fingers comes off as well versed, as though I smoke a lot, which makes me cooler. So I'd sit there, with my head in my hands and a cigarette comfortable itching some erogenous betwixt my fingers, looking like a chimney or the spout of a softly whistling kettle from my head and I'd

be freaking out. Locked in an essay-writing puzzle or ominously stubbornly resigning myself to an ignorance in how to study for a final or what have you. And I'd puff out a sigh "hoouhhh" and lean back and my legs are spread the whole time to try to mimic some dominance over my situation but also because it looks good to the passing observer should they exist beyond the realm of mine own head and I take a deep swig on my smoke and I drop my hand to my lap but calculating and in control the whole time as though my hand is a gyroscope ensuring the comfort of the cigarette. and I exhale a vast conical cloud and as soon as I do so the cloud is also at the whim of the environment and the wisps of what seems often only semi-gaseous are driven by my engine and the engine of the world alike and they contort and meld and compress and flourish and as people have goofy transcendent interactions with snowflakes for their rigid uniqueness I would have deep moments with these clouds and wisps and like a sage reading tea-leaves I would glance through this intense shaping of my mood, they would always conform and I came up with a word for it and because I was entrenched in the academic and such I came up with this greek denominative word for it, and it was 'paskhopoeia' and it fuckn got me never before or since have I got myself so much. Definitely it was the defining moment of my time in a world of vocabulary, and it was what allowed me to see beyond it. So I'll get to it, maybe open your eyes some, that's what I'm here for, well, not strictly if you catch my drift heheh, but it's a side favour I can provide, a free elucidation of my perspective that I believe to be valuable, me in my infinite wisdom, no, heheh. So you're familiar with the word 'onomatopoeia' yea? Yea, of course you are. It's often the word that gets kids into language in the first place. It denotes all the most interesting words,

"Bam!

"Swoosh!

"Susurrate..

"Wet.

"Heheh. Perhaps it was just me, I remember onomatopoeia really blowing my mind as a kid. The kind of small squibby explosion allowed by the relative size of a child's mind. But still, it got me and from that explosion there was this blossoming this lilting shape wherein language visually wisped through the world likewise projecting and being affected by and affecting. Whatever I read after learning this, the prose or the poetry seemed furry and tactile. I could

sit words on my tongue and taste them. I would draw pictures with words, like how 'bed' looks like a bed I would render language and image as one. Simple enough shit but for a kid.. it really affected me. So I guess since then even when it became shrouded in all I eventually learned, the abundant folds and extensions of education, 'onomatopoeia', this jigsaw chimera of ancient words that held this wild power that acted as flint to my winding and energetic mind and perhaps was the root the spark of my interest in the world, all linguistic. Perhaps not. Perhaps it was merely the conflagration that illumined my education. Anyway, as my studies began to feel more and more like a nightmare I felt myself grappling onto simpler aspects of my life, immediate ones like breathing deeply and feeling that or the cold warm sensation of getting into bed. Things that ultimately denounced the thin fabric draped over reality like some charmeuse lingerie for the world, smoothing its crude edges and luxuriating our experience in it. So I was smoking in these dire straits one day listening to some indulgent song or another, "My Man's Gone Now" maybe, unknowingly pathologising my deep loss of the something or other. Some faith maybe? and I'm smoking and I'm exhaling and I'm looking at the fine threads that come out in a superb natural fabric like an apparition semaphore flagging my deep deep stress and anxiety and the writhe tension in my muscles and the blossoming and growth and affect and action of my life and experience that brought me here, that bench, here right now, wherever I may be and I looked up some greek root words some early vestiges of human conscience, the relics of our illumination as transcendental beings, and I came up with the word 'paskhopoeia' so as 'onomatopoeia' is a tributary of 'word' and 'making' meaning 'word-making' 'paskhopoeia' means 'feeling-making' and refers only to actuality, not words, 'sad' doesn't sound sad but smoke often looks it. And the smoke that I was looking at so deftly looked like how I felt and its coming from within my chest, carrying me with it, so aptly captured my experience of feelings that I was *got* and the word I made was the *ticket* and I packed it in! My academic career that is, in its death throes it was anyway. How could I not? And I became myself now who lives alinguistically as best I can and with that comes my aromanticism which I guess is what I'm talking about since we're here aren't we?

"We won't go into other reasons for my dropping out of school,,,, like Papa's spike-in-wavelength-for-a-minute-there, getting into the red across the board, the colour both clad in LED on the sides of

buildings and regularly appearing on his shirt collar, with intel from one conniption heard through a wall even suggesting clods of the stuff once lacing his pubes. Yea that wasn't it.

"Sometimes it's about dilution, like here with first names. Here I am, look at me here, here, here, here, here, here, and here. Read my lines as they sit and gauge my distance from you. This is the basemost strata of language that I permit myself to utilise, I can turn anything into a rebellion. Even now, me saying all this, is a rebellious flourish of my stalwart approach to the world, adding planes to my already stratified existence."

"Of course. And it makes me feel like a lucky bird, witness to some sunset par perfection unglimped somehow from the same optimal vantage by anyone else. Ignorant of its significance. It merely graces my quotidian with a benign and indulgent light."

"Well but of course! Because that's my *raison d'être*! I strive for it! To be this amalgam of anti-rhetorical and beautiful. Merely a sight, not a sentence."

"So why the soliloquy?"

"Isn't this what you want? To wedgie this semi-sheer-somehow charmeuse deep up into the crevice of an intangible reality. The main thwart of relationships is subjectivity. The greatest failure of life is subjectivity. And language is our vague tool but here's one I've honed somehow in a fugue state driven by my raging nicotine addiction as evidenced here, here and, here. And probably other indulgences as well! Pull your thumb down on my lower lid and get a closer look at my eye. Doesn't it betray a vision remedied let's say by psychedelics and amphetamines and opioids maybe even? Is it so hard to believe in my description? Is it not as close a representation as you can get of the images you see when you see me? Here, here, here, here, here, here, and here. Read the depth in my brief lines. Understand that this is what I'm saying to you through my light actions. The simple ones I permit myself. I'm a writer, therefore a relative hermit."

"A hermit with a love life."

"I live transcendently through experiences of beauty. I must have a

love life."

"Ah, so that's what this place is. And yet all you've spoken about is smoking."

"Smoking's how I came to live the way I live. It's now merely how I frame my *mise en scene*, underpinning my love life, which is necessarily my only life."

"And in a place like this.."

"The forum. Where else? Hearing people say words turns me off. I like to watch people move and interact and intuit what those actions mean. I can stand surrounded the whole time and feel the furry sensation I felt as a child reading books, that I have since forgotten for having read too much analytic. I now feel it through experience. You glimpse me here and you get this, what I'm saying to you, in the brief glimpse I permit you here, here, here,,, all of these and in my brief lines. And gauge my distance from you and feel that I am real. And I get the same experience. Then perhaps we meet and I talk and I confirm the words you've heard from me in your brief glimpse that you're getting right now all of this these syllables degrees of the moment of glimpse and there's your repartee which changes the key and creates a dialectic and the density of the language you hear, all the degrees compounded, happens in the glimpse and that's why I'm able to be here, tucking the *charmeuse* taut yet undulating into the reality of this situation, let's bring it back to that. We both know why we're here. Another notch in the bedpost. Another notch to wedge the *charmeuse* into. We're both too smart to be here looking for love. Quote, unquote. (Quote, unquote.) We're not those dipshits in denial about anything they're finding here not rending in twain like receipt paper in flood waters. Shared moments so powerful they necessitate two people dedicating their lives to one another? Is that what it is? Love? I can't imagine that. That's why we're here. To maximize the demographics of our interactions. To multiply those interactions to add degrees to one's experience. Each a scrap of receipt paper to emulsify in nature and travel the route of environment until the end of time, alternately growing and shrinking. To tuck that *charmeuse* over and into and around the sumptuous continent of sand that reality is. At least that's me, y'see. Because there's something aromantic about wedging the

charmeuse. Sexiest fucking thing in the world, wedgies are, for their ability to describe so simply the cleft of the buttocks. But there's also a brute pragmatism that even kids find hilarious, the longitudinal nadir of the butt, the fabled crack, is great for a painful lift. And maybe I'm stuck there, groping my way around the universe. Or maybe the significance of love to people is a submission one enacts when you realize you're going to die.

"The history of my love life looks like a shell, it's why I've got this tattoo,,,, here. Sense the deep look in my eyes, a moment captured like a rare fish that quivers unsensible from the haptic. The whorls and spires constitute of affairs had. Time spent whirling round my shell's body. The growth. A shape so immutable I can yell into it and the echo I hear back is my own voice unchanged in a suspended animation some representational vacuum rip in spacetime. I put my ear to its pearly lips and instead of the ocean I hear an all-time average of my own heartbeat, either that or the voices of all my lovers, varying in volume over one another according to the wealth of experience we had together, words undiscernable but an orchestra of tone switching major to minor, minor to major; diminished; mixolydian. Their lilt stroke and tickle my ear, beckoning me back to the ocean of the past. Sirens holding the secret of myself, buried beneath all of the other secrets, buried further under billows of charmeuse breathing with breezes of emotion only briefly sucking the brisk fabric, with a pressure system, against reality. The continent of sand.

"You see? I'm incapable of thinking realistically about my romantic life, it's but a shivering mirage whose elongate waist-like curves I can almost put my hand against. I can almost define but a flutter of my heart will tend the line to asymptote and there will be no taut truth only interpretation by the thrumb thrumb thrumb of my heart. I was at work once,, not my writing job that's not a job, my job job that pays the bills that fuels my alcoholism that embeds me comfy in a society, it's in food service.. yeess,, I know, and I hate it and I shit on it and it's not what I'd planned, but also I veer the other way and I defend it vehemently::: it's a *job* goddamnit and I can wield my free time to write if that's what I am supposed to do, I could party less or be *here* way less, and plug my seven hours a day not even eight, to make my income to furnish my life, I still have a life outside of it which I can and should be furnishing. It's the subliminality of the work-life distinction that depresses me, for making food is not my passion, nor is customer service by any stretch of the imagination, and it seeps and wallows

into and around my whole life. We won't get into how, romantically, for such trysts shimmer murky beyond the bounds of my innate shame. And the fateful nadir of this job, the lowliest gooch of the affair is the upstairs clean-up grind-down battle against dehydrated caked on food like years of paint and dripping fridges and cheese puttied in cracks and I tend to defocus for this part of the night, for it's become second nature now, thankfully, and to think about it fuels anger in me somehow like supercoiling a thick elastic band in my chest to create some horrifying potential for me to erupt, to scream, and start kicking things forcefully and completely incorrectly with the sole of my foot, so this is why I defocus, to avoid these thoughts and feelings and merely hold my figurative breath and get out the other side to a fifth staff beer or whathaveyou the fuckn cash-out after the fact. Well one time, interrupted from my hypnotic rush to clean the things needing to be cleaned by a elevesens customer coming in, seeing if we're still open, which, c'mon I mean if you're able to come on in, chances are good, anyway I take his order and I defocus from him too cos I'm not in the fucking mood right and I make his food very quickly and I send him on his merry way and I take a swig of the beer I have hidden from patrons and I turn to assess what more I have to do without thinking about it, I'll think about it now and meditate a plan into my head such that I won't have to think about it while pursuing it, and I see the steel wool where I've left it, on a cleaned worktop, new an hour ago it's now been handle to my grip and ground over sauces laced over steel rushes ago and since hardened into brushstrokes of some coworkers bad work ethic, crystals whose solution I've previously inhaled that also line my body as they line the sides of fridges I need to return to a morning freshness, so the steel wool has suffered like I have over the night, the hammer to my shudder, and it's lost its shape and it sits there peppered with grime and sludge and it's weave has come undone here and been pulled there and that has tightened its weave here and some dorsal muscle from my hand has squeezed such and such a groove. And then in this brief pause between a previous interrupted fugue state of cleaning and inebriation (and I'm high obviously) and a future fugue state I will inevitably have to return to, the usually cold (who am I kidding?) reserve of my work attitude is penetrated and my heart beats a deep throb that shockwaves through my emotion, for it recognises its shape in the steel wool, a cardioid mimicry, and it too feels slick with grime and it too can recall its once preserved and shiny self couched in a little plastic sheath, brand new

and at the height of utility, a utility used for loving its mother and father and plumbing depths of awe in the world and it too, like the steel wool is now, feels so far from that, and irredeemably misshapen and dulled by time and use and overuse and it clenches in my chest for it realises the futility of this realisation that by dint of having been used today, there will be a new steel wool manufactured tomorrow that will undergo the same fate, for the kitchen will always become dirty and the cleaning of it will always necessitate future cleaning of it. And it's like, will I have a kid? And do I want to? If said kid is merely destined to forgo the same suffering as my steel wool heart perhaps better to not? And it'll have to grind and grind and grind and grind, then be rinsed and squeezed and then the grinding will start again. And I dwell on this with one raised eyebrow as I sip on my work beer and dig myself further into alcoholism little by little,, this is my interpretation of love and the feelings of my heart, there is no realism to it nor any direct romantic connection, it is merely fantastical and paskhopoeic see? And on further close reading it's hard to ignore that such a revelation is inextricably tied to a deep dis-love for myself, how it must be that I see my heart as something that scours, that is porous, is only tangible between various fugue states, and even then it is secondary to the moment, *it* is not driving the encounter, but my experience is, it is my interpretation of the experience that is fuelling whatever romantic entanglement I have with the steel wool or the job, or the romance that the job has surrounded me with, which, let me assure you is no small amount.

"All good appropriate conversation for a place like this, eh?"

"The internet is but a beckoning ear, but also, you're losing me."

"I lose myself sometimes, too."

"You're lacking a point, is the thing."

"Yea, but there is no point is what I'm saying. Any romantic entanglement feels pointless is what I'm saying;; lacks an edge. The points come from without, from the environment as opposed to spearing me through ruddy glimpses of my partner, pinning my heart to some cause. I don't operate that way, is what I'm trying to say.

"As much as my heart is wrought through with stresses of anguish for the women I've seen, my reminiscences of them aren't pitted

through with our conversations or blossom decibel arguments, not the ergo squeeze of a waist or thigh, but with rushes of the locations of our affair; a sloping hillside and we're planted against the grass, looking at panoramas mottled by blush deciduous and church spires; being in the passenger seat of her car, glancing the sky framed modernist by signs and tram wires; frozen Haribo spread over the bed, amber blush coming through the lace curtains as I stroke at a freshly shaven leg.

"There was this one time; really did a number on me.. made me really feel like merely a note, y'know, something conditional and transient. This paramour and I were walking about on a lovely day, nothing but blue in the sky, that blue we all know, not some funny shade just that classic blue, and we're arguing and the argument already feels like an involuntary improvisation just juxtaposed to the plush blue of the sky, it was about time as they always are in some shape or another; time or momentum or investment or depth down the rabbit hole and related paranoidias, and we paused to sit on a bench at a busy intersection and mutually alone with our thoughts, take a breather, and it was blustery out and the wind was whipping the long green street sign suspended over the road into a seizure; St Catherine's Avenue, and as it flapped against the blue it tugged on the nadir of the wire, like a bassist doing a palm mute, and this tugging pulled, it musta, on the two massive poles holding it aloft, which, planted into the ground as they were, strummed through whatever key into the concrete paving I had my feet squared frustratedly on. Then I felt it in my gut, this whipping jangling and I looked up at the sign flying about and I could feel its motion and it became the motion of my still body and it became the soundtrack of this stupid fight and my feelings, dig?, more so than my girlfriend's glassy eyes or quivering lip became the mise en scene—this is what I thought about and related to and this is now how I recall that engagement, like a note in some chaotic symphony cacophonising the world, and here I am merely some dud element, being played by instruments out of my control, out of the control of others as well. Out of touch with my life, but simply because I have no dominion over it, I'm simply a frequency operated by some erstwhile tuning fork with infinite tines."

"So you're unaffected by humanity, is what you're saying?"

"Ok going briefly back, before encountering that interpretation, I must say saying "I'm simply a..." is too broad, it should be taken as being

synonymous with “My recollections of myself *seems* like a....” As I and “I” radiate full through the past, the present, and the future. My past may strike me as a series of distorted frequencies, but my present is locked in to a brutish physical immediacy prohibiting any resonance, and thought or intentional action is constituted of minute slices of adjacent history. My future is like an ancient fossil or ruin, buried outside of my ‘things-I-know-I-don’t-know’ even, a series of dull scripts I write for myself plum full of aspirations and worries. My past is therefore the only aspect of myself I have to fit my self-conception, my “I”. In that respect, I’m simply a frequency.

“Now back to unaffected.

“Unaffected makes me sound amoral or immoral, perhaps one of which, I am.. (I certainly reason amoral but daren’t act that way.) It is not that I am unaffected by it, as obviously I am, in the moment, absolutely. I only think about being tuned by that sign retrospectively. At the time I was, don’t get me wrong, involved in the argument and had somebody I cared for’s feelings at stake; acting accordingly. I am (my recollections of myself seem to be) perhaps more *unpunctuated* by it, or humanity melds into environmental—becomes the association of experiences and actions, my sense of self-identifying affect is mediated through the paskhopoeic; linguistic frequencies, ironically the same way I define the future (for it’s the only way I know how!), but the present, no. And it reads like a literature of defeat. But it’s always changing, upon every recalling, and it’s alternaety gives it a potential for hope.”

“A lot like the potential for hope this place gives.”

“Exactly. This place, where my smoking,, here, and here, and here, here, here, and here, becomes doubly paskhopoeic—for myself it intuitively experiences and dilutes it for me into vision and understanding, for you, too, and those others who happen across me here. Doesn’t it just ring with a-linguistic transience? Perhaps some caught and transliterated fog to sublime some post-digital love-at-first-sight?”

“A truly transient one, yea, what with my thumb a’twitch.”

“It’d take a fool to not factor in rejection. When a tailor is tailoring a suit, they fashion it specific to an individual, not making it one size fits

all. I ain't in it to get everyone, not just because the density and variety of my seeing hundreds of people would be an explicit nightmare, but because vast swathes of the human population drive me up the wall, completely do not jibe. The fog I'm generating around myself with my miasmatic smoke is not purely serving as some sublime lens for people on my wavelength, quote unquote viable candidates, it's also a curtain concealing me from quote unquote undesirables,, people I know I know I dislike, beyond any hope of jibing. I let my environment be affectively warped by the wonderful relationships I have been in, I couldn't possible let it flush and distort with warblings of a rotten one. Making B#s out of Cs."

"So some mirror imago too?, whereby not only are your relationships changed inherent by your environs, but also vice versa you register changes in your environment affected by your relationships."

"Well yea as much as the paskhopoeic is a lens it is also reflexive, it is necessarily reflexive, and it allows rays both ways. So my excursions in romance are defined by my experiences mediated through it in whatever environment, but also the strength of these associations radiates through the environmental. Rendering the paskhopoeic some internal plane of transition, my own private I duno. An example: perhaps universal: The sadness of the rain—the melancholy of a dew drop—the degelasse of slime. A break-up once. In the front seat of her car, at night. Parked kitty corner from my home for I knew if we went inside I'd succumb to host and would weaken my position. Wringing words of explanation out of myself like from a damp rag. Them doing nothing to pacify but only rendering hucs and tears and questions without pleasant answers. The downpour outside drumming a white noise on the roof and bonnet and windshield, but more than that—its affect glazed through and onto us by the amber projection of a streetlamp. Thick icings of slip gulleys of rain down the windshield pitted with explosions and amassment of liquid. The unimaginable Kelvin of melting borosilicate glass flickering moving hellscape wallpaper over us like an endless blanket covering you there's no end to in kicking it from your face with your feet. Her face; doubly streaked with her own tears painting salt and the thick distorted orange chiaroscuro of the earth's sad precipitation framing her and me too, I suppose, in a tint of moist liquid amber, preserving the moment in time beyond its own ripples.

“And now, what thought of the rain, but to run and glisten the streets with the image of the sadness I’ve inflicted, the bookends I implanted, and the lens through which I’m being watched and judged and that dictates me. The slick of a dew drop off a blade of grass too reminiscent of a bead on the end of a quivering nose. The existence of flow and viscosity a constant reminder of grappling with desire, fighting for it and against it, the unplugging of these human reservoirs at heights of passion. The depraved and dejected passion of winter, the pervasive and drenching humidity of summer causing slicks to materialise from nowhere.