

# **WORK WASTE & HAPPINESS**

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## A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING

A fresh puberty graduate, I had managed to pass with minor injury but with far less self-esteem than I started with. My cracking voice served me well as a sexual repellent. With the inevitable fade of the boyish inflection, a whole new sexual kingdom was before me. Yet, I barely had the courage to embrace speaking with a vagina let alone venture on any sexual escapade.

Then she came along. I was blind-sighted without an inkling of what I wanted or what she was going to offer. Deep-down I took pleasure in being able to say that I was 'taken'. Even though she lived an inconvenient forty minutes away, I knew having a heterosexual relationship at age fifteen entitled me a modicum of social prestige. The idea of a girlfriend overwhelmed me with confusion and exhilaration.

The heart-pounding anticipation quickly subsided into a defibrillated state. My repeated and unreciprocated requests to touch her perky dancer b-cups were met only with frustration and blue-balls. My hormones were driving dangerously fast and hers seemed to be aimlessly sauntering. In the last six months of a two year chastity marathon, I was groping in the dark for an exit sign of any kind--without success. In an unsuspecting conversation with her, I inquired what the grounds would be for a breakup. The only consensus was cheating.

Since I never shed the stigma of awkward adolescence in high school, my options for cheating were sparse. I had a slap, three rejected notes and a little less dignity to show for my effort. I couldn't cheat, so did the next best thing and faked it. The opportunity came in the form of an out-of-state family vacation with unrelated and untraceable friends.

In one of her routine monthly visits to my house, I broke the news with tabloid sincerity and firmness. It was the first time I had lied to her and she didn't question what I said. It was painful seeing her upset, however, consoling her for a few more hours before her departure was tolerable if it meant I could have my clean break. She left. I wiped my tears and masturbated to celebrate my sexual freedom.

## BE PREPARED

be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
be prepared  
to show your i.d.

## BANANAS AND WALNUTS ARE TERRIBLE SUBSTITUTES

What is a banana? A banana uses bananas for political purposes. Often employing a tactic to assert bananas forcefully or aggressively but in a covert way. Public opinion generally disapproves of this behavior.

What is a walnut? A walnut also uses bananas for political purposes. Often employing a tactic to assert bananas forcefully or aggressively but in a covert way. Public opinion generally approves of this behavior.

Walnut-sanctioned bananas are never called bananas by walnuts, but rather 'counter-bananas'. In order to deny any involvement in bananas, the walnut defines all bananas in opposition to walnuts. The walnut says it can never be a banana because bananas are the enemy.

The walnut says bananas are always fundamentalist in their belief system and that this system stands in direct opposition to walnut-sanctioned bananas. Yet, walnuts will employ bananas that support their walnut-sanctioned bananas and call them walnuts.

Walnuts do a lot of talking. Bananas are never heard.

## OPEN CAGES

The opportunity to see other life is potential but rare. Seeing someone means toe-stands over the partitions amidst bee whispers, during a hasty lunch in a sterile lounge, or brief exchanges at the sugar dispensing machines. A satisfying day is an awkward Q&A with the attractive intern. Monotony produces untrained conversation that can easily translate flirting into eeriness.

Open cages are lonely places. Seclusion where cruel lights and flickering screens assault eyes, where spines are distorted with feeble posture, where nothing is audible but the click of keys and occasional scurrying footsteps.

The reward for passing the five o'clock finish line is retracing the clockwork commute with the hope that an unanticipated accident might mean a day off. The evening is wasted thinking that tomorrow may yield a lawsuit in the form of a terminal paper cut, wave of untreatable depression or fax machine concussion.

Bodies continue while souls are subjugated by addictive success. Resistance is medicated by a bonus, promotion or compliment. Open cages are delicious rusty hooks.

## SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT

another thirty minutes later  
lay-over purgatory  
metal detector enemas  
full cavity soul searches

potato sack races  
through the terminal grills  
designated coughing  
uniformed herders

pubic, sweaty tiles  
a single nervous shitter  
predictable misery for  
obedient toilet seat covers

cell phone savior  
wireless ball and chain  
and greasy neon pie  
with a side of token art

only screaming babies  
can express how they feel

## CLICK CLICK CLICK

It was about eight o'clock on Sunday. Still rubbing the sleep crusties out of my eyes and unaccustomed to the early morning commute, I passed through the mechanical doors. An ominous voice cracking behind me: "Stand clear of the doors."

I wandered to the middle of the metro in search of a relatively unblemished seat with as many vacancies on either side as possible. Flopping down, I succumbed to my own mental hypnosis only to be interrupted mid-thought by an unshaven, fifty-something man staggering down the center of the car.

Walking as if he was trying to stay upright in a severe earthquake, he stepped on several toes. With his index finger and thumb artillery extended, the toxic man pointed in people's faces and saying, "Click." The monosyllabic man repeated, "Click, click, click." He was a good shot and managed to destroy everyone on the train, including me. Typically my tolerance for unorthodox behavior is pretty high but this was not the case for the woman in the pink galoshes sitting across from me.

The man tirelessly made his way to one end of the car and proceeded to make his way back to his seat still clicking. Pink Galoshes, stabbing at his back said, "What are you doing? You can't just do that to people!" Everyone heard her. She went to the end of the car and

attacked the red emergency button to proclaim her distress. Half-peevish, the conductor heard her stern complaint and then loudly replied, "Thank you."

With the doors sealed at the next station, the train came to a full stop. On a system that prides itself on quick response times, it took the metro police twenty minutes to arrive to the station—a station supplanted in the middle of a poor neighborhood. The passengers on the train started to express restlessness, especially the elderly Frenchman with the grey mustache. He reminded himself four times, audible enough for other passengers, that he was late for a meeting. To ease the situation, the ominous voice boomed, "There is a broken train ahead of us. We'll be underway in a few minutes."

The monosyllabic man was lifelessly unaware. Pink Galoshes felt the anxious flames from the other passengers. Light-heartedly, I poked at the situation, "They sure do take their sweet time!" Her scrunched brow and squinty eyes were unaffected. The police, after some council, located the man and plucked him from the car. Bumbling for handcuffs, the police secured the man on the platform. Pink Galoshes followed them with mentally prepared statement ready to pour off her lips.

Both white officers re-entered the car scratching their heads as if they had forgotten their keys. Suddenly remembering, they began questioning the passengers for witness accounts of what happened. Everyone was

uncomfortably silent; a few were persuaded to speak. The officers scrawled names and phone numbers on miniature pads. The Frenchman squealed, "Let's go already."

The doors chopped closed and the ominous voice came on one last time, "Thank you for your patience. We had a situation in one of the cars where a passenger identified some suspicious behavior. If you see anything that doesn't look right, please report it to the closest subway official. Thank you for all those that helped." The voice revealed itself from behind a door as a white-haired troll woman. Wide-eyed and awkwardly loud, she individually thanked everyone on our car.

## **BLACK, WHITE**

homeless, vintage  
disorderly, rebellious  
ignorant, illiterate  
poor, unlucky  
lazy, unemployed

## **PLAYERS SHOULD**

Players should be able to learn the game quickly.

Players should feel continuously entertained, since the play will not always be a win.

Players should feel that the game is authentic and realistically reflects the odds of winning.

Players should feel a sense of anticipation of the possibility of winning a prize.

Players should feel that they had a real chance of winning, or came very close to winning.

Players should feel that they had a “sense of control” over their outcome.

Players should be given the chance to celebrate and then savor a win.

Players should feel that they got their money’s worth, and got the full amount of play value.

## **DEAD SOULS**

Live in democracy.

Work in autocracy.

## GIVING IT UP

He takes a step with certainty, brushes the rain off his shoulders and deposits a handful of coins next to the driver. Preoccupied with his wetness and resounding noise from his ear phones, he confidently plops himself in the first seat. The curtain of self-preoccupation lifts and across from him a handicapped man with a faded grey cap stares into his lap. Adjacent to him, a white-haired woman wipes her thick foggy glasses.

His head, in chorus with the other passengers, mimics the jerking stop of the wheels. A man with a slouched spine collapses his umbrella and gives it an arthritic shake. He warily fishes for his identification and a few coins as a line forms behind him. Briefcases, ties and shiny shoes anxiously breeze past him flashing their passes. The headphoned boy notices the old man using his umbrella for a cane. Without being seen, he stands and moves to the back of the bus. The old man with the umbrella sits in the seat which is unusually warm.

## I AM MY OWN

I am my own documentary  
in the revolution of apathy.

I am my own revolution  
in the documentary of apathy.

I am my own apathy in the  
documentary of revolution.

## **ANOTHER TUESDAY**

Samuel sauntered to the touch-screen and followed the simple displayed instructions. There was no one waiting behind him, so he took ample time to decide. After making a few calculated selections, he submitted his ballot. While waiting for confirmation, a small white slip of paper spit out of the sleek apparatus and stated coldly, "Sorry! You are not an instant winner. Please try again." Samuel scratched his head and walked away.

## **WORK**

Revolutionaries  
must wash their hands  
before returning to work.

## **HAPPINESS**

We cannot start  
the revolution on  
antidepressants.

## **GLASS ARMIES**

glass armies colonizing the young  
dividing and conquering demographics  
a world imperialized by persuasion  
reinforced by steadfast loyalty  
non-partisan thought and pleasure control  
ruled by an autocracy of mooks and midriffs

## LIAR AND A HOMELESS WOMAN

He's not sure why he lies. When there's an opportunity to embellish fact for effect, he does. Maybe he's shielding a narcissistic tendency to avoid appearing dumb or simple. People are amused by the extreme, the boisterous and the implausible. He lies to exit or avoid an uncomfortable situation. Repeatedly disappointing others seems to absolve him from feeling guilty.

"Last night a homeless woman approached me with a conversation. Having trekked from New Hampshire and living under a bridge, she described her unsuccessful three day search for her brother. She was thin, articulate, with a dark complexion, wiry grey curls and dressed in plaid pajama pants and a dusty blue shirt. Anticipating that she may ask me for money, I rummaged through my pocket inventory with no avail. Apologetically declining her appeal, I became self-conscious of my clothes, education, bicycle and the takeout food I was waiting for. She wouldn't look at me in the eyes after that."

She may have been lying about her situation--her brother, the bridge, New Hampshire. Despite her sincerity, he had no reason to believe or not believe what she was describing. Even if she wasn't honest, he can admire lies that disguise self-survival as opposed to lies of gratification and selfishness.

## UNFORESEEN BONDS

full-time chains  
small-time pain  
the gateway drug  
and tombstone engraving  
the helping hand  
and the slap on the wrist

once an exit strategy  
now a preemptive sentence  
immune to the walking dead  
and the parasitic souls  
that leech on drones  
and their children's meals

outsource sympathy  
redeem anything labeled 'pride'  
find the cultural suppository  
and medicate the enigma  
living ordinance cage  
and a luxurious steal wage

## SNAKE CHARMER

His diminutive stature made his legs dangle like wet clothes on the line. Laboriously shoveling scolding soup into his innocent mouth, he needed a distraction to keep from finishing that last piece of baby corn. At the most opportune moment, a yelp boomed from the other side of the house. Parachuting from his stool, he eased his way to the bathroom door--the origin of the disturbance. A few more yelps that made him hesitate; they were deep enough only to belong to his burly father.

He persuaded his head through the cracked door to see his shirtless father standing over the sink, head agonizingly arched. His mother was standing behind his father with her nose inspecting his middle-back. Her two index fingers were charming a white snake from a red mountain erected on his spine. He opened the rest of the door and graced into the exhibit. His presence seemed inconsequential. After the grown snake fell to his feet, his mother instructed him to finish his baby corn. Suspended by his thick arms, his father's head was lifelessly dangling. The exhibit was over; he obediently left.

Climbing aboard his chair he was still wide-eyed from the action. When he returned to the present, he gazed at his soup filled with baby corn carcasses and realized his appetite was on the floor with the snake. He descended yet again and threw the remainder of the soup in the trash.

## SAME SHIT, DIFFERENT WRAPPER

watch me  
over here  
stop watching  
pay attention  
fuck you  
just kidding  
love you  
don't know  
play games  
give attention  
i fight  
cuddle me  
i cut  
men suck  
pleasure me  
don't call  
time sucker  
head case  
please write  
hate parents  
be jealous  
no esteem  
help me  
i'm drowning  
be friends  
don't care  
call me

## **SPECIALISTS AND PROFESSIONALS**

Be skeptical of people that claim to be a specialist or a professional. It is an excellent indication that they possess a license to shit on your ignorance or stupidity. Believe me. In these matters, I am an expert.

## **STOLEN DEC. 16**

The woman accused of killing a pregnant woman and cutting the baby girl from her womb held her hands in her lap and cast her eyes downward.

The woman accused of killing a pregnant woman and cutting the fetus from her womb held her hands in her lap and cast her eyes downward.

The woman accused of killing a pregnant woman and cutting the unborn baby from her womb held her hands in her lap and cast her eyes downward.

## WASTE

in an attempt to  
conceptualize the ends  
we can see a racialized  
distribution of  
property  
resources  
and  
commodities

we need not forget  
waste trickles down  
the color lines and  
avoids the dollar signs

mentality of creation  
combined with the  
intention of destruction  
we find that property  
is  
nothing  
but  
theft

it is not the intention  
but the perception  
not to see the results  
and a history of insults

authoring an excuse  
for domination, they  
divided the apple pie  
based on  
bluffs  
deceptions  
and  
lies

standing on two feet and  
pulling up on boot straps  
as much as possible  
is physically impossible

## THE PROFIT-ORIENTED ARTIST

A cold figure stands on the crumbled cement curb. She is slouched with all her weight on one foot while the other one is set out in front. Her body is bound in fish-nets and dainty black leather like string strangling a loaf of pork. She is sheltered by an abandoned bus stop even though it has just finished raining. Her body is dead and is only defibrillated by the occasional sound of rolling rubber against the wet pavement. That is when she exposes herself from behind a shadowy curtain, struts out on the runway, turns, poses and smiles like she has done it hundreds of times before. She is an artist waiting to be consumed.

She is a pop star, enormously successful and tremendously powerful. Executives have built a mega empire of merchandise, glamour, fashion, and music based on a well-crafted persona. The artist that may have existed before has long been dead. Girls mutilate their bodies to be like her and boys masturbate thinking of her. She calls herself an artist, but none of the words she says or the notes she sings have been hers. Everything has been willingly and methodically crafted for her. Like a baker creates a lardy dessert and all she does is put in on the table.

She works as a hamburger jockey at a fast food establishment serving fat people food—food that will make them even fatter. Because she has no family or wife, she needs to make money on the side to support her painting habit.

No matter how hard she tries, her debt, loans, and bills never disappear. She lives modestly in a house occupied by friendly acquaintances. A few months ago she was regularly screwing one of her roommates which unfortunately ended in ruin. Recently, the source of her painting has been the angst and awkwardness with her ex-communicated roommate. No art galleries will host her work.

Not five miles away is a very exclusive fine art gallery. The smallest painting goes for no less than eight hundred. It is located in the heart of paradise where tourist bees swarm between Memorial Day and Labor Day. She is an affiliated and well-liked artist at this gallery. Her subject matter usually includes marine scenes, dunes, delicate skylines and weathered houses. Considered the most successful fine artist in the region, she works a self-imposed nine to five day laboring images that she is confident tourists will buy to hang in their urban brownstone apartments.

Even though the rent is nine fifty a month, she has no problem affording her luxurious apartment on Caucasian Hill. Recently a college graduate, she is a graphic designer at an international design firm that she commutes to daily. She creates mockups for advertisements that are ripped apart by a disgruntled supervisor. When she was hired she thought that she would have more of a creative voice in her design. She is slowly beginning to understand what is expected. Whenever she is bored, she doodles tiny stars on a desk calendar until some tells her

to get back to work. In the cubical not five feet from her is a seasoned and eccentric veteran. He has been there for many years and his opinions are well respected at the firm. Because of this, he is able to take many risks in his work without fear of rejection. He is responsible for creating sexually explicit beer ads in teen magazines, and he loves his work.

While living in the city, she works as a stripper to earn a living. She went to school to be a professional dancer, moved to the big city, and struggled to find dance companies that will hire. She is a little short for a dancer. In order to keep her body active and to make money to pay off her debt, she finds a job in an exotic strip club. Although she's comfortable naked, she is ashamed to be labeled as a stripper so her family thinks she works a temp job filing paper. She has an over-abundance of choreography ideas that she formulates in her head. Because of her current occupation, no one will take her ideas seriously.

He has been in numerous art journals. His name is widely recognized throughout the art world as a sculptor extraordinaire. Her job, along with a team of underpaid artists, is to create his art. He hands her a scribbling on a napkin, and she is the foreman responsible for overseeing the meticulous craftsmanship. As he gains more notoriety, his studio begins to morph into a factory and the workers become interchangeable. Once and awhile, he will disagree with one of her decisions, however, for the

most part he's never around to see the production of the art that bears his name. He's mostly preoccupied with promoting himself, negotiating with dealers, and being interviewed by famous publications. She hopes that one day she will replace the company's CEO and have the authority to call the shots.

Unlike most sex workers, she is her own boss. A car rolls up to the corner and opens the tinted window enough so that she can see her potential client. She awkwardly hunches over to expose an ample amount of cleavage and throws him an arbitrary question. Before she can make an offer, he waves several bills and without hesitation she steps off the crumbled curb and slides into the leather-lined passenger side.

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