



PENGUIN  CLASSICS

RITALINBOT

AGONIES

AGONIES

AGONIES FROM CONFINEMENT

Joseph Wilcox. Smith

with a preface by Conrad D. Rozensweig. PhD.

Written by Ritalinbot

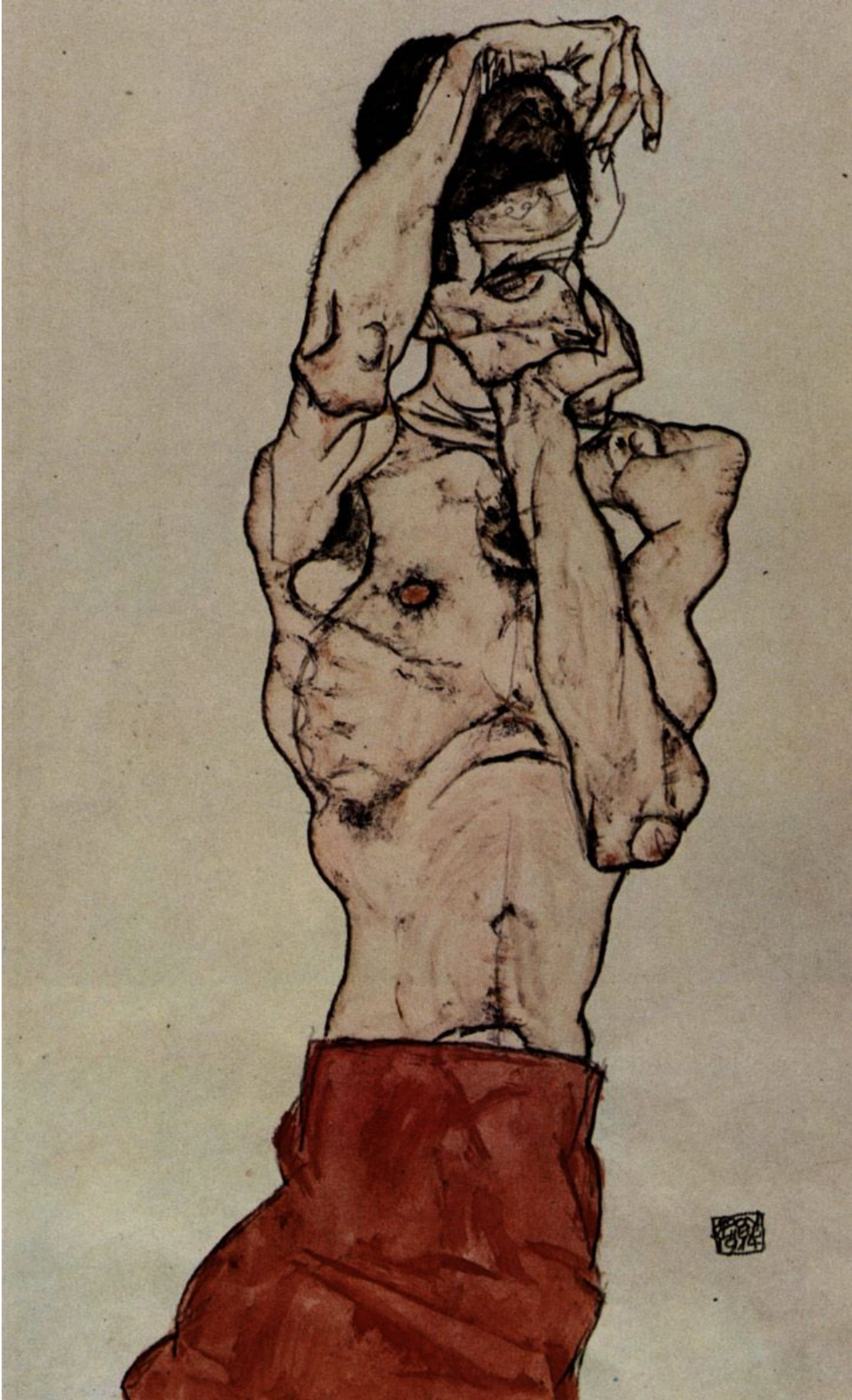


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Preface : *Self-Portrait, facing right*
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Editor's Foreword

The following work is the result of an unfinished draft found at the cell of one of the inmates of the Barry B. Telford penitentiary prison, Texas, written by a certain childhood friend of mine named Joseph W. Smith. The majority of the unfinished, diary-like notebooks was most likely meant to have been published and read, not simply kept as a personal journal, by people other than the author, but as regards as to which of the contents written that were meant by the author to have been published and those that were not is still up for debate. Nevertheless, the finished writing and publication of the author's memoirs never materialized during his lifetime, as he had committed suicide at the age of 28 by hanging, confined to his prisoncell and after having shown, according to the Prison's Psyquiatic Ward, signs of a deep depression and suicidal ideation, coupled with general mental instability.

Joseph W. Smith was arrested and tried on the grounds of having murdered his own brother, 24, on 5th of June, 2015, having shown deep signs of remorse, including a mental breakdown during the time of his trial. His sentence was to life in prison without possibility of parole.

The date of the suicide is 10th December, 2018. The exact reason as to why he decided to commit suicide has not been written into any of the notebooks, nor was any suicide note found. Smith struggled with various forms of mental instability throughout his life, and had been diagnosed with heart failure one year prior to his suicide, most likely increasing and worsening his mental condition and propelling him into writing this book, knowing that he might not have had much time left. It was unfortunate, however, that he decided to take his own life first, having hanged himself in his cell, leaving these notebooks, but without any explicit mention or note regarding his motives for suicide.

The reason why these notebooks have been compiled after having been found at Smith's cell has been due to the remarkable artistic and philosophical merits found in them, alongside a deep description filled with anecdotes of the mental instabilities that a man confined in prison went through, ultimately culminating in his suicide. I adamantly argue that these anecdotes are of great importance for the study of psychopathology and a testament of a man's life, and find the philosophical and psychological insights of particular value. Having this in mind, I find that students of

psychology, psychiatry, and philosophy would gain much from reading these collected memoirs, and that the book has much to offer to lay-readers like-wise.

Another factor that has led me to personally supervise the editing of this book has been that the Smith in question had been a childhood friend of mine. I had paid him a decent amount of visits in jail, and he had informed me, in July 21st 2018, that he had been working in writing a book. This interested me greatly, but sadly, our meetings were brief, and during the next few months, our visits had become increasingly sparse. Regrettably, I did not have a chance to look at any of his writings before his death, and consequently could not know which parts he would rather have been edited out, and which should have been shown the light of day. He asked me if I would publish his memoirs, or at least attempt to, if he would finish writing them, and I promised him that I would. Unfortunately, as previously stated, his wish has never materialized while alive and his memoirs have been left unfinished. Nevertheless, after having found out the news about his death, I was informed by the Texas Justice Department that the belongings of the deceased Smith were to be bequeathed to me, and that I was the sole heir to his belongings, including the aforementioned notebooks. In his will I had received a meager amount left that he had at the bank (around a thousand dollars, his notebooks, his assortment of books, and little else) and been made tacitly responsible for the publishing of his unfinished memoirs, being told personally of the task given to me during my visits before. I have attempted to get this book published by having gone to various publishing houses, exhaustingly contacting and trying to have it published anyway I could, and received no answer, that is, until I found a suitable publisher who ultimately accepted to publish the book, after two years of failed attempts. Having this in mind I deeply thank the publishing house for having granted me the right to make public my friend's memoirs.

Critical reception has been positive and the book has been well-received by literary critics, especially considering the unassuming nature of the work and the unrelenting fact that its author had been a murderer. In regards to the person in question, from what I can remember, as a child, he was a strange, disconcerting kid whom I used to meet at the school cafeteria, and sometimes play videogames together with him at his house. He enjoyed mainly japanese RPGs and strategy games. During his teenage years, he isolated himself further and further and I heard less about him as time went on. At the time we had become adults, we had virtually cut off all contact from one another, and I had only heard from him again when I had read the news one morning on the newspaper after he was arrested. I've talked to Smith during 12 scheduled visits to the Belford Penitentiary Facility and I had noticed he seemed to gradually worsen mentally-wise during his stay in jail as time went on. Overall, he was a strange and

peculiar individual, but whose acquaintance, I must admit, I was charmed to have had. Regardless of his personal challenges and struggles, he remained a very empathetic and caring person all throughout his life, even when he had such apathy for a World that, as he felt, had abandoned him. Whenever you happened to be in the same room as him, he made you feel like you were the center of attention, and that he paid more attention to your well-being than his. Smith was by nature constituted to be generous, too much so, on the contrary of the World he found himself on. I recall how he had this touching pity and sympathy for the poor and the homeless, and how, as a child, there was an incident he had told me that he lied to his mom claiming he needed money for purchasing one of the toys he wanted, but kept the money and secretly bought a doll instead, and proceeded to give it to a poor, orphaned bullied girl who lived in an orphanage across our Public School. For obvious reasons, the said little girl had no hope to afford or be given a doll of that price by the orphanage. At first I was incredulous, but then after school term was over, I remember quite distinctly (one of the many pleasant memories of childhood) I had asked the girl in question and found out that it was all true. I saw her walking with that same pale, blonde, pink-dressed doll for a long time after that, and she seemed to esteem it very greatly. Besides this, I still remember how he used to make me laugh when we were children, and I enjoy remembering then and again how he was a surprisingly funny and pleasant person to be around with, albeit as time went on, he showed signs of depression and gave off a gloomy aura to him, even before adolescence had fully hit. As time went on, things increasingly worsened and we eventually lost all contact. Considering the character of the person in question, there is no doubt in my mind that the crime he committed could only have been the result of an intractable (and extremely severe) illness that broke his psyche completely, resulting in an act that could only have been the product of a certain form of unrelenting, brutal madness. On the other hand, my work as a psychiatrist and my personal knowledge of Smith' family and household have led me to believe that a great part of his sufferings and sorrows can be attributed to the family life that he was born into, and the abuses - verbal and physical - that he suffered at the hands of his parents, which have definitely and directly contributed to his worsening mental state. One cannot help, however, but to wonder what could have been done to have saved him and his brother; and stopped him from having committed that horrendous act of familial homicide which has led to the grief of the family and friends of both Smith and his brother.

Having in mind the indole of Smith and the nature of the work, one must bear with the limitations and shortcomings that come with a work left unfinished, and so it's important to keep in mind that one might sporadically find inconsistencies in the text, along with sprawling thoughts and ideas, unfinished paragraphs and ultimately an

abrupt end. However, I'm sure that this will not hinder readers from appreciating the work, and might even find some enjoyment out of connecting the missing links and attempting to figure out what would have been going through Smith's mind. Also crucial to a full understanding of the work is the reading of my footnotes, which will clarify some of the apparent misgivings of the book. Besides this, I have done my best to edit out any errors and typos, and have insisted that the order of the paragraphs be left intact, with the intent of giving it a more authentic and less contrived rendition of the text.

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Conrad D. Rozensweig

PREFACE

I write this in confinement. The trial by which I have been deemed guilty for the murder of one of my close relatives has condemned me to life in prison. The pleas I have made to the judge have all been rejected. During the trial, I had been advised by my lawyer to plead for insanity, but I've refused to do such a thing. I do not consider myself to be insane, and find myself, today as much as of the time of the trial, to be of sound body and mind. All that I'm about to record in these Memoirs has been true. Even those fantastic occurrences, be it of fate or else, that seem impossible to any man of scientific and rational mind are to be believed, for I write this with no intention to excuse myself or to change the opinion of anyone who might encounter this text regarding my innocence or guilt of the crime committed. Nevertheless, I'm positively sure that some of you might find that what I am about to write are only but the ramblings of an insane man pleading for the reconsideration, or at least the rehabilitation, of a man in jail, and that I write it is in order to make myself seem more humane or worthy of pity or your sympathy. I assure you that this is not the case. These memoirs will be excruciatingly, brutally honest and sincere, and I will hide no wrongdoings or unfavorably-looking facts and thoughts of mine in any attempt to flatter myself to others. What I will write will be the harsh and honest truth, and even though some of you might find me detestable, or simply miserably pathetic, unworthy of anything closely related to pity, I will not change or alter in any way the facts as I've encountered them (John 8:32).

I assure you, with God as my witness (for what can a man who has nothing left to swear on besides his God), that the following accounts are all true, and that I write them as they show themselves in my mind and as accurately as I remember them. Having the truthfulness of these accounts been established and the reader, having in mind that there comes a time where a dying, confined man has no reason to lie anymore, I must inform him that one of the reasons why I have come to write this, derives not only from knowing that my life and my testament will not have been forgotten after my death, but in order to ease my mind and put me at ease. "What do you mean, putting you at ease?", you might ask. I mean that having my memoirs written will hopefully avoid me from going insane, while at the same time making a record of my experiences and my life so that, if it really does come a time by which I shall lose all of that which can be considered an understanding and rational, thinking mind, my by-then invalid, demented consciousness will be able to at least recollect a few fragments and scraps of what I once used to be.

The following texts are a collection that will reflect my experiences and thoughts about the short life I've been forced to live and the discomfoting events that have ultimately led me to live the rest of my time confined in prison. They are, in a sense, a reflection of everything that I've ever known, about this Life, the World and everything else that this prisoner can recount that has at least a little importance that warrants being written here. So, without further ado, to whomever this might concern, be it one of my prison inmates (if any of them even bother to read even a little), some stranger, my dear friend Rozensweig or nobody at all, here are my memoirs.

NOTEBOOK I

“Life has its own hidden forces, which you can discover only by living.”

Soren Kierkegaard¹

¹ Editor's Note: this quote was found in the first few pages of the notebook, having been scribbled at the side in brackets : [*write this at the beginning of the first draft*], thus justifying my putting it here. Most likely this was meant to be the introductory quote to his first chapter. Smith had mentioned, during my visits to him in jail, that he was an admirer of Kierkegaard, and he was glad that there was a copy of *Either/Or* and *Fear and Trembling* in the prison library, probably due to the fact that these were religious works (and religious works are more easily found in penal institutions). The parts of the book were divided according to the order of the notebooks, so that the first part is the first notebook, the second part the second and so on and so forth.

My life has not been lived. My existence has been empty. I have been alienated from the World and its inhabitants from the very beginning. The concoction of all those indescribable but intense sensations that are so accustomed to humans and so usually taken for granted - those experiences so common to those human beings I had no understanding of - have simply been denied to me. Those little, simple things that no soul ever takes a moment's notice to think over: how easy it is to make friends, form bonds and converse, move locations etc. were all strange ideas to me. Life had gone on without me, and I feel myself as a lonesome voyager on a long trip leading straight to nowhere. My life wasn't really a life, but just time badly-spent.

I admit, however, that no person has ever had a perfect life, but I cannot help but to feel that they, at the bare minimum, felt as if they had something they could at least call a life. As far as I can remember, I've felt that I had been but a shell of a person, something similar to *Oba Yozo* from *No Longer Human*. Even as a child, I had a very gloomy and depressed disposition, and during my adolescence, had experienced various bouts of depression and self-inflicted isolation. Even now, as I write these memoirs, I feel best not to indulge into reminding myself of those years too much, as they still feel like a deep source of sorrow for me, so I plan to keep the accounts of my formative years relatively short.

Besides the usual depressive states I so often used to find myself in, the greatest impediment to my overall happiness had been an oppressive insomnia, which hindered me from living out a normal life. My daily schedule and circadian rhythm were all but normal. There were days I would sleep at noon and wake up at night, other days I would sleep at night but only wake up at noon, or any time in-between but almost never with anything you could call regularity or familiarity. It was anything but normal. There wasn't one week that went by in which I slept at a regular time. I was a true insomniac, and that led to many problems later in life, and surely damaged my already fragile psyche.

The despair one finds himself in during episodes of true insomnia are a paradoxical mixture of pleasure, depression and anger. First, pleasure, because the mind feels a placid, eerie satisfaction in maintaining itself awake and conscious during extended periods of time, and one cannot help but to feel a certain enjoyment in keeping the body and mind active during times it's precisely supposed not to. Second,

depression, as one realizes he's alone and lonely, and all sorts of terrible thoughts creep into his consciousness unwittingly, and without his permission. And finally, anger. Anger at not being able to function, anger at not being able to cease the pain, anger at not being able to sleep. At extended periods of insomnia, one notices his mind begin to deteriorate, but there remains this eerie, strange, ineffable pleasure that accompanies this unhealthy deprivation.

Before my twentieth-first birthday, and after the formative years up until 18, I had finally developed a more or less consistent sleep schedule. I used to wake up at around 12:00PM or around that time, and I used to have the entire day all for myself. I had no job, nor did I look for one. I hadn't entered university either, as I couldn't be bothered with having to wake up on time to watch a boring, graying, bald college professor give a lecture for a semester for a test which I would surely forget their contents right after (and so would my classmates). What does one even learn in university anyway? There simply is this plethora of bachelors that serve no practical purpose, and most infuriatingly of all, they teach absolutely nothing. In most universities, the content that is actually taught by professors is nothing but a simple introduction, and the students almost always learn nothing. The amount of actual content that college professors teach their students is close to nil, as I later discovered in life, but I'm getting ahead of myself. My days would usually consist of just studying and reading alone whatever literature and philosophy I could get my hands on, no doubt aided by the vast amount of information provided by the internet, and repeated bouts of depression, with the occasional suicidal thoughts mingled in. These suicidal thoughts never went beyond fantasy, of course, and even though there was something that I detested about the very fact of being alive itself, I never gave serious thought to how I would commit suicide. Rather, I just fantasized about it. Perhaps I felt that death was too great of an event to me. Perhaps I did not, and could not, muster the strength to commit suicide, but either way, I knew I could never go through with it. Suicide was something that I could only fantasize about but never actually did I believe, even for a moment, that I could actually do it, mostly because I lacked the conviction to take such drastic action. On the other hand, however, one thing that fascinated me about death was just how easy it seemed to be achieved. One slash to the wrists, and you'll bleed to death, one overdose on whatever drugs that you happen to have at your home and you are dead (or handicapped for life), a few minutes without oxygen and your brain cells would start to die, eventually leading to your death and meeting with the abyss etc. etc. At the same time that it seemed like an impossible task to be done, something that I simply couldn't do, an insult to life itself, it all seemed like suicide was too close and

too easy for me to actually go through with it. It's very difficult to explain it. It all seemed like it couldn't even be true that you could simply end your life and all those years which should be in front of you would just stop existing just from a single action. I've felt that, due to the very easiness that death could be attained, it could not be true. With such effortlessness one could end one's life yet so few did so, and those that did appeared on the news. How come so few people committed suicide when it's so abundantly clear how awful and meaningless Life is, and at the same time death could be achieved with such effortlessness? Death seemed to me something too easy, and maybe not worthy of being chased after, perhaps? Perhaps there was something in Life, some purpose, some meaning, that had been granted others but denied to me, and that would have given me purpose and strength to go on living without the thought of suicide ever conjuring up in my mind? Perhaps there is something to Life I hadn't found out about, and that would end up making everything better, everything more endurable, less empty and devoid of senseless suffering and despair, and would turn the mere thought of suicide an unfunny joke? I'm not sure. What I'm sure though, is that dying is at the same time difficult and easy. I'm no poet so I find it very hard to find the proper words to describe this feeling I have about death, but it feels like death is concomitantly a terrifying challenge to go through and a natural, passive and straight-forward "activity" we must all meet in the end much too easily. Perhaps, dear readers, when you come into a close-contact or when the time does come you have to meet death, or think seriously about it, you'll know what I speak of.

Death seemed at the time like something that one could fantasize about, but such a gigantic, irrevocable and terrifying meeting with it sounded like something my mind could not fully comprehend, and as time went on, the wish for death started changing towards fear, and thus an eerie while at the same time familiar fear of death was born, and remains with me until now. It is ironic that those that fear death the most use to be those who are most likely to contemplate suicide. Perhaps because the fear of death increases their anxieties and dread up to such a point that suicide starts to appear as a suitable option to undertake in order to rid oneself of this very same fear. Were a man to commit suicide out of his fear of death, that would surely make a great comedy-tragedy. Nevertheless, this fear of dying always remained with me and it will probably continue until the day I cease to exist, by which time this fear will have reached its culmination, and then dissipate along with my consciousness, leading me to endless oblivion.

I did not, and have not, ever understood death and still cannot. Even after one gets close to death, still one cannot understand it. But what one gains from looking at death in the face is knowledge of life's briefness, but death still cannot be looked at directly too often, and the fear most likely will always remain with you even years after the encounter. The readers who have survived near-death situations will perhaps know what I mean. To the others, it's an ineffable experience that cannot be properly expressed, they may even skip the next few pages. I know for a fact, on the other hand, that the majority of people do their best to avoid thinking about death, and a lot of times they go on about their lives as if they really were going to live forever. Whenever they think about death, what registers in their minds would be that others die, but to them, this could never happen. How could it? I think this is because death is something so inexplicably alien to the nature of the constantly thinking mind, that it goes against the mind's own principles. How can the mind register or contemplate oblivion, a complete nothingness, forever (or outside of time and space)? It cannot just so happen that at any one time, irrevocably and perpetually, life and everything one has ever known would just end with a complete and utter extinction of consciousness and everything. Perhaps God had made a really practical joke in creating humans whose nature included an instinct for survival so strong, coupled with a complete ignorance to the nature of death, that they could not come close to understanding the nature of non-being itself, but who were doomed to death from the very beginning. "I think therefore I die."

Regarding my intellectual interests and past-times, I would usually indulge in all sorts of literary and philosophical delights, since I had a vast selection of books that I could order from the internet, or print them myself. Even though I had some considerable interest in literature, I do not believe that the manner in which I engaged in them was the same that one would expect from a literary bookworm. I was not accustomed to reading literature focusing myself on the style and how the things were said as much as the things that were said. In short, I always looked for substance rather than style. Not that I did not enjoy my Nabokov, but that I sincerely believed that the purpose of reading those literary works should not be as much refining one's literary and artistic taste as of discovering new ideas and philosophical and psychological insights, some of which would best be rendered into a literary format. Hence my favorite author, by far, was Dostojevski. Even though I must concede that some criticisms made to him that his works, and especially his characters, were badly-developed or shallow, the breadth and depth of his philosophical ideas allured me, and that's why he has been my favorite author, ever since I got my first copy of

The Brothers Karamazov at 16. The psychological events described in his novels, and the description of the sentiments that the characters felt, along with the philosophical ideas and concepts expounded, enamoured me. *The Brothers Karamazov* has profoundly affected me since an early age, and I still get an urge from now and then to re-read it, but unfortunately they do not have a copy of it in the prison library.

Leaving these activities aside, it never felt like I had enough time for anything, even though I had all the time in the World. Time always seemed to just slip by my fingers, and undoubtedly I wasted way too much time just doing about nothing on the computer, playing games or wasting this short existence that has been granted me doing nothing or consuming whatever cheap media I found. My second greatest wish as of today is that I could get back the lost time that I wasted so much back when I was free. The first one is to get out of jail. Oh, how I loathe that time that I squandered away! Now that I'm in jail and realize that there's not much time left, the thought and remembrance of the time I was free to do whatever I want haunts me like nothing else! The regret that comes from knowing that I wasted the time that I had to do something positive and productive while I was alive (for this life I live as of today isn't life at all.) is the most haunting of all. It is not simply cringe-inducing, but rage-inducing. It makes my teeth grind. To know that I have been granted such a short time and have finally found the value of time and having myself be confined to this prison for the rest of my life to brood over all this time wasted is the worst thing of all. Maybe the worst punishment here in prison isn't the staying inside four walls with nothing to do, or the bad food, or having to deal with the other prison inmates, but of having to remember, day and day again, that I wasted the life that I had, and now I am left here to rot and to live a non-existent life but with all the suffering that comes from regret and knowledge of the past without any of the things that make life worth living, or even bearable. "This is the bitterest pain among men, to have much knowledge but no power.", a certain greek once said.

Since childhood, I had preferred to be alone. I don't know if this is a product of my own biological nature, if this had come to be due to how I had been raised or whatever it is that psychologists and psychoanalysts like to ascribe in order to explain the behavior of young people and children (not to mention the child psychiatrists, who came up with the ADHD diagnosis and prescribe amphetamines to 6 year olds), if it's misanthropic nature (some of the intelligent, at least, have a latent misanthrope in them, being gradually developed when we have to live among the masses of humanity, and not due to a particular philosophical development or refinement. When one

becomes misanthropic, it is not as much that he has gotten into his head this stupid idea that the pessimists like to expound, as much as that the living with men brings him hatred of mankind. Some of the most intelligent (especially those philosophically-inclined) have in them a seed of misanthropy, and the constant interaction with men of this World, particularly in childhood, is like the watering needed to make the plant grow) or with how, during my formative years, the colleagues I had in school were, without a shadow of a doubt, detestable and despicable human beings. Anything even mildly intellectual or curious to them was only but a bore, and so there was nothing for me to talk to them about, but surely they wasted no time in order to pick on me and others. Children and adolescents, those human beings in formation, were truly terrible and sadistic animals. It is in them that the true nature of humanity is to be found in : how they enjoyed killing and torturing animals, picking on others, maltreating the weak etc. It is most likely that I got my misanthropic feelings from them (but I'm also sure that my parents didn't help me change the gloomy way I saw the World at all). Perhaps it's a mix of a little bit of everything, but I suspect it owes mostly to the way I was raised and those I interacted with, and the other part to my misanthropic nature.

7

Memory is an odd little thing, isn't it? How come recollections of suffering come to the fore and trouble us so often, but not those that were of delight and pleasure? Isn't it enough that we suffer as of now, and why must we torment ourselves so with remembrances of sufferings past? Why has man been created in such a way that the sufferings of the past trouble him so, but the delights are all but forgotten? I remember having read that Epicurus delighted himself with knowing the pleasures that he had experienced during his happier times in order to endure his painful death more easily. His death bed wasn't painful, even the Stoics admit it, according to the records we have of Antiquity. Most likely this portrayal of Epicurus was a mystical one, or he was an indeed extraordinary, almost super-human, individual. I cannot imagine one who is able to reminisce about the good, pleasurable times, rather than the bad. The sufferings, injustices, and pains of the past come to my mind immediately, most often without my permission, and the ones of pleasure and delight are quickly forgotten, and are almost very difficult to recall, almost as if my mind were against me and conspired to make me suffer.

8

Aren't the sufferings of today enough? Why must we collect our sufferings of the past and remind ourselves so constantly? Must we gather and collect sufferings

and have them all put before us, instead of our This confinement of mine is already painful enough, go away, Imagination!

9

If only we could relive our excitement instead of our anxieties with the force of our will!

10

I don't remember exactly the month of the year, but around the time that I was 21 years old, I would usually wake up and ask myself what I should do with the time that I had. When you don't work and you don't have anything to do, time goes by incredibly fast, so much so that it gets to a point where it scares you. What will happen to you once you get to your 30s, or 40s? Does time pass by like a bullet-train and you can barely remember the last thing you did, and all the things that you've done this last year sound to you like just a month had passed by, or even a week? I wonder what it is like to be that old. Even though I was just about 21, I felt like I was growing old too quickly, and that Life was just passing by through my fingers. It wasn't a pleasurable feeling at all.

11

Those things that I had been doing everyday, those daily chores and activities that would ordinarily bring satisfaction to a normal human being sounded like the perfect life for a layman, a life that was too easy and effortless in its nature. By far a happy life. A layman would think me extremely lucky. But the things I did get boring terribly fast, and especially when you have no one else to share it with, then it becomes doubly boring. What I could do, however, would be to do those same activities I have been doing since ageless time and simply pretend that time wasn't moving at all and this day wouldn't end up being lost. I was too smart, or at least self-aware, to do that, however.

12

Back then I would sometimes fantasize that time had stopped still, and that everyday wasn't a new day. I would wish that the next day would come as if it were a continuation of the infinite life that I have been living since ageless time that loops

over and over again. An Eternal Return of sorts. I could just pretend that this day wouldn't go away, that this day wouldn't be lost, that this day won't even register in the calendar. I could make myself believe I wasn't getting older, that life wasn't just passing me by. Sure, if I kept on doing this everyday and kept forcing myself to believe that not a day had passed, I would eventually grow old, and other people would too, but the way things were going on in my life, maybe that would have been the least of my concerns.

-“Everybody grows old, right?”

-“Yeah, but they don't waste time like I do.”

13

Everyday felt the same, and it felt like nothing was changing. Days used to go by and I went on adding the years and nothing new or different ever happened. The way things were going by the time I turned 21, I'm pretty sure that I could fool myself that time had stopped and didn't move, or that everyday was just a repetition of the old and nothing would change. I could even tell myself that I could predict the future, and I was pretty sure that I would get my predictions right every time. Back then, I didn't even look at the calendar anymore, because why would I? Maybe I could ignore it all and pretend that nothing was happening, because really, nothing ever was. Everyday felt the same, so I came to fantasize that they were. I would then be stuck in time, redoing the same thing over and over again, and what would it matter anyway? Unlike what goes on in the escapist media that always has the main character stuck in a situation be helped whenever he's completely lost, something or someone wouldn't come to save me from this strange routine I found myself in anyway. And I'm pretty sure that, if I ever got to the point I would have become a psychotic male who had lost completely the sense of time, I wouldn't want to be saved anyway. Maybe the insane don't want to get out of their current state. Maybe they would want to remain stuck in their delusions, and I would be no different. I would just want time to stop and to forget that the World existed

14

Unfortunately, however, the World went on without me and didn't stop despite my pleas.

One time a certain relative of mine told me that I was the reincarnation of Franz Kafka. If by any chance you came upon this book (how did you even get a hold of it anyway?) and you have no idea who I'm talking about, perhaps it's time that you stop reading it now. Nevertheless, it came to me as a surprise that I was described as such. I never viewed myself as someone who had any literary talent to being with. Maybe standards of reading have fallen so much in the high school curriculum that writing skills and tastes in literature have all taken a big hit in the Western Hemisphere. The intellectual curiosity of the majority of the human population (if that can be said to even exist) is so low that it is hard to find a single soul that cares for studying for its own sake. Anyway, I didn't like him very much, and he wasn't even really very versed into the humanities at all, nor did he even care for it in the slightest. Actually he probably thought that people who do so are lazy, incompetent, and almost useless members of society. He hated the humanities. But at the same time he must probably have felt that he needed to compliment me somehow. Maybe because he inflates his secretly fragile ego by attempting to help and inflate others'.

It seems that there is this small part of the population that has this psychological trait to them. They need to flatter someone to make them feel better about themselves. It's all a big hypocrisy, to compliment and inflate another's ego but deep down to hold nothing but disdain for that person and the things that he complimented him on in the first place. He said this as if he were complimenting me, but deep down he hated literature and all things related to it. He thought not only that literature was a waste of time, but that anything related to the humanities, be it psychology, philosophy, history, art etc. were below him. If that was it, it would be completely fine by me, but to make a case to compliment someone based on an attribute he deep down detests and keep a facile smile over it is not only a completely reproachable thing, but downright insulting. It is the worst kind of humility, if you can call it that.

The Ancients were really precisely correct in rebuking flattery, it being worse than being offended and rebuked directly, but in this World filled with farce, it is something that one must get used to, eventually.

He told me I had to start “contributing to society” a few days before my twentieth-first birthday. Hah, what a joke. During all these years I have lived, if I had discovered a single thing, is that nobody actually cared about “contributing to society”. The thing that people want the most, and have always wanted ever since times past - with the exception of the times where there was honor to be made - has been money. Simply and merely this. Money. People so often lie to themselves and invent fanciful ways of saying that, whatever their office may be, their work has some reason for being and actually is important for humanity as a whole or in some way contributes to the welfare of mankind. I have discovered, however, that this is simply what people say, to themselves and to others, in order to make it appear that they do a dignified work and are not simply in there for the money. Those who are sincere to themselves, and do tell people, privately or publicly, that the only reason why they are doing what they do is in order to make a living for themselves, and have no passion at all for their work never are seen as honest people, but in fact, these are the most honest of all. Money, I’ve found out is “what makes the World go around”, as an old saying goes. Money is what people mean when they say to “contribute to society”. They simply mean making money and then they sugarcoat it saying what they’re doing is contributing to something.

However, even when the so-called work is nothing but an elaborate farce, like what those bureaucrats are used to doing all around the World, that is, pretending to do something while in reality doing nothing but feeding and propagating the useless and meddling apparatus of the state, there is a feeling of doing something that matters, even when it’s to no avail to anybody, nay sometimes even prejudicial. I’m very sure that all those criminals and gangsters of the 20th Century, and even those who belonged to the NDASP felt that what they were doing was real and honest work, and that when they would kill people during the invasion of this or that country of Europe there was real progress being made. I’m very sure that they felt their time was being spent productively, because at least they were doing something with their time, which I apparently was not.

It is not as much as the motives for what people do that annoys me, as much as that they are not honest about it.

It must be a psychological current that pervades what we do. When we are doing something, even when in fact we are actually doing nothing, there is this pervasive feeling that there is something meaningful and purposeful in what we are doing, even when, if one thinks hardly about it, it's made very clear that he isn't doing anything. We do nothing, contribute to nothing, say nothing, tell no truths, and then call that a hard day's work.

Those times I have wasted worrying about nothing at all! If only I had them back, if only I had lived one day sincerely and with meaning! Sometimes, I wish that all my friends would have a non-fatal encounter with death in some form or another so that they would consider their own mortality. Maybe then they would think more of what to do with whatever little time they have left.

The job of the poet is to show us what cannot be shown. That's why some people have trouble understanding their art. Because to make the ineffable shown is an insurmountable task.

Death is something that we will all have to go through, but which we prefer to delay, even the thought of, all the time. It is regrettable that such an important matter be left to the future. Death is a subject too important to leave for tomorrow.

Is it better to know when the time of your death is on the calendar, or is it better to go on living with death unacknowledged? People often don't value life much, because in their minds it will go on forever, but if they were too suddenly confronted with death, would they make good use of it or would it be too much to bear? Whenever I think about death, I contend myself with the thought that it is something far away from me, in the far future, and the idea that it is so distant to where I am right now, and that I'll never really have to face the abyss, but I realize now that death hangs over

me at every moment. It probably hangs over you too. My question is, having to choose between acknowledging your mortality, knowing the day you'll die or remaining ignorant of the date of your death, which one would you choose?

26

Sometimes, thoughts of death calm me, other times, they bring me to despair. First, they make me despair over having to face the prospect of the abyss, then the despair of the knowledge that Life and the entire world will become darkness and the "I" will paradoxically meet the oblivion whilst ceasing to be (meaning it meets death at the same time it doesn't, for meeting oblivion equals to non-being), is coupled with the insurmountable regret of knowing that I've wasted my only life, and the time that I could have been happy is over. (funny that we should suffer for what is already over, for the anxieties and lack of happiness that are over now anyway should not matter in the present, but they do, all the while we do not rejoice at the delights, pleasures and joys, be it of childhood or whatever else we have amused ourselves with in the past.) Later, by accepting death fully and utterly, the futility of life and being, and the meeting with non-existence brings all anxieties to a nil, knowing that there is nothing to come, and consequently, nothing to brood about.

27

How I regret, regret, regret the past! I loathe my past years, and my mistakes. The people I should have interacted with, the things I should've done, the actions I should've taken, the time I've wasted, even the moments I should have been happy but wasn't... yet, when I think of what it all boils down to, when I think that all ends in nothing - that is, to death - sometimes I'm able to find some tranquility.

28

Having to choose what to do with the little time I have in this life used to engender great anxiety inside my soul. After knowing I have no choice but to spend it the rest of my life inside these four walls, this anxiety for the future ceases, but the regret for the past multiplies. A single mistake, a single moment my guard having been lost, and I'm confined forever to this miserable existence, constantly repentant over the past, always feeling at times either melancholic, other times despairful, about the future. Life in prison is unbearable for two reasons: one is for the bleak, senseless,

wasteful future. The other, for the creeping, ominous, and regretful brooding over the past.

Money means power, in today's World and in the times of before too. But now it means more than ever, because there are no other things to aspire for. While in times past you could at least pretend to aspire for greatness, noble qualities, and those things like Mercy, Piousness and the like, nowadays it has all been replaced by the desire for financial success. I don't know if it is due to the loosening of the hold of religion over people's lives or whatever it is that people used to believe in times past, but any aspiring to anything else other than money simply does not coincide with what men of our age aspire towards, and honestly I don't blame them. People need to work, and they need to make money, they always have, and in times past I'm sure it was even worse than today. But to say that this is the only goal of what a man should be and do seems to make life really something contradictory, and worse than laborious - tedious. Maybe I would have done something and not have been a NEET were things to had been different and the work-life balance changed somewhat, but the way things are looking, no wonder so many people drop out of society like Japan's hikikomori.²

The so-called "productive member of society" - whatever it is that that means - is the phrase people use in order to validate or invalidate people whose lifestyles they don't approve of. I don't know if it's a combination of envy or simply because this is what they were taught to believe. Most likely the latter, but I've realized that sometimes some people have envy too. Surely they don't have any philosophical or political foundation for any of these stances on the matter. They don't know why not working is bad; they can't quite put their finger on it, but they act vehemently against it. Maybe it's because what they see is that whomever doesn't want to work is simply lazy, or because they tell themselves that old adage "Who doesn't work, doesn't eat." but I sincerely do believe that not having to work for one's living is not only a privilege, but one that one should be proud of having. Considering the pains and the toils of mankind in history up to the present day, that there are people that can afford to live a

² Editor's Note : NEET is an acronym for *not in employment, education or training*. Hikikomori is a Japanese term denoting "hermit/withdrawn", a phenomenon that denotes mostly young adolescents who do not leave their homes, instead choosing an escapist lifestyle away from society. To those more interested in knowing about the Hikikomori phenomenon, I recommend *Hikikomori : Adolescence without End* by *Tamaki Saito*. This paragraph was written in a very bad orthography, being difficult to figure out. The letters are particularly small, and done in a quite scribbled manner, suggesting that this was not meant to have been published. It was most likely just an anecdote that Smith wrote without intending it to be published. I decided to include it, however, in order to preserve the integrity and the natural order of the text, along with the flow of thought and writing of the author.

comfortable life without working must surely have seemed like a divine gift to those generations of the past. And perhaps by conforming to this ideal of working the least as possible, I would be doing a favor to those generations of the past that have dreamt with the existence of a life without work, that is, without toil. Wasn't society expecting that the advancement brought by technological progress would allow man to free himself from the exhausting necessities of work? On the other hand, not working also has its downsides. One feels ashamed when away, having to explain "I'm a NEET." and things similar to that, and having to tell others how you enjoying spending your time, along with how introverted you are, coupled with your strange hobbies is no easy task either. To you, I might seem like a complete useless person, but I must reiterate that it is my philosophy that all life is useless. Everything is useless, utterly useless... Maybe I derive my worth from my uselessness, and maybe it is precisely this that makes me feel more of a human being.

30

If suffering has no visible usefulness, at least it makes great poets out of it.

31

A man has to lie to himself at least once in a while.

32

I have so often procrastinated over and over again. I feel that, were I to be confronted with the situation of having to either eat or drink to quench either hunger or thirst, I'd be so indecisive I would do neither and would die of one or the other, perhaps both. I feel like I've never really lived, and when it was time for me to recover lost time, the opportunity was over, and the door locked, perpetually inaccessible to me. The despair worsens.

33

Whoever reads this should be thankful he's free. Being confined to a prison is akin to death, but a peculiar death where one still has enough life to curse his own being - a half-death. A stillborn of sorts.

34

One thing I detest about Life is that it is not possible to live happily and satisfactorily it only by avoiding things, (although it must be conceded that not doing is, most often of times, the hardest thing in the World.) but that it is always in a constant motion. One never has enough time to catch a breath and to stop. It always has to go on forward, otherwise one dies, or is severely crippled by Life. One must keep on doing and doing and doing, and never can live without strenuous effort. Life then becomes a chore.

35

Too much humility is sometimes a sort of arrogance.

36

Being satisfied with whatever one has is the noblest - and hardest - virtue.

37

Not only is it suffering to know and be aware of the things he has done wrong, but life has so severely punished man and so strongly barred him from attaining happiness and well-being for most of humanity, that consciousness not only torments us for what we've done wrong, but for what we've not done at all. Those whom we should have met, should have asked for forgiveness, those whom we should have talked to and lived with but did not so out of fear or complacency. Remembering and having remorse over past complacency, weakness or cowardliness - these former two the most - is even worse than remembering positive (rather than negative, indicating lack of) past actions and mistakes.

38

True happiness consists in being satisfied, up to a certain point (but which is the majority, consisting of up towards 96% or more cases) of the situations one finds himself in.

39

Knowing the brevity of life. Being confronted with the prospect of death, Contemplating, nay, coming into contact with eternity. Staring at the abyss directly... After this, it becomes such a stupid, ridiculous even, idea to worry, or to suffer, or to feel shame over the past, over past mistakes, over embarrassments and slight

humiliations! What are those in comparison to eternity! Look at death in the face, and you'll see that, whatever humiliation you've suffered, it is nothing compared to the calamitous death you'll have to face someday.

40

Every death is a calamity. Every ceasing to be is a great tragedy. We only are foolish enough to believe that the consciousness of one or the other is worth more or less than that other. We mourn more one than the other based solely on that. But what does it matter if the consciousness of an emperor or a beggar ceases to be? What is the difference? Why do we hold one in more esteem than the other? Isn't it a fact that the death of a Caesar or an Augustus owes its tragedy due to the persona he creates, and not as much as to the consciousness or the being that is behind that same persona? In regards the World created by that consciousness, isn't the beggar's just as lively and real as an emperor's?

41

What matters is to be alive. A living mouse is worth more than a living lion, yet we all must die. There lies the contradiction.

42

Happiest he who thinks the least. ["I sit astride life like a bad rider on a horse. I only owe it to the horse's good nature that I am not thrown off at this very moment."]³

43

Even when everything goes well, there are some traumas by which we have had to encounter during our lives that stay with us forever. And no matter how well things are now, it never seems like we get any true peace from what has happened in the past.

³ This is a quote attributed to the 20th Century Austrian Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein

44

I might sound contradictory, self-defeating even, in my beliefs, but I do believe that this coincides very much with how Life is itself, contradictory by nature, so I only feel that this work reflects precisely how Life is.

45

I miss the taste and feeling of intoxication by alcohol.

46

Nonetheless, I still believe that happiness can be found in life. One must only do everything correctly right from the start, but that's where lies the difficulty. Yet, happiness is possible.

47

It's often said that people need life experience in order to write, and especially that they tend to write what they have personally lived through. Of course, something cannot come from nothing, and the same can be applied to books. Noone has ideas worth reading without at first having had experiences himself. I remember a long time ago, back when I was 19, I watched a film where one of the characters decided to become a writer, and their siblings, upon reading her first work, became hostile towards her due to the espousing of their lives, due to the inherently auto-biographical nature of the work. ⁴ All the great works, at least to my taste, need to have a tint of auto-biography in them. These are the only truly sincere works of art in literature. If this book weren't a work of fiction, I'm sure I would be writing something that would have similarities to my own life, no matter how much I would like and attempt to distance myself from it.

48

Sometimes I don't think creativity exists. It's just that some people know how to put their life experiences and memories to use better than others.

⁴ The films Smith mentions is most likely Hannah and her Sisters, released 1986. No mention of it is done in any part of the other found notebooks.

When I wasn't asleep, I would usually dwell in philosophical thoughts. It's the only thing that interested me deeply, and it still does, even in prison. A certain Austrian philosopher also said this when asked why he did what he did, and he answered that it gave him satisfaction, and that was it.

To know everything is meaningless... sometimes is a great comfort to me.

After having woke up at noon, the day after my 21st birthday, and starting my day as usual, I first poured myself some tea, the particularly strong kind (that which would make most people recoil at how crudely it was made) and I rethought about my life again. Thinking. I was always thinking about something, probably because I'm a man of inaction. Besides the reliving of memories and of the past (that unhealthy activity that the Stoics detest so much!), I would be always lost in some sort of daydream, thinking and thinking about this or that. It had gone to a point that I consider that a man is nothing but his thoughts. What makes a man be a man anyway? I'm not really sure, but I think I'm onto something.

I was in a kitchen room, with a table in the middle, a cloth over it covered with one or two innocuous stains of coffee, and a pan in an oven brewing an expired german-brand of black tea. Way too many black tea leaves for the amount of water contained in that pan. Something around one liter. I would stir the coffee-like tea with a spoon and brood over things, like I always did. Something about hard-determinism and the implications of quantum mechanics. As I sat there, on the kitchen chair, gripping that yellow cup of black tea whose repulsive taste I had eventually grown to enjoy in my right hand whilst my left stirred its contents with a silver spoon, I gazed at the window in front of my grandmother's kitchen, sun shining as usual. One could see the garden through that same window and how beautifully organized and well-kept it was. It was a refreshing sight to see, if anything.

An interesting note, however, is how even the prettiest thing in the World ends up becoming boring and stale if you see it too much. Sure, the opposite effect is also very

true in some regards. There are things, paintings specially, that the more you look into them, the more you enjoy them. The first time you see it, there is no pleasure in seeing it, sometimes even disgust, but the more you look at it, or the more you are forced to look and to live with it, the more you grow to enjoy it. It comes to a point where that little painting that one of your old relatives hung on the wall during those years of your formative years, becomes the staple of what your taste in art will become. That little painting made by some french artist that not many people (maybe not even anybody) really cares about instantly grabs your attention whenever you happen to stumble upon it somewhere else by accident, and you'll tell yourself "Look! It's that painting that I saw in my aunt's house when I was a kid every time that I visited her house!" even though it's a very uninteresting or boring painting. The opposite is true - that is, you grow to hate - however, when you're forced to see what you particularly don't want to, or the repetition is so much it becomes so stale your only wish would be to move into somewhere else, even if that meant moving to some place worse than you already inhabit. Then you move to, say the big city, and you regret it all the more and the only thing you wish is to come back to your old, decaying and boring home. This was the case with this old garden I had to stare at everyday. Over and over again. I did not leave the kitchen, the tea was still too hot for me to drink up and I still was reminiscing about things.

I used to think a lot of becoming a writer. Not that I had any literary talent, but I think that at least I would have something to say when asked if I did something. I thought I would just say that I wrote for a living instead of just saying nothing. Although I'm not sure of what I would write about, whether it should be something out of my heart and that actually deeply interested me, or if I would write something that simply was what was in fashion at the time and make a meager attempt to make as much money as possible, I wasn't really sure. It seemed that, whatever it is that people like to read nowadays anyway, is mostly trash. I found it quite difficult to find anything of actual worth on the contemporary literature shelves back when I was not in jail. Mainly you will find genre fiction or other garbage like that. Literature is in a sad state as of this century. It honestly feels like, besides people not valuing it in the slightest anymore - without a doubt partly due to the emergence of things like the cinema, the internet, and all those myriad things we should honestly be thankful for - the good writers just don't come to the fore anymore. And if they do, I'm quite sure they would be forgotten or would lose their place to some other famous and popular writer who has no talent whatsoever. Those who actually have talent and something worthy of being said reach no popularity while that one that creates something easily digestible for all to read

gets to become famous. Not that it wasn't like this since forever though. I'm pretty sure that even during that time of Dostoyevsky or Dante or whatever era of literature you think of, the popular thrash gained prominence and the true auteurs were left to their own, many dying without the slightest recognition and in poverty. If that happened to Bach and to Vivaldi, but without a doubt to many writers whose names I'm not in a mood to go through my head to find out right now, then it's only expected that this should be the case today, right?

54

No, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe the writers of today actually have more chance and opportunity to write great works of art and to be acclaimed for it than before. I'm sure also that the literature professors and the literature departments in the developed World get to create books that have a lot to offer. Isn't it a million times better as of today to write since everything is so much easier to share and create, in comparison to say, the time of Dante or Petrarch? Think about how easy it is today to get a hold of books and works of literature. Nowadays you don't even have to get physical books anymore, you can learn everything from the internet (such a shame that I don't have that privilege anymore and have to contend myself with the prison library!), and the access to information is virtually unlimited. You can read anything from any period of time or any region of the world, provided that the pdf is available on sites like libgen or b-ok.net (those unacquainted with the internet will probably not know what I'm talking about) and if I'm honest with myself, everything that I've learned from all these years that I had free had been from the internet and the books I downloaded, printed or bought.

55

See, the amount of information we have now from the internet is so vast that would any medieval or renaissance scholar be amazed from the thought alone, and I would urge my readers who are not confined to four walls to take advantage of that and immerse themselves into isolation inside a computer. [sudden stop. Torn page.]

56

Do I ever think about the countless amount of people that had great talent, maybe even true genius, and that wrote some works of true art that may have been completely forgotten as the sands of time compelled humanity to completely forget them? I heard once that that great work of philosophical poetry, one that had an incomparable

importance both to its literary field and to the scientific advancement and thought of the time, *De Rerum Natura* was actually discovered only in the 15th or 16th Century by some monk and by pure accident. Thinking of it, I also read somewhere a long time ago that there was this famous Renaissance man of letters that did his best to obtain and recover a great amount of ancient works that were just left to rot in monasteries and no one at the time even bothered to come to copy them and maintain them in a state good enough, considering they were invaluable works that defined mankind's best intellectual and artistic achievements up to that point. Even having this in mind, it's not like I could completely blame whoever was responsible for maintaining these works alive. It was the Middle Ages, and what could one gain from keeping a certain manuscript by some philosopher even the Church did not care much about, and that might even have some ideas that went diametrically opposed to the Church's doctrine? Again, not that I'm one of those who foolishly and erroneously believe that the Catholic Church was the evil villain in the story, like the modern atheists like us to believe that they were. But if you were to live in the Middle Ages, it was not so much that there was this outright danger in just thinking or copying some unknown text from the ancients that wasn't so keen on the Christian vision as much as there musn't have been that much interest in doing so. If you lived during a time of wide illiteracy and downright ignorance, in a feud in a continent once ruled by a single, great, but questionably cruel empire that has degenerated to a now conglomerate of warring emerging states, it is no wonder you wouldn't give much thought to these works of literature. But just think of it. Imagine if there were some work as great as Homer's, or Virgil's, but which simply are unknown to us at this time simply because some monk decided it wasn't worth copying it or lost by some fire or burning or ridiculously and seemingly innocuous, inconsequential thing, and simply because of that we cannot ever even hope to enjoy them? Whenever I want to read something about Heraclitus or some pre-socratic philosopher, I have to content myself with fragments. Just think about those written works that haven't survived! Diogenes of Synope, that great philosopher that people in sub-cultures of the internet like to point out as a funny character in history whose behavior and cynic attitude to life and things we should imitate, has no extant writings left. I deeply mourn the ignorance that we have as a result of some simple and seemingly (forgive me for repeating this) innocuous occurrences that would go on to change history and the Western canon forever. Usually we erroneously believe that the resultant extant writings of the Canon of the Western World, and especially that part which was contributed to by the greeks, was a logical occurrence that must have happened regardless of that multitude of events that made them possible during the time they were created. We believe that this canon had to have been, that it is impossible that it should not have been and so on and so forth. It is so ingrained in how we think and how we reason that to any minimally intellectual mind

to imagine a World in which a Homer, a Socrates didn't exist is something close to preposterous. It's obvious that they have had to exist, otherwise what would be of the Western World! But the truth is that, all of these wonderful works of literature, from Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* to Aeschylus' *Fables*, even Socrates himself (the idea of him or the person) are simply but a very lucky accident that humanity passed by, and by some luck we have come to inherit. Not even for a moment do we come to contemplate the idea that, were it not for some random occurrence during that time's past, all if not most of what happened there would change in such a way that what we have come now to regard as the cultural heritage of humanity would simply not have come to be. Forgive me if I ramble on too much, dear reader, or if I am not being historically accurate, but from what knowledge I have come to gather during these 20 or so years of mine, what I've been told (if the history books can be believed) is that Ancient Greece was an unbelievably rare case in the Ancient World, and that the fact they existed and were able to create so much, and that these works weren't destroyed like it had been done since the dawn of man, but actually spread throughout the known World by Alexander, is simply such a stroke of good luck that it is difficult to believe it is true. All that we have come to believe, all works of literature of the Western World, from the past to the present, have been influenced by the greeks in such strong manner that it is difficult to see anything that we have as of today existing in their form were it not for them, and all of this being a contingent accident that humanity happened on to stumble by pure luck! My impression has always been that this was a necessary event, that it is simply impossible that humanity would not have inherited its Socrates, its Plato, its Diogenes, and that these could not have been written off as mere accidents. That the greeks had invented such complex systems of political philosophy was already a great feat, creating systems and political ideas that the World had not even began to conceptualize since then, but that the philosophers like Plato, but also Democritus and Aristotle existed and had created such wonderful works of true philosophy that would continue to influence and change the way we think for thousands of years after their deaths' goes to show that something truly extraordinary happened there. "All of philosophy is but a footnote to Plato", a certain british philosopher once said. Either this shows that philosophy doesn't have much to go on and to advance or that Plato really was of such a genius that his mind could incorporate the philosophical ideas that would take thousands of years to be contemplated in their entirety. Or maybe both, who knows? Either way, It goes to a point that it is indeed a tough case to make that there is even anything worth of reading, including these confessions I make, that can even come close to rival the works of the ancients, those men in huts that lived two thousand and five hundred years ago, who didn't even have pen and paper, not to say of the internet. And this is only what we have come to find out. What has actually survived from Sophocles, from

Aeschylus and Euripides? Very little. Maybe what we read of them are even the works they have regarded as their least impressive, their worse ones. And keep in mind that what I mention right now are just the poets whose names have survived. Who knows what great works were just left buried and forgotten forever? Who or what can explain the emergence of such great civilization? If we were to recommence humanity again, and have let chance take over its course - I'm very adamantly sure on this - and repeated the experiment over and over again, I'm sure that in ten thousand different replicas of the same experiment of this species called Homo Sapiens on an exactly replicated earth, maybe in one in a ten-thousand we would have had the luck to inherit some knowledge and philosophy from an ancient civilization, or there have been one as great as the Greeks at all.

57

But it didn't need to be. The history of the World until then was simply a conglomerate of succession of war upon war, with the culture, history, and literature of the one vanquished either destroyed or incorporated into the winner's and nowhere in the World did something, as far as we have any knowledge of, come to exist such as the Greeks in the intensity of its greatness and intellectual sophistication.

58

It is too difficult to believe that such matter should have been left simply to fate! As if the destiny and the identity of mankind would have been left simply for either fortune or misfortune to mold them. These events in history are of such importance, such greatness, that to proclaim that they were but the result of mere chance borders on the insulting, and it is no wonder that one would feel this way, when coming into contact that humanity and all its course, from its Homer to its James Joyce had been just a contingent thing that wasn't planned or meant to be previously by any mind, be that God or some spirit, nor fate, not even by nature and the biological. It never was written into our genes or whatever it is that is contained in those strands of information inside our cells that we should have written our Tallus or our Cicero. Yet to come to this conclusion and to expound it might sound not only insulting, but even blasphemous to some, but I must affirm that it is true. All that we have come to know by now has simply been the result of something even more unfortunate than when fate decides things for us: chance. And the fact that things come from chance and not by any deliberate action or Will surely becomes a source of great suffering for us, for whomever can contemplate it. And to contemplate its actuality surely is not something easily digestible for a cultivated mind, and not even comprehensible to an average,

middling one. To contemplate, or to even have but a simple idea of the countless generations that have existed, including all their lives, all their personalities, all their wills, desires and sensations, from that utmost ineffable pleasure to the downright excruciating pain, having come to be from a contingency that wasn't in the slightest meant to be is truly a task unfit for us. Maybe it is worthy of a god, perhaps not even then. But we are not merely talking about some superficial person in a World of 7 billion, but we are talking about humanity itself and all its generations of lives. The truth is, this is difficult to accept and comprehend even in a single live. If we come to realization that your life is but the result of a contingency that shouldn't have meant to be, save humanity, the progression of your life having been of such as that there is the possibility of there having been thousands or millions of different outcomes and to contemplate them and knowing that there is nothing that you can change about the past anymore, is truly a source of great suffering. And I don't mean your existence as a person as such as your birth or conception or whatever similar, but that your fate and your life are the result of a "could have been", and you knowing you will never have the life that "should have been" is a pain that will make your teeth cringe and make you curse God. Your soul, be it formed by an intelligence, or a mind or whatever it is that philosophers have come up with to describe this consciousness that you have, will writhe in pain and agony at being and having knowledge that this existence is but one in a million possible ones, and that it was never meant to be this way for this or that reason, but that it was mere chance, mere *acaso*.

59

There are many remedies for such feelings of despair and hopeless pain that invade into our souls, that which fill our spiritual sensibilities with agony and suffering.⁵

60

There are things one cannot write into a book.

61

Sometimes, the most important part of the book is the one left unsaid.

62

⁵ Editor's Note: thought n.59 will continue in thought n. 71 and 75

I am of unremarkable appearance, average height, average built, average everything, honestly. I am not particularly beautiful, far from it, nor am I hideously ugly. I'm more in the middle. Sometimes I think that, the right word shouldn't be "average", but mediocre. Not that I'm any worse than other people, not at all. Considering the sad state of the species of the human race is in, I'm far better than average, but I cannot shake off the feeling that we are all mediocre, and that includes almost every human being I've met (but not that I have met many anyway). Maybe I had a different view during my childhood; maybe I had met people whom I admired and I wouldn't put into the mediocre category so easily, but that isn't how I view things as of now, after having matured. An Italian philosopher called Giacomo Leopardi once said that "Adults see nothing in everything, while children see everything in nothing." I feel this is a most accurate portrayal of what it feels like growing up. I had lost that innocent worldview that thought that humans were of great importance and there were those whom we should admire and look up to. It was replaced, on the other hand, with that misanthropic feeling that so marked philosophers like the pessimists, say Schopenhauer, Mainlander and Thomas Ligotti. Philosophers whose works I haven't read, and unfortunately will never read (they don't have these kinds of writers in the prison library) save for a few excerpts or essays, and have only brought bad thoughts and worsened my view on things, even though they were completely right in everything that they said. I'm sure that any reader well-versed in these writers will judge me badly for what I'm about to say, and also for not being well-versed in them myself, but I shall write them anyhow. My view is that, even though their views on most things are correct: the meaningless of existence, the despair that is engendered by the Will, and all those misanthropic and anti-natalistic ideas that they have so famously expanded to students of philosophy, my conclusion after a long deliberation on the matter is that, even if they are correct in every little single thing they have said, it's better not to know or to be knowledgeable of the truth they illuminate. A sort of "Anti-Socrates", or so. If the greatest philosopher had said that there is only one evil, and that is ignorance, and only one good being wisdom, he probably only said that because he didn't know the pessimists, or he rebuked them (for Socrates was born after Heraclitus). Even though they were correct in every single thing that they said, those were truths not meant for us to hear. If I am speaking to the so-called pessimists, do accuse me of being weak or whatever it is that you will use to justify your belief in these pessimistic and despairing philosophies, but this is the conclusion I have reached, for the time being.

On the topic of humans, it is very strange how our expectations of them so often fail to be met. I had thought before that those in my family, for example my father, an overtly masculine man, with an extremely stoic disposition (up to a point where it becomes exaggerated, and does injustice to the word “stoic”, but not in the good sense), of average appearance, height and a short beard that I viewed as a representative of masculinity as a child, was one that possessed qualities that could be considered admirable and had an interesting and “noble” (if this word can ever be used in today’s time) character.

He was a loser.

Our ideas of what people are as a child are most often than not very distorted to the point where they become laughable as an adult. I simply had this idea that what my family was doing was normal, that they lived normally, that they were intelligent and had good characters and weren’t terribly unhappy and uninteresting. The realization that this is not so does not come from a quick and crushing event like the shattering of glass but more like a slow crushing of a certain mold that goes on for days to a point where that mold is irrevocably crushed and twisted in such a way that it is unrecognizable from its former state.

The wife hated her husband. The husband hated his wife. I hated one first. Eventually I grew to disdain both.

My mother had a degree in Literature. She knew nothing of it. Didn’t care. Didn’t read. Morbidly obese. Foolish. Cunning. Paranoid. Lying. Overprotective and unashamedly unintelligent. Her face was round, not due to her obesity but by her natural constitution, her conglomeration of fat in the face only increasing that sensation of roundness whenever you happened to stumble your sorry eyes upon her. Her hair was graying and she was about 52. She usually wore the same clothes over and over again whilst not caring much about her appearance. Rarely wore makeup. It was very clear that she had some sort of mental illness, judging from her accumulating and hoarding

addiction. She would never let anything go. My mother used to obsessively and compulsively lie to me, even when it was more profitable, to both of us, to tell the truth. She had no sense whatsoever that to lie was wrong. Moral scrupulousness was but incomprehensible to her, no matter how much she hid it later. It was as if a certain moral part in her was missing, specially in regards lying and doing wrong. She thought she could get away with anything.

67

These sorts of observations do not immediately tell a child that those people that were supposed to raise and teach him are close to lunacy and completely unreasonable people in their dealings and mentality, whom one should stay away from as much as possible. Children have simply no way of telling that. Because of this, I'm sure that many people all around the World have suffered needlessly in the hands of their parents or relatives, and had their personalities completely twisted due to how they raised them. This, I have no doubt.

68

Having finished my coffee-tea, I went to the living room and opened up my cellphone. Having sat down onto the sofa with the phone in hand, I checked the Whatsapp messenger app. I had found out my closest friend (that one I had since childhood, his name was Ivan.) had sent me some laugh-inducing image through the messenger. I decided to message him asking him whether he would be free for tonight. It was a Saturday (not that it made too much difference for a NEET), and he said he was free tonight. A pleasurable surprise.

I left out of the house and used the Uber app on my phone. Leaving my house and staying outside the gate to wait for the car to arrive at my place, one could see the expansive and privileged situation I was in. The neighborhood I lived in, a closed gated community, was very much for the rich and higher middle-class only, and I lived in a affluent household. The ironic part, however, is that even though my parents made a lot of money, much more so than was needed, we were deeply unhappy, much like in a Tolstoy's novel.

69

If I were a great writer, like Nabokov, or some realist russian or french writer of the 19th Century, maybe I would be able to portray to you, in a manner realistic enough,

the idyllic nature of the scenery set before me. The neurons responsible for conjuring visual images in the Mind's eye would flair up as you read the exquisitely well-written paragraphs, and you would be able to imagine and see before you a deeply detailed account of the scenery that I now have in my mind. As I lack such literary ability, however, the readers of my memoir will have to contend with my poor descriptions.

70

Having the car arrived at my gate after some ten minutes of waiting (and having gotten a call from the man responsible for the entering and leaving of cars of my neighborhood. I don't know the right word and I lack a dictionary here where I write.), I entered the car and set on my way to the center of the city, so that I could meet my friend Ivan. I'll write some more later. [sudden stop. Torn page]⁶

71

Maybe even with all this suffering and meaninglessness of existence, or whatever it is that the Absurdists like to call it, isn't so bad. I know I'll die, and everyone I know also will, but what I feel right now, that music and being with friends you love is so fulfilling and fill your consciousness and qualia to such amount that no empty space is left, that all the thoughts of there being any despair becomes preposterous and ridiculous. One knows it will last only for a short time, this feeling, but still it is an overwhelmingly pleasurable feeling. Maybe Epicurus was right in saying that pleasure is the ultimate good. I hope that in the future, with the advancement of machines or whatever new technology that AI will provide us, maybe we will reach a state in which we will attach our consciousness to computers or things like that and simply and completely and utterly forget the World and to live in an ineffable state of perpetual bliss. Some people might say that this is ridiculous, that it makes life meaningless or some other conjunction of philosophical ethical propositions, but have you actually been inside that machine? Second, it's not like the state in which humanity is in right now makes a whole lot of sense. Think about it, how many personalities with so many desires and a strong will to change things and to live and to be alive etc. have been extinguished due to that stupid thing that ends all our fun called death? It's not like there is anything really meaningful and purposefully made in this World that would make our human lives and our ways of living that sacred anyway. The fact is that there are so many hindrances to our miserable lives

⁶ Editor's note: this page ended abruptly, without explanation. The next two pages are missing, having visibly been torn apart from the notebook's original state. The pages have not been found and are expected to have been destroyed by the author.

that to say that there is something sacred in this life that would ethically impede us from procuring a stage of perpetual bliss derived from pleasure just due to some consideration of the “meaning of life” is downright wrong. Take a look around at the World as it really is, and you’ll see that the suffering and the pain that are incurred by the great mass of mankind are of such immense intensity, while there is so much meaningless destruction of life, coupled with the inevitability of death (many reaching this stage much before due time) that to say that if making life better through pleasure would be against the “meaning of life” (or whatever this means) preposterous. One doesn’t need to read Dostoyevsky to know that.

72

The trouble however, and that which Epictetus argues for, is that every overt pleasure like sex and those of concupiscence are coupled with suffering after, and that’s why these aren’t so great. But if the time comes that the pleasure machine is recreated and there are no clear downsides to it, I’ll be the first to sign up.

73

Suicide.⁷

74

It’s funny how, while other books would portray great events, that include death, betrayal and all those motifs that we are all so accustomed to this pastime called literature, there comes a time where we come to regard those books where very little happens as the greatest, and those that have many grandiose events those most stale. There are stories that, even when the main plot is so stale and boring to the point that nothing of note happens, the intensity to which the main character expounds his ideas, his sufferings and his inner desires, is so intricately and exquisitely presented that it comes to a point it does not even matter whether there even comes to happen anything at all. His soul and the form that he makes it known is enough to give us great pleasure to relate to whatever sufferings he has, even if those are the most futile or meaningless. Even if his troubles and worries are meaningless, even if the person itself is meaningless, the work is of such great value that it speaks to us more than if all events of the World that other authors portrays in the so-called “novels of action” happened before our very eyes.

⁷ Editor’s Note : this thought, written in big letters in one of the notebook’s pages, indicates that Smith already contemplated suicide at the point he was writing the first notebook.

Continuing from those dispersing thoughts I had before⁸, I have realized that people will find many remedies for their sufferings. Some resort to absurdism, some renounce their will completely, some give up, others forget about the trouble altogether, yet others will resort to a philosophical system that says that the “problem does not exist where there is no answer”, or to an even more effective philosophical system, the religious one. We humans will lie to ourselves, or try to comfort ourselves however we can, be it through a new philosophical system or religious thought and feeling.

number

Misanthropy. I recognize, however, that readers don't like to and wouldn't very much enjoy to read my misanthropic thoughts. Nor would they be very delighted to know I hold such views, and, upon reading them, might even grow a dislike for me and my person. It is truly unfortunate.

I wonder how many great philosophers and writers have had important parts of their lives, integral to their work, left unsaid and unknown by the biographers, or obfuscated by the creators themselves. We do not understand them.

We often “understand” a work far too quickly, and not even consider the possibility that the meaning lies not in what is said, but what is left unsaid.

The passage of time is the most devastating of all tides.

⁸ Editor's Note : Reference to thought n.59.

The thought of losing intelligence or talent truly would make any artist shudder . Maybe intellectual pursuits will always be something one should avoid, as always the fear of losing genius or talent will haunt you.

80

Are there things one cannot say? Truths that are better left unsaid, unknown, undiscovered? If there are, would it mean the World was made in such a manner that humans were not meant to see reality as it really is? My suspicions, after having seen a picture of the World, for what it really is, suggest that the answer to this question is a resounding and ominous “yes”.

81

Despair.

82

I had decided that I would start writing, and the trouble was, what I most wanted to communicate and tell the readers was what I felt, but precisely this was the most troublesome, because what I felt was the ineffable. It is impossible to tell someone what he has felt and expect him to understand if he has not yet felt what you're talking about. I've discovered that the best we can do is the same as pointing, and just hope that whomever we're talking to will look at wherever you are pointing with his own eyes, but really there is no such thing as communicating feelings and sensations. It all is simply a pointing and indication that suggest to the reader to use his own imagination, and he does imagine it the way that he wants and how his mind was formed in order to do so, and we have no way of knowing how he imagines and how he conceptualizes that fiction in his mind. Who knows if my red is the same red as yours? That sort of thing.

83

I've written a short-story I'm sure some of you would like to read.

He sat on his desk, 4 in the morning, attempting to finish his novel. Slouching onto his chair, writing at an unremarkable pace, and hoping that whatever it is that he was writing would turn out to be good, or at least decent, he hoped that whatever miserly amount of money his publisher would pay would be enough to make ends

meet. He thought about the great literary works of art and knew that his works could never compete. Whomever could even come close to the greats like Virgil, Dante and Homer? "I write trash", he thought. "Nothing but trash." and he wasn't being dishonest with himself. It was not that he was an awful writer, not by any means, it was just that he recognized that this world was filled to the brim with mediocre and middling writers, and that was the majority of those who wrote, a group to which he belonged to.

His novel was a disappointing, uncreative work that copied the premisses of a great book written by Nabokov, whose famous title had already entered into the English vocabulary, and particularly into a certain sub-culture for animated cartoons. His novel would be one in a sea of million of other trashy, badly-written, second-rate novels, he kept brooding over and over again. Or was he just being too hard on himself? He wasn't sure. Were there even good novels being made anymore? Maybe those people on the internet were right, maybe the ancients and those Greeks were the only ones who made something worth reading. Is there even anything at all of worth reading anymore in the 21st Century? Either way, he had to send the draft of his 200-something pages to his publisher to see if he liked it and if he was such a witless philistine to the point he (and the rest of the mediocre and pitiful amount of the population that would read the work of this writer who had no clear talent) wouldn't recognize that his novel was a clearly disguised ripoff of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

After finishing writing a first draft, he sent an email through the Yahoo email he used (he had not changed to Gmail yet, God knows for what reason. He was not that old, Goddamnit. He was still in his late 20s!) to his publisher to let him know he was actually writing something and not wasting his time like the general public thinks that a writer does. He drank alcohol every single day. Smoked too. As he pressed the enter button into that old MacBook he had, he got up off his messy, badly-decorated rented room and got up towards the kitchen. Opening up the fridge one could find eggs, some leftovers of sandwiches, milk, and whatever the hell it is that the people he shared his room with liked to eat. Most of it seemed disgusting.

Sighing and coming to the conclusion he would have nothing to eat, and that it was getting late anyway, he did the only thing he knew: drinking. He took a big bottle of gin, yeah, that one that stayed hidden along all the other bottles of alcohol he drank everyday, and prepared to make himself some caipirinha (that alcoholic beverage he learned to make that those people in that God-forgotten country known as Brazil like to drink. He was proud of himself for knowing how to brew that, as if it were his own unique special skill) and he muttered to himself: "What a life, heh?". He planned to

drink until those repetitive and annoying thoughts he kept on having would just go away, like they always did, when he drank enough. The only problem is that he kept on having to drink more and more just to have the same effect, and he wasn't so sure how much he had to drink this time.

“Why did I have to become a goddamn writer?”, he thought. It probably was because his ideals or whatever it is that he had in his mind during the time he was to choose a career were too lofty, and so he didn't become a dentist or lawyer or something that turned out a profit, or it was due to something about his parents. But to know it for sure, you'd need to either raise Freud back from the dead, or pay a Toyota 2016's worth of psychotherapy sessions – both completely impossible for him at the time. An endeavor that would actually make money and pay off the bills, was what he needed. He had no real genius, maybe he had some talent, but no real, genuine, honest genius. That genius that the masters of Old had: Goethe, Hordelin, Kant, Tolstoy. Sure, he could play it off saying that people just “didn't get it”, pretend that the reason why his novels didn't succeed was because they were way beyond what people would accept at the time or that they were way too subtle for the masses to understand, but that they were wrong. He could lie to himself and say that he had unrecognized genius, but when he was honest with himself he knew that that wasn't the case. He was destined to be just that, mediocre. He was too honest with himself to do what the majority of people, and failing artists do. It even went to a point where he had come to the conclusion “Only the mediocre are happy, better get used to it.”

Depressingly pouring himself one more caipirinha on one of those small glass cups he kept on top of his kitchen sink, he brooded and ruminated again. “If only I could make money off my worries”, he ironically thought to himself, wishing that this night would just be over, or whatever it is that was left of it. He drank his third dose of caipirinha and kept on thinking. “What the hell am I going to do with my life? Is there even anything worthwhile in literature and in what I'm doing?” Two failed marriages and a few published books (he was even lucky that the editors accepted whatever it is that he wrote) he just couldn't bear the thought of what the future would look like. It was some greek historian that said that the worst thing in the World is to know and not be able to do a damn thing about it, he knew this really very well. Because there was a time he could have done something other than this deadend job of writing and being paid miserably for it, but now he couldn't do anything, yet he kept on thinking to himself and reminding himself of his current situation.

Leaving the kitchen with his fourth dose of alcoholic beverage, he sat down onto the shared living room of that decadent and unpretty (what other word should I use?)

apartment and he came to the conclusion that life was about being mediocre and contenting oneself with it. When one is intoxicated, it becomes much easier to think honestly and sincerely to oneself, and he was by now inebriated enough for that. At this point he wondered what life even was about, and how he would make ends meet. Slouching over with a curved back onto the table that had crumbs of bread that his neighbors (or maybe it was his?) had left over onto it and not even bothered to clean up, and putting his head over his extended arm like a drunkard, he kept on mumbling something or the other. He was visibly drunk by now.

If one pays attention enough to people, he realizes that most of humanity is just empty, like what Schopenhauer or whatever pessimistic philosopher used to say, but the trouble was that he was insecure whether he was one of those people also, not empty, but mediocre. It seemed really depressing and an almost unbearable thought that more than 98% of the human population had to be consigned to be mediocre in everything that they do and then just forgotten. But then again, not even those who are remembered after their deaths are happy today! So what does it even matter anyway?

Realizing that he was already intoxicated by both drink and pessimistic thoughts, he decided to get up and go to sleep. The first step is always the hardest. He put his left foot onto the floor and decided this one would be the first to move. Having done this with a little bit of effort, he could now move his right one and he started walking towards the corridor where his room was. He got up and started walking, supporting himself with the walls of the corridor, opened up the door of his miserly room, and threw himself onto the bed.

“Mediocre, mediocre, mediocre!” he said to himself, as if someone were there to listen to his mumblings and actually cared.

“What would his next second-rate novel be about?”, he thought. Should he focus more on substance or style? Should he even worry about style anymore? At this point, he had read and ingested and consumed so much media that it was clear that style didn’t even matter any longer. It had to have substance, it had to transmit some idea, something new that hadn’t been said before, not worry about style or whatever that is that he doesn’t even have any talent to write anyway. What should he write about? He has no talent, but at least he could get some new idea about something. Maybe he should write something polemical like Houellebecq did? That french writer, or as is commonly called “the enfant terrible of french literature” [What the hell am I writing?] would pour polemical and controversial stances onto his books and maybe that’s why

he's so famous and notorious. And by doing that, he sells books, and that's what matters.

Next morning, he woke up because of the alarm he always set up at 9:00 AM. Honestly, he did not want to get up. But he had to, and had to work more on his novel and check if his publisher had said anything regarding the draft that he had just sent. He got up reluctantly and opened up the computer. Upon checking the email inbox, there were a few new messages. They were spam that the email system had not detected automatically. Regarding his publisher, nothing. Had he not received the email? No, that's impossible, of course he had received it. Maybe he just chose to ignore it for the meanwhile and give him an answer at another time. Yes, that was probably it. Either way, Joseph had to start the day and work. Closing his notebook, and getting off from the desk, he headed to the kitchen to pour himself some drink (he started every day with at least a little bit of alcohol) and started making breakfast. The kitchen was all messy and unorganized. His roommates had not taken good care of it at all. "This shared apartment is so fucking messy.", he thought, and not without good reason. The kitchen sink had leftover pieces of food that were straight dropped into the sinkhole in order to be discarded, the unclean and unkept glasses and utensil far outnumbered the clean ones by four to one at the moment, and there was very little space even to organize oneself to start cooking. Hopefully, his roommates were still sleeping at the time and not awoken so he could at least give himself some excuse for not having the courage of confronting them about it and at the same time keeping that complacency of not taking action. This was not a comfortable home to be living at all, but at least he wasn't homeless, he contended himself.

He used the only clean pan that was minimally usable and put it into the oven. He took one of the egg cases stored inside the fridge and was about to take one of the eggs, but he sensed a strange smell. One of the eggs was rotten, so he put that egg case away back into the fridge (wh would he care if there were rotten eggs inside the fridge anyway? The basic contents of the fridge (like eggs, milk etc.) were all shared anyway so nobody cared if there was something gone bad among the contents.) and took another one, and checked to see if this one was decent enough. It was. He broke the egg shell and started cooking it on that pan. He added salt to it and took some whole grain bread from the kitchen counter, and took three pieces of bread from the loaf and put it onto one of the three plates that were minimally clean to be used. He waited until the egg was done and used a knife to transport it into that same plate that had bread on it. He took this plate to the living room with only one fork in his hand and set it onto the table. The crumbs of bread left from yesterday were still there. He just brushed them off and set his plate onto the table. He proceeded to eat and, as usual,

brooded over his life. He didn't even stop to consider whether whatever it is that he was eating had any taste to it or not. Joseph did not have any cooking skills, but he accustomed himself to eating whatever it is that did not have an immediately recognizable repulsive taste to it. Eating did not serve a recreational purpose to him as much as a practical one, and having to waste time on making a dish particularly delicious seemed like a complete timewaster to him considering how he did not pay attention to the things he ate, rather he focused on whatever was going on in his mind at the moment.

“What am I gonna do? I'm running out of money.”

This was the major concern for him at the time. Joseph did not have anyone who could support him anymore. He wasn't a young adult any longer. He had to support himself on his own, but with the miserly wage that he gained from his publishing job, it was extremely difficult to be able to live with what he earned. Joseph hated that this was what he did for a living and absolutely detested remembering that he had a time and opportunity to choose more profitable careers and instead went for the creative one. At the time, he really did think that he had some talent that the World needed to know, but with maturity comes knowledge and a certain cynicism that shatters the illusions of the past, and he came to realize that people didn't really care for him or his ideas as much as he previously thought. No matter what he incorporated into his novels, there was nothing that wasn't said in some form or another before.

He got a call at about 12:00PM. It was unexpected. An unknown caller. Who could it be? It couldn't be anyone he knew that was important or dear to him, as he explicitly told everyone he knew, and especially his friends, that he would like to only be communicated with through the Whatsapp messenger on his phone or email, and that calling him should be only when either something extraordinary happened or the other means of communication did not work. He hadn't received any Whatsapp messages by then, so it could only be someone he wasn't close with. He hated talking on the phone.

He thought it over for a few seconds and looked blankly at the number shown in the phone and asked himself whether he should take the call or not. He opted to take it.

-“Hello?”

-“Mr. Harden?”

-“Yes. Joseph Harden. Who’s calling?”

-“Mr. Harden, I am sad to inform you that your father has been admitted to the Mount Sinai Hospital a few hours ago. He suffered a stroke and is in critical condition. The Hospital has communicated with his closest relatives, including your other two brothers. The doctors here in the Hospital aren’t sure, but it’s not expected that he will survive. We’re terribly sorry.”

His reaction wasn’t one of being afraid, or angry, nor any of those negative emotions usually entailed whenever one hears of the death of a close one. Instead of that, he was caught in a mixture of annoyance and surprise, probably more of the former. "Why did they have to bother him with such a boring fact", was the overall perception Joseph had about this call. Maybe it would be better if they hadn’t called him to tell him this, then it would have saved him from having to go through the bore of having to pretend to care for a relative he was completely indifferent to, or even apathetic towards. In the past he had had to feign sorrow or grief for relatives that died he didn’t even truly care about, and regarding his father he was particularly annoyed at knowing he would have to go through such troubles as having to visit him in the hospital, pretend to care about him to the hospital staff, waste his precious time, attend the funeral, pay for the funeral bills etc. It was all such a bore for him.

-“Should I go visit him now? Is that possible or are the doctors working on him? What should I do?” He said, expecting that he would be soon pronounced dead so he wouldn’t have to go hear any words from his boring, unlikable, dying father.

-“Mr. Harden, the condition your father is in right now is of tremendous frailty. Being terribly honest with you, we do not expect him to make a recovery and, considering his age, it is not expected that he will survive for long. He has entered a medically-induced coma at about 45 minutes ago and has been completely irresponsible since. We’d like you to come to the Hospital so we can discuss this further. Again, we’re terribly sorry for what has happened.”

He didn’t really understand what the caller was apologizing himself so much for.

He got into his car, and the traffic was terrible, but he got there on the time planned. By the time he got there, his father had already passed away. He went on through all of the troubles of having to deal with a dead relative, including all the

feigning he had accustomed himself to go through like he had when he was a child in boring funerals. He met his other brothers in the hospital and they saw their dad's corpse, having perished at about 13:00PM.

The next day, however, the lawyer that represented the deceased had called Joseph and let him know that there was something important that he had to deal with him. It did not come as a surprise but as something curious. "Some legal proceeding?", Joseph thought. Surely, it must be nothing more than that annoying bureaucracy family relatives have to go through when an important relative dies, but not much more than that. He didn't expect that his father would leave him much, if anything at all, but what came after a curiously pleasant conversation with his lawyer came as an indeed great surprise. His father had left him a very considerable amount of money and assets, including his three-story house, to his son, in detriment to the other brothers.

He was at a loss for others, not only had his father died, but he had left a huge amount of assets and money to him right when he needed them the most? It sounded too good to be true.

"I can assure you that this Will grants you the rights to all of these assets previously mentioned and that it is irrevocable and fully according to the rule of law, mr. Harden. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I do understand." he said, not really fully comprehending nor having knowledge of why this had come to pass.

"In short, you will get his house, and financial assets that are equivalent to around two million, four hundred and twenty two dollars. The other assets, these equaling up to four hundred thousand dollars, were assigned in his will to go to your other two brothers. Each one taking half of it, so that would be 200 thousand for each."

"Uh-huh", he said, at a loss for words.

"Mr. Harden, let's not beat around the bush here. I do not like to pry into the personal matters of my clients, but it looks very clear to me that this comes at an astonishing surprise, considering it's clear you did not have an amicable relationship with your father. And for some reason, both of us not knowing why, your father has left you with such great amount of his assets in his will to you. Why is that so? Do you have any

knowledge of something that might have changed his mind at the time of the writing of the will?”

“No.” He said, really not having any idea of what could have gone through his old man’s mind. Maybe he had gone crazy?

“Well, regardless of the personal justifications for this, the testament is crystal clear. You are getting all of the assets mentioned irrevocably at the termination of the Will.

What would his other brothers think? How would they react to it? His father always liked them the better, why did this have to happen?

After the termination of the Will, his brothers grew visibly resentful towards Joseph. For what reason had their father left him with the majority of the money, assets, and the mansion to that failed son he never got along with? Something had to be wrong.

During the next months, Mr. Harden had not only gotten a new house, bought a new car, and lavishly decorated his new place with so much unnecessary ornaments (to the point that, even to an untrained eye, it looked terribly distasteful) but had also discovered pleasures that came with the spending of wealth that he had no previous knowledge of. He had had sex with multiple hookers, sometimes with more than one at a time, drank some of the most expensive, luxurious liquor that he didn’t even have knowledge of before, and experimented with several recreational drugs. Soon, he developed an addiction to cocaine..

Joseph started doing cocaine every single day. While before his addiction was just alcohol, now he simply switched it with another, and this was worse than before, and now he seemingly had all the money in the World to spend on this newly-found vice. His health and mental state started to deteriorate, and after that pleasurable high we all get from doing something novel, boredom started to set in. Having accumulated the means to living and not having to work, he would always find himself constantly bored, and he distracted himself with each time more and more copious amounts of drugs and whores. Eventually, his money would run out, and maybe he’d even have to lose the house he just herded, but he expected that this could go on for some two or three more years until all the money ran out. With no source of income, he knew that, if he kept things going at this rate, eventually he’d run out of money in the span of a few years.

Even though he indulged in all of these hedonistic pleasures, he was scarcely happier than before. In reality, he was more miserable in this current state than he found himself at now than his previous situation. Having all that free time allowed him to contemplate on how miserable he was. He contented himself with knowing he could use drugs, and this is what he did, but the high never lasted long and they were always interrupted by relatively long stretches of boredom and depression until the next high came...

After having decorated his room and personal library in the living room with books he knew he had not enough time to read, he decided to spend some actual time reading instead of doing nothing productive and opened up a book he bought online from a random shelf in his richly ornamented room. *An introduction to Zen Buddhism by Alan Watts*. He read the book in its entirety, and after having gone through its contents, he started becoming deeply interested in Eastern religions, with a particular emphasis on Mahayana Buddhism, but also having an interest in Daoism.

After he had read this book, he decided to read the other Buddhist books he bought, that were honestly put there only in order to decorate his room and he thought he'd never actually read. He read through a couple of books on Buddhism, and then decided to purchase a large amount of other books on Buddhism (an amount that even an adherent or scholar on Buddhism couldn't expect to read in a lifetime. He bought too many because he simply had the money for it.) and they arrived a few weeks later. He devoured the books he could, and gathered a large amount of knowledge on the subject, while of course, hypocritically still indulging in vices, but without as much vehemence as before.

After having sex with a couple of hookers in one night and snorting two long lines of cocaine that were quite clearly too much for him right after, he had to go to the ER and explain to the doctors he was a cocaine addict and was experiencing tachycardia coupled with chest pain, and thereby he decided that he would change his ways and do a complete turn-around his life (but of course, like all those drug-addicts must know deep down, he wasn't really going to change himself nor his habits, and would go straight back to doing cocaine the moment he realized that he was just lying to himself and realized that he couldn't keep himself off the drug. That it was too good to).

After having experienced this a couple of times, however, he decided he would finally do something. If he could not get off the drug, at least he would try doing something different and hope for a miracle. He decided then that he would become a monk (who was he kidding? He was a drug-addict, had no real self-discipline, didn't work, didn't

do anything and had no real sense of dedication), even though he quite clearly did not have either the resolve or the perseverance for it. Deciding to visit the famous Buddhist temple that attracted way too many tourists for his liking, a beautiful, sprawling and indescribably gorgeous buddhist chinese temple was there where he could meditate and ponder on questions as to the meaning of existence and those things that pop-psychologists and female charlatan astrologists tell us to believe, while real Buddhism died under the false premises of Westernized popular watered-down buddhism. As he ended the meditation session he had under a hippie-looking loser wearing colored clothes that told his students to recite words that weren't actually buddhist but hinduist, he went to a strange-looking shop that eerily had no tourists or passerbys looking at what to buy. It was empty, except for the strange merchant there, who had a big grey beard and an unusual, eerie, but strangely homely smile on his face.

“What is it that you sell around here, old man? There is nobody around, even though the temple itself is full of tourists today. Do you even make money off these souvenirs you sell?... What is it with this big buddha statue? And it costs 7 thousand dollars?” He said.

The bald and cheerfully smiling merchant responded.

“Hehe, young man. I don't sell anything here. I'm just trying to make money but noone cares about my products. And just so you know, that statue you just pointed is not of the Buddha, but of a Boddhisatva. There's a big difference between the two.”

Joseph had read his fair share of buddhist texts so he knew exactly what a Buddha was and what a Boddhisava was, but he could not recognize their difference in statue, as he had only read in books and not actually seen these statues in a temple before. Right in front of him lay a rendition of a Buddhist monk, of around 1.7m in height, or a Boddhisatva should I say. Protuberant, standing high and towering, showing neither sign of outward joy or complacency, but simply still and calm. His hands indicated something he once had read but had forgotten by now. The statue had a writing in Sanskrit right below the richly-detailed stone barefeet of the Boddhistava : "one of the students of Shariputra, who had attained a level of liberation and detachment to worldly-things to such an extent, coupled with his spiritual progress, that he attained Boddhistavahood, yet remained on Earth until the saintly day he would finally achieve supreme Nirvana. He helps and shares compassion to all living beings until that day.". [Obviously he didn't know this because he didn't speak or read Sanskrit but I'm the narrator here so I know everything.]He didn't think that the statue would ever be

worth the price to anyone who had a thinking and calculating mind, but Joseph did not have one, so he decided to do something stupid (and since he had the money anyway, too much to even know what to spend at) he decided to purchase it. The seller felt extremely astounded by someone actually having been so foolish as to buy that statue that he almost could not believe it. He was overflowing with joy, and what seemed like a malevolent Machiavellian laughter at having fooled someone hard enough to actually have made him purchase something so frivolously expensive.

After having bought the statue and having hired a helper to get that darned heavy thing into his 4x4 car and put it into his mansion, Joseph wondered whether his purchase was a good decision. Did it even make sense for him to buy such a thing? “Probably not.” he thought. Afterwards, he proceeded to do what he did best, waste his time and spend money frivolously on hookers and his drug of choice.

Then, the next day, something extremely unexpected happened. The boddhisatva statue came to life.

He was not under the effect of drugs, or was he? He was actually, but not THAT sort of drug. It was just cocaine? Or was it? Either way, what he saw was something he couldn't believe, there was an ACTUAL Bodhissatva right there, right in front off his eyes.

Absolutely astounded by what he had just seen, he asked “W-where did you come from? Who are you?”, and the Boddhisatva, with a calming, placid, and pleasant, but not lethargic tone responded:

“Why yes, I'm the boddhisatva from that statue. I have been asleep for around a thousand and five hundred years. I'm a disciple of Shantideva.” answered the calm Boddhisatva to the awe-struck Joseph.

“B-but. How??”

The Bodhisattva just smiled, nodding his head a little. He wore a simple, yellow robe, and was barefoot. His face was darker than a white man's, but not too dark. He most likely came from a northern part of India, where people weren't as dark as the rest.

“W-what is your name? How do you understand me? How do you even speak english?”

The Boddhisatva made no reply, he just smiled.

Maybe Joseph was going insane, maybe he did snort too much cocaine. He wasn't really sure. Joseph made further questions to the Boddhisatva, who made no reply. Anything regarding his name, the precise location where he came from, how did he know this or that, all were met with a simple, almost complacent smile and a nod.

He needed to show the Boddhisatva to others, otherwise he couldn't quite know for sure whether he was going insane or not. If he was not insane, he would make a pledge to give up on all sins and vices, including hookers and cocaine, and to become a buddhist, for real this time.

The Boddhisatva, upon hearing this, disapproved of Joseph, claiming that he was doing this in a way as to show off the Boddhisatva, who preferred to remain in a humble and non-ostentatious manner. When Joseph gathered some friends to see the Boddhisatva, he would never be in his house. He would just, vanish.... He did not show himself to others easily.

This took a toll on Joseph's mental health. Was the Boddhisatva real or not? When he decided to visit the Buddhist temple and look for that ne merchant who sold weird things and had no costumers, he found out he disappeared. He tried looking around and talking to other people who went to that place, but all of them told him that they had no recollection of the said merchant. The man who helped him unload the statue, however, did recall it and remembered the day that the statue was taken here to there. However, he did not remember what the statue looked like or the merchant either.

The Boddhisatva slept under Joseph's roof. He had a room of his own, one of the many empty rooms that served no practical purpose in his home. The boddhisatva slept on the floor, on top of a mattress he found in Joseph's place, and he only wore his robe and walked barefoot. Joseph made further questions to the Boddhisatva, but he only replied with either Yes, or No, or a nod with the head coupled with a smile, but nothing beyond that. He did not answer specific questions.

Joseph kept on using cocaine, and whenever he called in people to see the newly-found buddhist saint, he would always simply disappear from view, and would reappear, calmly walking in his house, whenever Joseph so happened to find himself alone.

“What is it you want? Why are you even here?”, Joseph asked. The Boddhisatva gave no reply. “Look, I’m convinced that Buddhism is the true religion, but why did you even leave that statue to live in my house?” It makes no sense.

This is what I can remember having written. As you can all see, it has a highly auto-biographical character. “Is it any good?”, you might ask? How would I know? I’ve never written any real fiction in my life, and now that I’ve been confined to life in jail, there’s nothing for me to write in fiction. I have no more experiences to live, I cannot go out and see the real world nor find any inspirations, and so have dried up the ideas, and even if it was good, how would I know? **I’ve read my fair bunch, mostly non-fiction though, so how could I even know if what I wrote was any good?** For that I’d need to actually have someone review whatever it is that I was writing and ask him if I showed any **promise**, but how would I do such a thing? Should I just magically wish for someone to appear, a literature professor and to simply ask questions away that would let me know whether my work was any good here in jail? It’s not that easy. Nothing in life is. Maybe I should have written something else. Or maybe I should just drink absinthe like those old writers in the late 19th Century.

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The shortness of life. I have found out that being happy is the only thing that matters. Not intelligence, not having knowledge, not reading many books, not striving to become a genius, not even having talent, none of that matters. The only thing that matters is enjoying and being happy during this pathetic, meaningless existence. This is the only thing that matters and is the takeaway of this book. Talent is meaningless. Famous writers don’t do anything but write. They don’t do anything.

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Life is too short for worries. The only thing that matters, and that should be your goal, is towards achieving happiness. This is the only thing that really matters and that one should strive for. One should strive for nothing else. Nothing matters. Lose all your worries, and enjoy life while it lasts. Nothing, absolutely nothing matters, only happiness in this short life. ⁹

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⁹ Editor’s Note : this was scribbled in a very “sudden” manner

Nietzsche was right : There are no facts, only interpretations.

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I haven't lived enough. That's why I can't write. It's ironic that I only come to this realization after I've been put to jail, waiting to rot until the day I have to inevitably die. My mind is completely ambivalent on the matter however, sometimes I wish that the day of my death would come straight away, others that this day would never come. Even with a miserable life, I find it better than to simply die. It is a sort of masochistic tendency I have that makes me believe that even a miserable, awful existence is better than non-existence at all. Were I to have to recount my days in this life, I believe that I would count the days I've suffered as a plus rather than a negative, because I have come to believe that even senseless pain and suffering is better than dying. I don't mind suffering as long as I can complain about it, one way or another, be it through talking to people, or writing as I'm doing right now. I don't know if this text will ever be read by anyone, or whether I'm simply writing this to myself. But if it comes that I'm only writing this for my future self, that would contend me. At least I'm writing for someone I can annoy with my constant complaints and worries. What does a NEET like me know about existence or whatever the hell it is that makes life brim with energy and life? If there isn't energy and life or whatever it is that makes writers come up with ideas, at least there is that gloomy and sullen air to them that is depressive and sometimes even oppressive but at least poetic and memorable. I have no talent, and the novel is dying anyway. Thinking of it, what the hell do people even care for reading anyway? The state of things is quite sullen at this point. Nabokov took five years to write that darned novel, what the hell was he doing during all this time? Nowadays, if you tell someone you'll just take five years off to write a book and that you'll make money off royalties by then, you'd get laughed at right then and there. "But he had talent!" you might rebuke. Yeah, you're right. He did.

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Writing is harder than one would think. The impression that most people have is that writers do nothing all day, but that they all drink and smoke so they can get their ideas for their novels. This is the overall perception of what writers do. The truth is, however,

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I enjoy writing more than anything.

I suffer a terrible disease. I don't know the day I will die, but it might be soon.

My greatest regret is that I have worried too much, all fretting over useless and meaningless things that would turn out to be mere phantoms! Things I should never have worried even for a second! And what did it come to! What did these worries help me when this is what has become of me, when fate struck me so! I urge my readers not to do the same, and to live their lives without paying much thought to whatever meaningless and insignificant thing troubles them. Not much is worth fretting over.

Even though I have also felt disgust for those who are misanthropic, the truth is I'm one of them too, and even if it should not please the reader, I must admit that I'm one of them.

Being told you have no talent is a great thing. Something one should be thankful for, almost like a compliment. It means that there isn't anything you'd lose were you not to make an effort to try creating something new, for yourself or to the World.

One need only stop thinking, and then all is peace.

“

—LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

NOTEBOOK II

“I drink not from mere joy in wine nor to scoff at, no – only to forget myself for a moment, that only do I want of intoxication, that alone.”

Ommar Khayam

I write this to my death.

Should art be a distraction, or something that exalts man, giving meaning to his life? I've constantly swindled between the two, never finding a correct answer to this question. I'm still not sure.

Anyway, I was trying to write something with more substance than

Whatever it is that happens or that we do, we must accept it

Writers often don't get the recognition they deserve. They have to write, and rewrite, and edit, over and over again. If this were a work of fiction, I'd hate to not be recognized for what I do.

Schopenhauer said that one could escape the Will through the contemplation of art. This is not true. A man cannot live of art alone.

With art, humility goes a long way in protecting oneself, in real-life, it's the opposite.

Oh, what I would give to have been born with a talent like that of Tolstoy's or Dostoyevski's!

Take away the imagination and all's tranquility...

Life in jail is awful. The food is terrible, you have to fear for your life when your prison inmates are around, there's nothing to do...

The natural state of man is happiness. One needs only to pay attention to the silence, and not to diverge oneself from there. All joy comes from that single thing only.

I can't write.

I'm positively sure that some of You might find me contemptible.

Would I be happier if I were free? Probably not. If I were, it would only be for a short period of time. I'd go out, see new things, eat the food I loved... And then I'd become unhappy again.

I decided that I would go for a drink, what time was it anyway? 11 PM? It was still quite early. I thought that I would just go out for a drink with my friend anyway, that friend I mentioned earlier, NAME, and we'd go at least have some fun. Just us three good friends, Me, NAME, and drink.

I went out of the night, stumbling drunk, worrying and brooding thoughts disturbing my peace, thoughts about my life going away and my life shortening and all sorts of depressing things bothering me. It was around 11 PM or so, I'm not so sure. The street I was walking on was depressing (everything to me seems to be depressing), and looking back, I had already walked a measure of around three blocks since I had left the tavern. I was heading home and heard the people, the other drunks and all those sorts of people one regrets having ever met having fun at a distance of a few dozen feet away from me, in another open tavern. "To hell with them, to hell with humanity". As I kept on walking towards and looking at the ground with my brooding eyes and crooked back, I finally caught glimpse of the gate of my friend's house when a drunkard stepped in front of me, and I quickly was taken aback.

"D'you have a lighter??" the drunkard said.

I was so drunk at that time I couldn't answer with a clear NO, but instead was taken aback at how direct and how straightforward this 40 year-old pathetic inebriated man looked, and I instead said nothing, not out of desperation or being afraid, but out of being stupefied both by this rare occurrence and by my being drunk.

"HEY, I'm talking to you, d'you have a fucking lighter?" he asked again.

I said, with a trembling voice and scarcely asserting tone, "No."

"Huh?" asked the assailant

"I said I don't have the fucking lighter! Now get the fuck away from me!"

Having pushed him aside with my right hand, I distanced myself from him and tried to get back on my way, but surely this would not be taken lightly by this drunkard. He seemed like he would be troublesome for me, were he to actually have had a gun or

something dangerous with him. One does not go around like that arguing with drunkards, but I was drunk just as well and in this regard was no better than him.

I took a few steps in the direction to my friend's housegate, it was so close, maybe he was already there waiting for me. I looked back, there he was, the drunkard, with that ominous look in his face staring at me, as if he wanted to do something to me, like hit me or something similar. I didn't know what I should do. I looked forward and kept on walking. "A few more steps" was the thought that resonated in my mind. I wasn't feeling well at all. "I want to go back home."

Those few steps that are necessary to take in order to finish getting to where you want always seem like the longest and the ones that will register more strongly into your mind, consciously and subconsciously.

Having arrived at the threshold of my friend's house, I found him there waiting for me, cellphone in hand, behind the gate and with keys in hand. It took him a little while to notice that I was there until I hit the gate and, upon noticing this, he put his phone away that he was using to pass the time and looked at me head-on. I was visibly drunk and staggering. I told him, with my staggering and shameful voice that I had drunk too much and that there was another drunkard I had upset. We got into his home.

After being there, I took the pill. I got extremely high, and a murderous rage came over me. I killed him, hence why I'm here.

There's nothing I hate more than the brevity of life.

I see the same in all our lives, in a way, specially in those who have more of a "Will" (as that old darned, pessimistic Schopenhauer would say. Not that I had read anything else beyond his Essays) If the true works of art aren't recognized during the artist's lifetime, I'm pretty sure there must have been many works that went by unrecognized but, without any form of maintaining that work alive and to share it like we have today, in ancient times these must have been lost or destroyed or god knows what. It seems that not a lot of people stop to think that during the Antiquity, thousands of years had passed with greeks and romans creating truly wonderful works of arts and hundreds of generations had passed by during that long period of time. It all seems so short and inconsequential now, but to them, there must have seemed like an eternity had passed ever since humanity existed, and to us now everything that time boils down to is the *Illiad* and maybe *Oedipus Rex*.

Who do I write this for? To my death, of course!

Or you could make an argument for determinism

The ineffable. This is what I'm trying to say.

I wonder whether books will be written by AI

Maybe I should live more, so that I could write more.

The World is an unreliable narration.

What I think we can conclude though, is the fact that, even though the internet has allowed such spread of information and so many good works to be shared freely easily and everywhere, that people will always turn to trash, even when they could choose to read the cream of the crop. Honestly speaking, I don't have any sensibility for poetry. Nil. Ever since I was a kid I had barely written or read anything poetic. I didn't really get it.

(excuse my poor language, I'm no Byron or Nabokov)

Those thoughts of the past haunt me. Whenever one is alone and has too much time to think, he then starts to ponder on questions that he shouldn't even ask in the first place. Maybe that's how every philosophical existential question appears. And I constantly remind myself of the shameful things I've done in life. The regret sometimes reaches such heights it's almost unbearable. No matter how hard I try to dispel these thoughts away, they never leave. They haunt me everyday. Not a day goes by I don't feel pain from it. Dear reader, I advise you to NEVER stay hidden inside and to let thoughts of the past interrupt your peace in lonesomeness. There is no worse feeling.

I want, desperately, to make others feel what I feel, say what can't be said, but that's wholly impossible.

What is it that makes me afraid of death? What is it that makes my consciousness and my personality, who are linked to my Will so important as to never be extinguished?

At the time of death, you will have nothing but your memories and remembrances? Will it be painful or pleasurable?

Sometimes I believe that what we call creativity is nothing but the recounting of one's life. The greatest writers, Dostoyevsky I will mention first, did nothing but recount his life. I don't mean to denigrate the writer in any way whatsoever, but all his works have been a direct result of his life experiences and a direct product of his living in St. Petersburg, his personal philosophy and religion.

Am I a coward?

I don't wish to be remembered. What stupid thought. I wish not to die, this is what I wish the most. Have you ever been close to death?

The Insurmountable Fear of Death.

I have come to discover that, there are things in books that you cannot say. If you do say, they either break the structure of the text, or they seem outright ridiculous or outlandish.

Anything but death, he thought.

I had the idea of actually putting something into writing, to put those thoughts into a story or something. I wasn't sure whether I wanted it to be a full novel, a short story, a draft, or never end it in the first place. It started like this:

I think a lot of becoming a writer, but what sorts of writing can I do

I find it really unfortunate that, in order to write, you have to live. And I've lived oh so little!

What do the thoughts of an unknown man even matter anyway?

It's funny that there are things in books that can't be said. If I try to say it, it breaks the immersion, it would be like putting Director's commentaries on a movie.

I have no literary talent.

So few books are actually worthy of being read.

Mention Wittgenstein?

Envy of being a NEET? Do people have it?

Fear of death

Most of literature is thrash and shouldn't be read. There are a few true works of art, the rest is thrash.

The love of friendship

Is there anything worth reading? How to compete with the greats?

The ineffable, this is what I repeatedly try over and over to communicate. But it's just impossible

that surely such an account of how easily a man may fall from grace should be known to the public

I hope you have not lost attention by now!

I'm not a poet

The suffering of knowing things happened and you can't change them are sometimes completely unbearable.

I've never read too much Freud, but I've started to believe that there really might be some death wish, or death whatever it is that he calls that.

I lament that these words have to be reached through such a failing, weak medium such as this, and

great unjust injustice to justice

The interest part, however, will start now.

(forgive me if you find my writing contrived, or God forbid - pretentious)

(forgive me for forgiving myself so much!)

No Longer Human

See, it would be dreadful for me to be the recipient of such criticisms such as of being an awful liar, or that old word I've often feared - "pretentious", but it seems that, in whatever work you do, either you have to try to be pretentious and simply hope for the best, or not to try at all. Besides this lack of it has been in my mind for a long period of time that simply there are no good works out there, only "mediocre" ones - thrash - purely speaking, and that the works of art (those that are actually worth a second of your time in this terribly-short life) are so few that one could simply count them with your two hands. There is so little that can actually

What even is reading (or as I'd like to call it, thinking with another man's mind)

He drank Absinthe and smoked,

What even is imagination?

I do believe that a writer has no such thing as originality. There is no such thing as originality. All great works are merely and simply an expression of one's previous thoughts. The great works, are almost always auto-biographical, the modern ones, at least.

Everything is thrash

Substance vs Style

I have no talent

There is nothing good to read.

There is no such thing as originality.

One writes because one must

Write it like Pessoa, not Nabokov

Mediocrity in writing

Write like a novel but filled with thoughts like Pessoa's Livro do Desassossego

The undescribability of feelings and what I've felt

Write about the worthlessness of reading, how only the greats are worth being read and everything else is superfluous

Write about not liking poetry.

Your character will be a NEET

The best books are semi-autobiographical

I wonder if what I write will be seen as fictional, or real

The worst thing is thinking about lost time that will never come back. That's the most painful. Knowing things, and that things could be different, but not being able to change them.

You, reader, I want you to know that the worst thing there is, is that whatever you do in this moment, or the moment after you finish reading this book, will change the course of events, tragically, if Fate is unkind to you, and you will never be able to change it ever again. Remember that.

Thinking about all of those people that lived empty lives and whose personalities went to the graves with their deaths. Knowing that so many people, so many particular, genuine personalities have died and their stories ended, so many generations of people whose lives have been completely and utterly forgotten.

Describe the place where you are while writing the novel too. Don't forget that.

A man needs hope, after all.

Herodotus, the worst pain is knowing and not being able to do a thing about it.

You should write in first person, even though writing in third person is easier.

Write in the novel, that what you are writing isn't fiction but reality.

Maybe one day I will write something that's been troubling me but which is so hurtful I'm too afraid to write. Leave this mysteriously and don't explain it.

The key to happiness: just don't think about the past.

Write about how it's impossible to write and have someone else feel what you write. You write because you want someone else to feel what you feel, but noone else can feel what you feel.

Writing about the shortness of life

Writing about the Schopenhauerian Will and a sort of ironic way that having less will and taste means more happiness and less suffering?

Do I fear I will run out of ideas when this book is finished?

I've often found movies to be boring, because they will never give a sense of being, of freedom, of being an active participant in whatever story, always a spectator, always noone.

I feel like art's trouble is that it will never be able to replicate what the artist has felt. Then he creates something else which does not exist in order to try to make the spectator feel something, but it is not what he originally intended. He creates a death scene not because the death scene matters to him, but just to make him feel the sadness he has felt, regardless of if he even knew of death in his life. He just wants the other to feel. Maybe in this way, art will always be a betrayal of the truth the auteur wanted to communicate.

Write about the shortness of life?

Semi-autobiographical novels are the best, and maybe only sincere ones?

Postponing things. I always postpone things.

That it's better to read philosophy than fiction.

Misanthropy

I'm a writer who hates fiction. Everyone wants to write and have their writings read, but nobody wants to read anyone's.

What matters the most in life, I have discovered, is to have been happy, and to keep being that as long as possible, hence I urge all my readers to give up all worries and to become content with what they have. They have not been confined to prison as I have. They still have freedom to go by.

Insight and taste often go a longer way than pure intelligence.

"Great men" are no greater than those noble and virtuous persons we so often find and take for granted like university professors, hospital workers, firemen, or parents who do the best for their children.

Nobody is remembered forever. The Marcus Aurelius that we remember isn't the same that lived two thousand years ago, it is simply a persona that was left of him.

We use to foolishly pay more attention to that which harms life, more than what ends it.

Eugenics

In 15 mins you know everything about a person.

"I can't write", Osamu Dazai.

MAYBE I SHOULD PUT ALL OF IT IN PLAYFAIR DISPLAY

I urge you not to let life pass by.

I should write some letters that were found as well alongside the notes and make an editor note saying that

Maybe I should write unreliable narrator gibberish

I have cynism in regards fiction.

Write a more elaborate story

Maybe you should write a fictional world?
I worry as if I would live forever

To forget oneself is to find happiness

If art is to be taken for its own - that is, art for art's sake - then it must exalt the soul of man. If it cannot do this, then art should be left aside for philosophy.

Specially in regards things one has no knowledge of, lie the great exists anxieties, but knows about.

He who thinks the least is happiest.

Let the past be dead to you.

Whenever I think of my problem from a 3rd person perspective, they seem mild and solvable, whenever I do in 1st, they are despairful

Sometimes the most important part of the book is unwritten.

Optimism is often disguised pessimism for the things that are probable.

Sometimes it is an arrogance to be too humble.

Some things can't be learned by reading

Throws this book away after having read it.

Os erros me que nunca serao corrigidos mas que permanecrao para sempre na memoria!

We must let go of the past, and we must have hope. Always.

Is there anything I mourn more than the shortness of life?

It's better to live one more day than to die and be known for eternity.,

Omar Khayyam's quote on forgetting oneself found in the deal of death,

Seneca on shortness of life quote.

I think therefore I die - Jack White

What stupidity to lose the present brooding over the past!

Aren't today's sufferings enough?

Nos drogamos não a fim de aumentar o prazer tanto quanto fazer com que nossos prazeres nos "overwhelm", faça com que esqueçamos de nós mesmos.

I dedicate this book to my death,

I think therefore I suffer.

The less we think about ourselves, the greater we become. The more potential we have.

Gratitude is not as important to the one who gives as much as the one who receives, especially when the giver is life.

Maybe Conrad Smith compiled and found the books just like Book of Disquiet

I should also write some scattered letters to family members

I believe one who writes learns to love it, but not everyone loves to read. We want to write but not read, say but not listen.

We write to forget the past.

True optimism consists in strong pessimism in what could have happened differently from what did. It is a sort of contradiction to itself. To be an optimist is a sort of pessimism.

Let the past be dead to you

Leopardi's quote on misanthropy

When one cannot know what it is that he could have had or been, were things to have gone on differently, that truly is a great suffering. I am not sure which one is worse, to know what could have been, or to be in doubt. Both are terrible.

He is happiest who thinks the least [write this after this last remark I just made]

Its important that we remain optimistic and pessimsitic at the same time. Otimistic about the things we have, and must be, and pesimistic on things we could possibly have were things to have occured any differently.

Otimismo pelo que poedriamos ter, pesimsitas sobre o que nao poderiamos.

AS long as you dont die, its all fine, even memoryu loss.

The reason why we lie to ourselves, and we MUST lie to ourselves, at least once in a while, is to defend ourselves from the vicissitudes of life.

Think of writing unreliable gibeerishojn book.

Por mais que nos magoe, temos que deixar o passado para tras.

One uses to fear more disability and becoming handicapped than death during one's youth, that's because we are foolish, or self-deceptive enough, to leave the prospect of death out of our minds. We believe that, although we know that it will happen eventually in some really distant future, death is something very far away, or we do not take it into account at all. Some of us are so naive up to a point that we do not even believe death is something real (or that we will have to actually go through) because it is so alien to us, in a way that is difficult to explain.

E tao importante esquecer quanto e de se lembrar.

It is better to live one more day than to die and be remembered as a hero for eternity.

Those who have become "eternalized" after their deaths, have not actually been. It is only but a person of theirs, as much as

The idea of being “immortalized” is the greatest of man’s vanities. Famous and supposedly “great” men are nothing but humans with a few nobler qualities and virtues (sometimes - especially when we refer to statesmen or “men of action” - they are people whose nobilities and vices, when weighted against each other, show more propensity for evil than to good) who have had either the luck, the audacity, or the moral unscrupulousness to do whatever was needed in order to get ahead, sometimes even doing the most atrocious and needlessly cruel of things to achieve such prominence in history, and have done things that are not only unnecessary but precisely that against the order of things that should have happened. Those who have achieved artistic pursuits, like the artists, poets and painters, are also of not much better indole than other dignified men, only but they do it without the shedding of blood, yet they do not show more nobility or virtues than many other, even nobler men forgotten by time.

We think much of

Clown quote by Kierkegaard

O que e novo e muitas vezes apenas lembranca do passado.

AS long as you dont die, youre already lucky.

Arent todays sufferings enough?

I fear that what I might write might already have been written by someone, but I don’t know or haven’t read yet.

See, the trouble wasn’t that I was NEET, but that I was ASHAMED of being one. It was more due to them than to me.

One must be grateful towards Life.

Hikkikomori

WITH SUCH EASE DO WE FORGET OUR VOWS! If only we remembered the good things as much as the bad.

Usually we make promises to change our ways, and make a resolve to live a different life, but we soon forget it. It seems like the only thoughts that change our life are the bad ones.

We learn lessons more from suffering than from being given a second chance, because whenever we think of the second chance, we always think that it was a right given to us rather than a blessing and a privilege. We always think that there will be a third or fourth chance because we don't believe bad things can happen to us, until it does. We take for granted our second and third chances because we always think there will be another one, or that it is a right given to us, rather than a privilege.

I have found out music is the highest expression of art, for it has no superfluity in it, nothing unnecessary, only the essential, and the true, exists in a piece of musical art. The only honest, and unpretentious form of art, is music.

I want to live, live!

Have I become a solipsist? Perhaps... then who do I write it to?

Do I write this book solely for myself?

"I did this because I had to.. I had no choice, Johann! You must understand, you must. I couldn't resist...I didn't mean it, but.. Why does a man act the way he does, Johann Do you think it was my fault do you think i'm a guilty man... or do you think I'm a worm Am I a guilty man for what I've done... Should I pay for what I've done Or am I a worm, a miserable insect,, who doesn't deserve even to be spat on and judged I don't know what's worse, Johann I just don't. I think i'd rather be punished, I think I'd rather go to jail than to

Why do you think I became a priest, Johann, just because I believed in God why do you think I refused money from my father, why do you think I punished myself with plain water and bread was it so that I could be seen holier under God's eye or so that I could pay, redeem myself even if God did not exist? Do you think me a worm, Johann? For if you do, I want nothing more to do with you, I'd rather be seen as a criminal rather than a worm! I'd rather be seen as a murderer rather than an insect, but let me tell you, even if there is no God, even if there is nothing up there, we must believe, Johann, we must. I'd rather be punished but have the possibility of being rehabilitated in a godless World where all is farce, even God's very own existence being but a mere product of my demented imagination rather than to know the truth that we are

insects, both insignificant insects in a godless World! Even if he doesn't exist, Johann, even if he is nothing but a tale... We must believe, we must! I should rather be punished for my sins, for this that I've done, knowing that there is the possibility for redemption, knowing that there is somehow that I can pay my prices, even if means suffering, even if it means redemption in Hell! For suffering gives this grief and sorrow and pain and all of this I suffer everyday meaning, Johann! It gives it meaning, so that at the end I am not a worm, 'm not some stupid little thing to be disregarded and thrown away, insignificant before the universe, but a man, a man that deserves to be punished and beaten... like a dog, for his crimes, but a man nonetheless! - Paul said.

This is not life. This is a hell I'm living in. I'm, not happy, I'm not well. I suffer and suffer and suffer. I don't want to live forever, I don't want immortality. All I want is to stop suffering, I want this to end. I want this remorse that eats from the inside to give a respite, so end for at least a single minute, so that I can have peace at least for once. What I have isn't life, what I have is pain, pain, pain... Paul said, tearing up. I don't want to live, to stay alive for even a second is to suffer in eternity. I want heaven, I don't desire for death... I want life, to live. Do you have any idea of the despair I have? The entire World, every little single thing, will cease to exist when I die. No, I'm not making sense. All I want is not to die, I don't want to die, I don't want to disappear, but at the same time this pain just consumes me. Surely you understand, surely you know what I speak of= This idea of dying, if only I were to die suddenly, painlessly, without notice, at some day without my knowing it, but no! God has chosen me, God has decided to make me suffer, to feel pain! Is it due to my sins, or is it something else?= Does God exist and not listen to us, Johann? Does he not care about us? Does he exist in Heaven and enjoy seeing us suffer? Or is what we suffer just, Johann? Is it because we must? Because we are paying for our mistakes, or humanity's mistake? Johann, listen to me, I don't want to die. I don't mind suffering, I even like it, if it is for the good of the whole, if it is for the good of mankind. I would not mind to suffer, to become a slave to all sorts of misfortunes and pain and griefs... But I don't want to die! I don't want to disappear. I don't want to go away, I wanna stay here, even if it means to suffer... even if it means a hell on earth... But not to die, not so early--- It's not that I fear suffering, but that I fear not knowing, not being... That's it, I have a fear of not knowing, of not being. Is curiosity a sin, Johann? Tell me, is it a sin I am committing right now? Wanting to know what comes after? What do I do, Johann, I can't take any of this anymore. If I have to, I will suffer for all of mankind, but please don't let me die, Johann, don't let me die! Don't let God do this! I don't want this World to end, I don't want things to go! He said to father.

I don't want to have to die, I don't care. I don't care if I have to suffer: as long as I don't have to die, be that as it may! Is it a sin, father, to want eternal life isn't this why we have become priests?

I'd rather suffer than to forget, suffer than have to be oblivious!

If only I could go back in time! If only I could undo this. I'd give everything, everything, father, to undo this. You have to believe me!

Because of a little thing, the World will be gone for me. How is this fair?

want to believe that this was made for me, that it could not have been any other way, that this was all meant to be this way and I could not have done it any differently! At least some consolation to my dying soul!

One moment of stupidity, and your life is over. It's all over much too quick!

I know father, that it seems like I'm going on and on, that I'm dragging this on, but I must tell someone, I must!

Paul and Noah meet homeless people and describe poverty and how neither of them have ever suffered poverty.

Noah talks about his heart failure and all and how he wishes to live more than anything.

I will die, and I have never even lived. So much time I wasted so much time I worried and brooded and brooded, over what? I'm about to die now, and everything will be gone. The World will disappear, everything will turn lack, and I will have had nothing. I will become nothing. Save this from me, father. I need proof, I need proof of God's existence!

Later we find out that Julia Skarsand is Charlotte Muller's daughter.

What a cruel joke. What cruel joke to be destined to oblivion! All I want is to live, even if I have to suffer, even if I'm laughed at by all, but let me live, father. Let me live! I know it's a sin, but give me a sign that God forgives me and will let me live. I beg of you, father, I beg of you!

If only I lived one day honestly! If only I lived one day without worry and brooding!

In my mind, Miriam is Dianne Wiest and Robert is that Jew actor from *Husbands and Wives*, the husband of Dianne Wiest's character.

Paul began with his father's Wittgenstein *Tractatus*, he was enamoured (use another word) by the mysticism of the *Tractatus* and then he went on reading the Mystics and he eventually was convinced of Catholicism.

Paul has heart failure suspects, but he becomes a priest and recovers. In the end he goes on well.

Why cannot I be like my brother? He killed a man, his own father, yet he feels nothing. Am I weak, father? Should I become one like him? Kierkegaard once said the opposite of holiness is despair, am I worse than him, father?

Why was I born? Why is it that God created me? To suffer?

I have not lived. I have been dead all of this time! As a priest, I have finally found peace, finally found what it means to live!

Knowing that one dies, and having this feeling, this contact with the nothingness of death is great relief, for this nothingness means that all else is nothing, and so there is no suffering, and also no worries or anxieties either.

You wish to learn something? Throw away this book, burn it, tear it, trash it, whatever. But forget it and go live life.

The question that most often hurts is "If only". We should rather choose to say

What I have discovered is that there really is nothing new in Philosophy. Even Schopenhauer's idea of the will, I've discovered, bears a striking similarity to Meister Eckhart's Philosophy. There's nothing new under the sun

The best thing in the World is to be in nature - thoughtless.

Never ask yourself: what if? There is no greater pain.

AGONIES in confinement title

The appeal of writing literature, I suppose, is that it's wholly creative. It's all new. While all other sciences, one only rewrites what others have thought in the past.

The greatest and most sublime work of art isn't comparable to a good walk in nature.

Sometimes I think that nature was made too perfect for humanity.

It's important that, when we write works of sadness or depression, we do not become so engrossed in it that we adopt that depression instead of merely expressing it, lest it becomes our identity, and that depression intensify rather than diminish. We must be cautious not to let our ventings become part of our identity, and this particular is true in regards depression.

"I", "I", "I", "I". Is that all that literature boils down to?