

SERENITY



I NEVER WISH FOR SERENITY. AND KNOWING THAT,
I SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED THAT I NEVER GET IT.
BUT EVEN WHEN I REFLECT ON THIS OMISSION ON MY
PART, I NEVER SEEM TO CHANGE MY WISHING WAYS.

I SEE SERENE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE, I KNOW THAT
IT IS A POSSIBLE THING. BUT THE PEOPLE I SEE WHO
ARE CONTENT BRING UP BILE IN THE BACK OF MY
THROAT: THE WEALTHY, THE LAZY, THE WILLFULLY
IGNORANT. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM MY
HEART'S DESIRES THAN TO SETTLE FOR *THIS*, TO
SET DOWN MY MEGAPHONE AND SHAKE THE TENSION
OUT OF MY FISTS, TO DECIDE THAT THIS IS GOOD
ENOUGH. I AM A MALCONTENT, AND I KNOW IT WILL
KILL ME IN THE END.

I NEVER WISH FOR AN END TO THE FIGHT.
THERE ARE DAYS I CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE WHAT
AN END WOULD LOOK LIKE. OTHER DAYS IT'S ALL TOO
CLEAR TO ME: A BOOT ON THE FACE FOREVER AND
EVER, WE ALL LOVE BIG BROTHER, A TINY UPPER
CRUST MAKING MERRY ON THE BACKS OF BILLIONS
AS THE WORLD BURNS. AND TO SAY THAT ALL THE
DANGER IS EXTERNAL WOULD BE A LIE, I KNOW
TOO THAT I HAVE MY INNER STRUGGLES, MY OWN
DRAGONS TO SLAY.

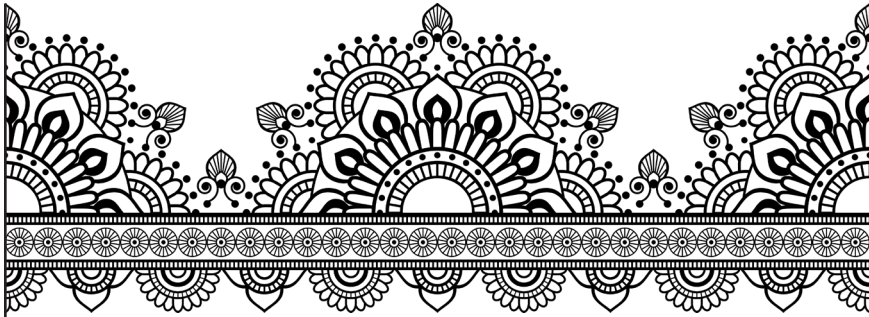
I WISH FOR A BETTER SWORD. I WISH FOR A
STRONGER SHIELD. I WISH FOR A PITCHER OF WATER
AND MORE AMMUNITION, FOR YOU AT MY SIDE AT
THE END OF THE WORLD. FOREVER.



Blessed is the Apple in flight
Blessed is the rock that calls down machine gun fire
Blessed is the raised fist, the bullhorn
The stencil and the paint
Blessed, oh blessed, is the man ablaze

What possible love could be greater
Than the love for the throwers of bricks?
The ones who shatter glass and empires
Those who tilt at windmills and death?
So blessed, blessed are the bricks



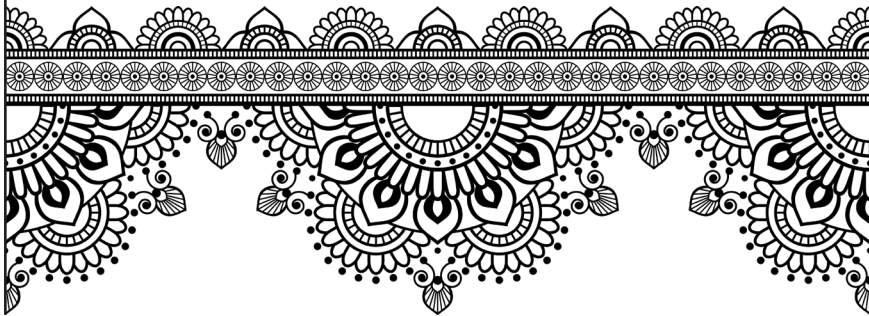


Meditations on the Night Before a Major Release – Chris Salsman –

Activists have a big problem with burnout and loss of hope, trying to face the negative reality of the world -and raise awareness- can be a very taxing thing. Sometimes you see these huge complex stories that you have difficulty even explaining to people. Years can go by and you're still not sure how to convey the reality, the enormity of it to the uninitiated.

And then you get faced with a moment where a very terrible truth could get outed, something so sad and horrifying, but yet you get hopeful at the idea of release. There's this weird moment where one might feel guilty over feeling hope in the midst of all the darkness. But maybe we shouldn't feel guilty. Hope is such a rare thing these days, so I will cling to it.

**The outing of a terrible truth
is something to feel hopeful over.**



Turns Out

I was once something else entirely
I was part of something bigger than myself
Something new, and dark, and exciting
And we were loud and intentionally outrageous
We were the internet personified

And I said
I don't care who you are or what you believe,
Your opinion matters.

But it turns out I do fucking care what your opinion is
If your opinion is that Jewish people are untrustworthy
If your opinion is that transgender people are insane
If your opinion is that women and people of color
Are in anyway inherently less than a white man
I am done with your shit.

If your opinion is that closing our borders to refugees
Is prudent, acceptable, or humane
You do not have my support

If your opinion is that the greatest threat to this country
Is the fact that you can't drop an n-bomb in public
Kindly stop breathing my air

People are dying for your dumbshit opinions
There is suffering greater than your political inconvenience
We are on the brink of terrible things
And you fuckwads are screaming at the top of your lungs
For the world to jump

I am done with you.

I do not forgive
I do not forget

ON WINNING

- ANDY FYFE -

WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING A GAME AND YOUR
OPPONENTS CHEAT, YOU WILL PROBABLY
LOSE THE GAME IF YOU PLAY BY THE RULES.
YOU WON'T GET BONUS POINTS FOR TAKING
THE HIGH ROAD, YOU'LL JUST LOSE.

YOU WON'T IMPRESS ONLOOKERS WITH
YOUR DETERMINATION TO LOSE ACCORDING TO
THE RULES. YOU'LL JUST LOSE.

YOU WON'T WIN ANY VOTES BY CLAIMING A
MORAL VICTORY OVER THE PEOPLE WHO
CHEATED AND WON. YOU'LL JUST LOSE.

WHEN YOU LOSE ENOUGH, YOUR CHEATING
OPPONENTS WILL CHANGE THE RULES IN
THEIR FAVOR. THEY WILL CHANGE THE RULES
SO YOU ALWAYS LOSE.

I REALIZE THIS IS A CONTRADICTION OF MANY
OF OUR MOST CHERISHED CULTURAL MYTHS,
BUT IT'S STONE COLD REALITY. IT'S AN EASY
COP-OUT TO COCOON OURSELVES IN SELF-
RIGHTEOUS DEFEAT, TELLING OURSELVES
THAT IF WE JUST KEEP LOSING WITH OUR
HEADS HELD HIGH THAT EVENTUALLY
IT'LL BECOME A WIN. IT NEVER DOES.

WHEN THEY GO LOW, WE STOMP THEM INTO
THE FUCKING PAVEMENT, AND LET THEM WAIL
ABOUT OUR NON-REGULATION BOOTS.

YOU ARE ENOUGH - ANONYMOUS

THE WORLD MAY COME AT YOU WITH KNIVES
AND TRY TO CUT AWAY THE PIECES OF YOU
THAT DO NOT FIT THEIR VISION
OF WHO YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN

THE VOICES MAY PILE UP ONE ATOP THE OTHER
SCREAMING YOUR INADEQUACIES
REHASHING EVERY LOSS AND SORROW
YOU NEVER LEARNED TO GRIEVE

AND YOU MAY SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE FIGHTING
AND NEVER SEEM TO MAKE GROUND
YOU MAY LOSE YOUR FRIENDS
AND SEE YOUR ENEMIES IN POWER

BUT KNOW THIS

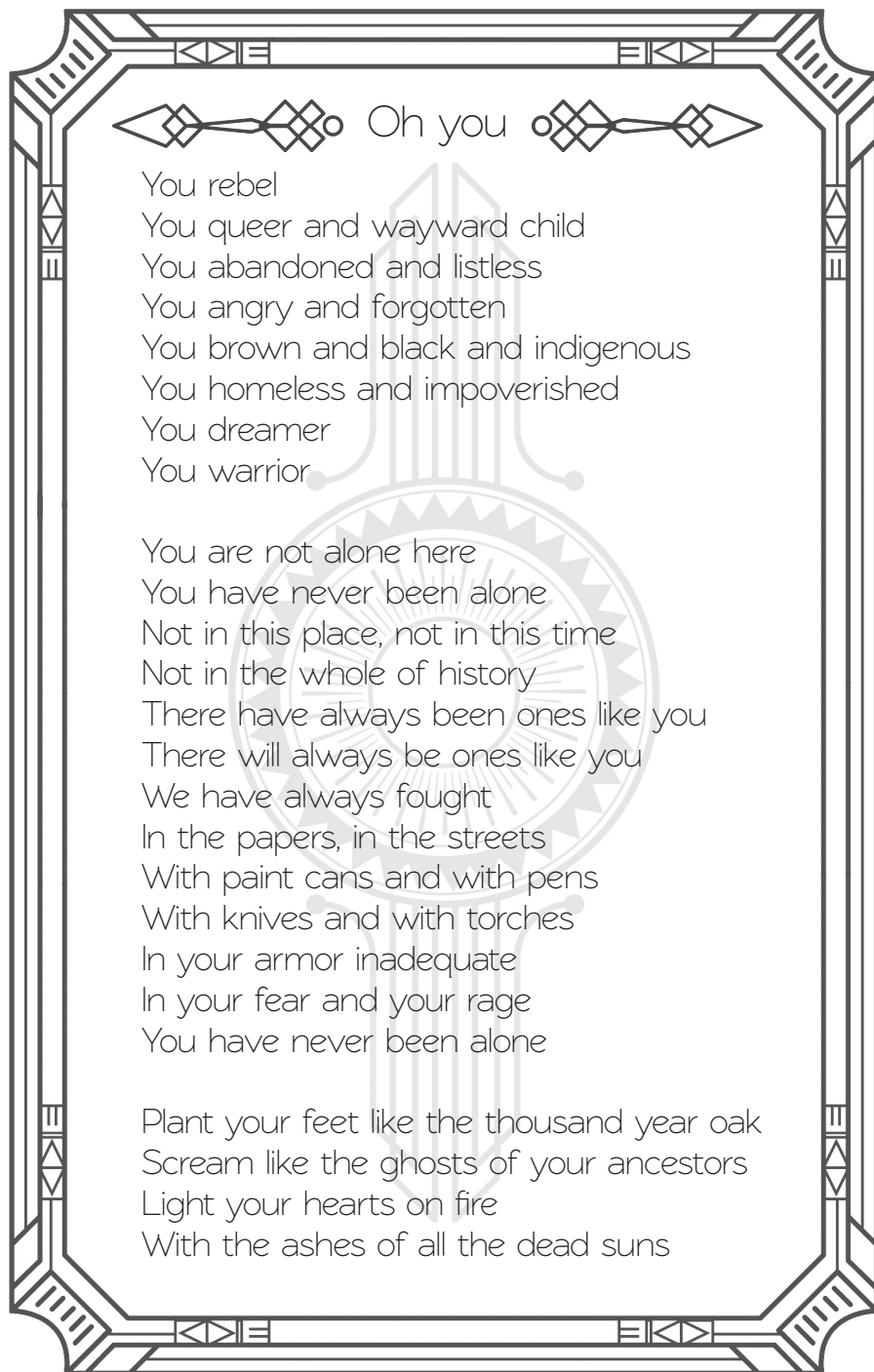
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FULFILL ANY PROPHECY
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO AVENGE THE GIRL
YOU DO NOT EVEN HAVE TO GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER
TO BE WORTHY OF THIS LOVE

YOU ARE ENOUGH AS YOU ARE NOW
WITH YOUR FAILURES AND YOUR FEARS
WITH YOUR DREAMS UNACCOMPLISHED
WITH YOUR WEAKNESSES AND DOUBT

YOU WITH EVERY GOOFY GRIN AND BAD JOKE
WITH YOUR SCARS AND ADDICTIONS
WITH THE WEIRDNESS TO YOUR WALK
AND YOUR QUESTIONABLE FASHION SENSE

YOU ARE LOVED



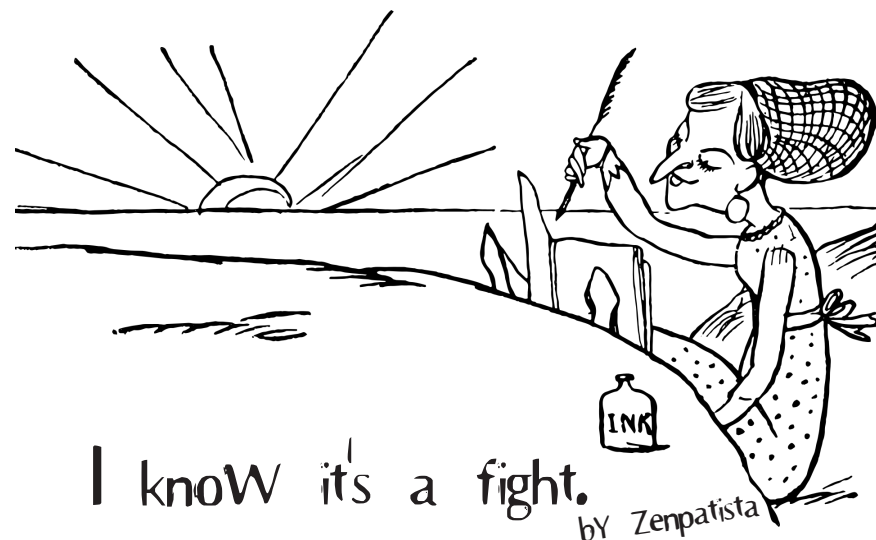


Oh you

You rebel
You queer and wayward child
You abandoned and listless
You angry and forgotten
You brown and black and indigenous
You homeless and impoverished
You dreamer
You warrior

You are not alone here
You have never been alone
Not in this place, not in this time
Not in the whole of history
There have always been ones like you
There will always be ones like you
We have always fought
In the papers, in the streets
With paint cans and with pens
With knives and with torches
In your armor inadequate
In your fear and your rage
You have never been alone

Plant your feet like the thousand year oak
Scream like the ghosts of your ancestors
Light your hearts on fire
With the ashes of all the dead suns



I know it's a fight.

by Zenpatista

In fact, it's more accurately called a shit-fight against the establishment. I know I'm the little guy. I know that as I stand up that some are too cowed, or beat down, or habituated to their "Whatabout"isms to stand with me.

That's OK.

I know that it's inevitable that I will go down. And it probably won't be a typical beatdown. It is very likely that I get roasted alive and "made an example" of.

That's OK too.

But I also know that it will be a glorious fight and I will make them cry. I will make them wonder. I may face imminent defeat. But when I go down, if I go down, I will do so swinging, grinning, singing and spitting.

First they came for the Muslims
and we said NOT TODAY MOTHERFUCKER
Then they came for the women
and we said HELL HATH NO FURY
Then they came for the scientists
and we said KISS OUR SHINY METAL ASSES
Then they came for the immigrants
and we said HOW ABOUT EAT A DICK
Then they came for the National Parks
and we said YOU'D BETTER BE FUCKING JOKING
Then they came for the sick and disabled
and we said OVER OUR DEAD BODIES
Then they came for the internet
and we said BITCH DID WE STUTTER?



Creativity in a Cultural Wasteland

-Payne

This is for all of you out there who have shit going on in your life, and can't deal. Can't vent. Can't defend yourself from.

There are times when you must be seen, heard, felt. Even the most apathetic or the most cynical of us do it.

There are times when you must stick your head over the trench wall and see others toiling away, and take comfort from the fact that you are not alone.

So I am here. I am listening.

Some of us take up the pen, the sword, the megaphone, and turn negativity into a positive. Some of us create temporary monuments out of the shrapnel that rains on us.

Your tasks are your own, what you do, you must do alone, but what is done, will be seen.

There is nothing permanent. In the space of a life time, we build many monuments, and we tear many down.

There is respite, though. There is a moment of hiding in a shell crater as you run across no-mans-land, sharing a knowing glance with another refugee, leaving your mark, before you jump up again, and run to the next bit of scant cover.

There is that assurance that what we do will have meaning, for a fleeting time perhaps, but not an empty gesture.

Breathe. You can't tear down the world if you stop breathing, so breathe.

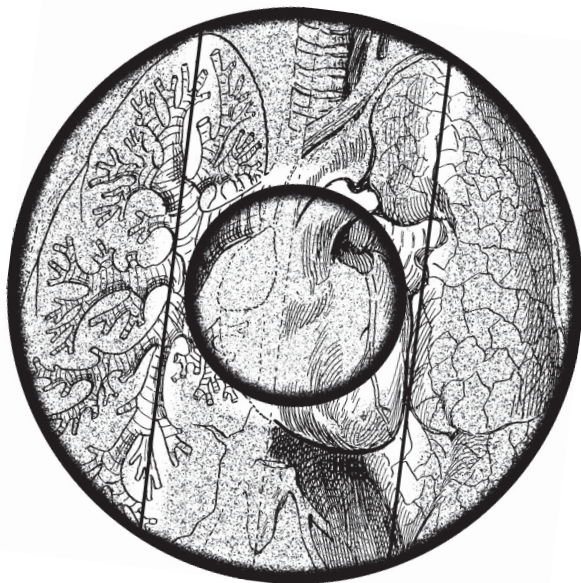
You haven't won and you may never win and you aim so high you know you'll never get there and you have to stop beating yourself while you're down or you'll never get up you have to breathe.

This world will kill you it will tear you in half and grind you to paste and your hopes and dreams are handles sticking out of your forehead and the fates or some other assholes will use those handles to steer you like a wagon and if you give up caring about things it won't get any better and you can survive this and maybe help a little and it will hurt but you have to do it you have to keep moving you have to breathe.

There's glass in your lungs and poison in your veins and everything you love will die in the end and the sun will explode and galaxies will collide and the universe will die a slow, boring death and there's nothing to be done about the laws of physics but that is trillions of years from now and you can only do something about now and now isn't forever but it still matters you matter you have to breathe.

You don't have to make peace with it and you don't have to accept it and you don't have to stop being the kid who would cry at a mall opening you don't have to be perfect you can't be perfect that's not what you're here for you know what you're here for you have to keep trying and breathe.

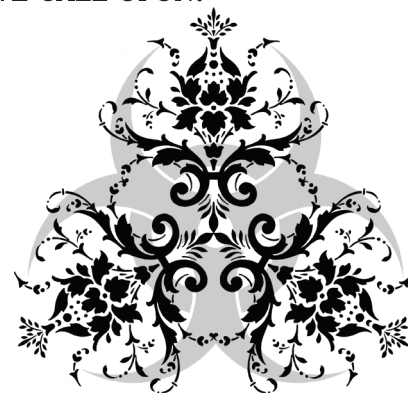
I love you. Breathe.



THE THREE STRENGTHS

THERE ARE THREE STRENGTHS WE CALL UPON:

ANGER OBSTINANCE AND DENIAL



ANGER GIVES US THE STRENGTH TO ACT. IT MAKES OUR BODIES STRONG AND OUR WORDS HARD. ANGER PROTECTS US FROM PAIN, AND FROM EMBARRASSMENT. ANGER DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN FRIEND AND FOE, DOES NOT UNDERSTAND SHADES OF GRAY OR DEGREES OF WRONGDOING. ANGER IS A HAMMER. SOMETIMES, A HAMMER IS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB.

OBSTINANCE GIVES US THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE. IT MAKES US STAND OUR GROUND WHEN OTHERS WOULD SWAY US. OBSTINANCE GIVES US ROOTS TO WEATHER THE STORM. OBSTINANCE SHUTS ITS EYES TO THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE WORLD, AND IN SO DOING LOSES SIGHT OF ALTERNATIVES. OBSTINANCE IS A STONE. SOMETIMES, A STONE IS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB.

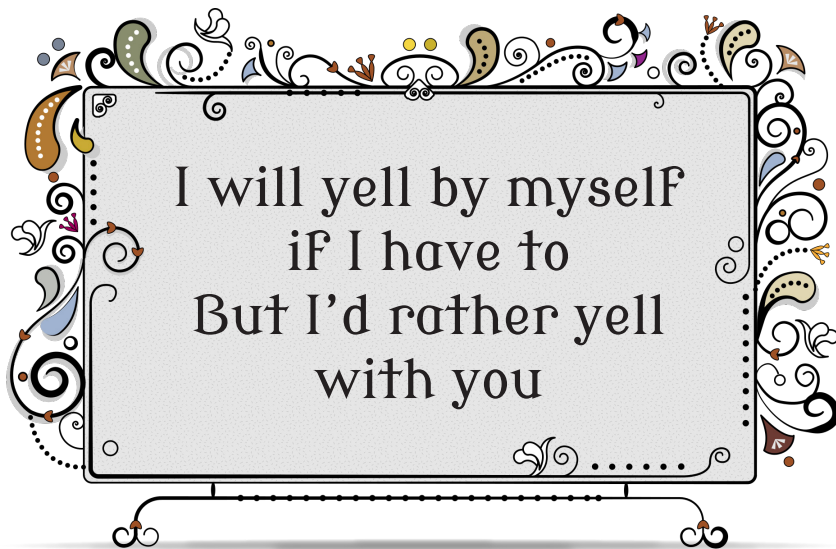
DENIAL GIVES US THE SECRET STRENGTH WHEN WE ARE LIMITED BY THE WORLD TO IGNORE THE TWO OPTIONS LAID OUT BEFORE US, AND TO FIND THE THIRD PATH.

WHEN WE FIND THAT PATH, WE ARE FREE.

The most frightening thing I've heard in this season of Whatever-The-Hell-This-Is was when a man insisted his candidate could not be racist, because "if he was, they wouldn't let him run." Sadly I was too gobsmacked at the time to respond coherently, and now the moment is lost. I wish I could have told him that the "they" he was expecting to intervene was actually him. People get so caught up in fighting the power that they seem to forget that the powers that be answer to them. Have you ever spoken to a politician? Every single one I have ever met has been every bit as horrified as the rest of us at everything going down, and feel every bit as powerless! Your vote is the only meaningful check on mad men. Your choices matter. All the Freemasons and Lizard People and Elders of Zion in the world can't do a thing without our permission. If you don't like what they're doing maybe you should stop giving it.



We become what we pretend to be, so we must be very careful with our fantasies. The dollhouse of course represents domestic submission, but even this may be subverted. Look, Dolly! I have created a space under the cupboards to hide the persecuted dinosaur refugees. Tomorrow, we shall graffiti anti-establishment propaganda all over town. Never forget that our forebears were abolitionists and suffragettes: law-breakers and dissidents all!



Blessed are the Malcontents
For they will not be swayed
By your excuses and misdirection

Blessed are the Cranky
For their sentiments are genuine
And their platitudes are few

Blessed are the Terrible,
For they are capable of good on a scale inaccessible
To those confident in their own virtue

Blessed are the Trouble Makers
For they will get shit done

Blessed are the Messy
Blessed are the Stubborn
Blessed are the Imperfect

Blessed are the Loud
For they will be heard
Whether you like it or not

Blessed are the Crazy
For their understanding of the human condition
Is beyond the reach of the sane

Blessed are the Hypocrites
For they are equipped to handle
The reality in which we live

Blessed are the Living
For they are Not Dead Yet

Blessed are those with a Good Left Hook
Blessed are those with Resting Bitch Face
Blessed are those with No Fucks To Give

Nothing to Fear

*We will never be imprisoned
We are the ones who will be shot on sight
They will invent new execution tools if they have to.*

*We will never be captured
We are not the ones they want in a cell
They will string us up in the square unannounced.*

*We will never be tortured
We are the ones interrogators fear
They will scream to drown out our hideous laughter.*

*We will never be converted
We are the ones who corrupt all we touch
They will cut out our tongues before we can speak.*

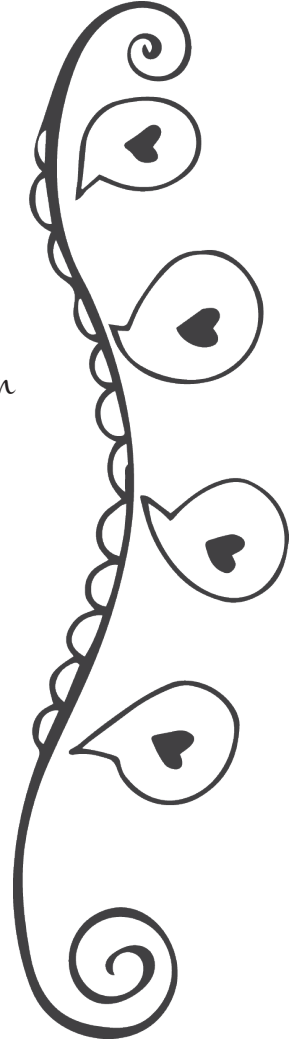
*We will never be imprisoned
We are the ones who die upright
They will be afraid long after we are gone.*

God
Is the moment
When you nearly burst into tears
In the back of a cab
Because you want nothing more
Than to plant a soft kiss
On the cheek of the driver
Who has been through so much
And seen so many things
Lived such a complex life
Of joys and sorrows
Across three countries
And sixty years
And has offered you the barest glimpse
In this short time you have together
It is being completely overwhelmed
With love for a stranger
For just being



**The truth is you are not puppets
And there are no puppet masters.
The truth is that evil persists in this world
Because good men can build bad systems
And changing systems is harder
Than shooting bad men.**

Be grateful for the sense of purpose
You keep stumbling upon
When you least expect it
That keeps dragging you back
To the same place
The thing you're alive for
The thing you were sent here to learn
That you know but keep forgetting:
You belong here
You can act
You are not a prisoner
In this wondrous, fucked up world
You can cause trouble
You can create
Imperfectly, inconsistently
You are authorized
To the space you take up
And the air you are breathing.



Some Notes About Balance



by chaotic neutral observer
and Professor Cramulus

We all seek balance in our daily lives. Life-work balance, a balanced diet, balancing the needs of family and friends, balancing exercise and relaxation.

Balance is also needed in the world at large. Balance between order and chaos, right and left, liberal and conservative, light and dark, good and evil, peanut butter and jelly.

What a crock of crap.

"Balance" is one of those words like "Nature" that gives people a stiffy... they think it's somehow connected to "what things should be like" and want to get on board. There's this perception that there is a balancing energy in the universe, and if you align yourself with it, you can dodge harm.

It's a construct though. Look at forests... we used to believe them to be these perfect little homeostatic ecosystems. The wolves and deer have this natural "balance"-- too many deer, and the wolf population grows and brings it back down. Too many wolves, and the deer population decreases, which also caps the number of wolves. As long as they stay "in balance", this can go on forever.

But dig into the soil. You can see evidence that it hasn't been going on forever, it's just that we generalize the present conditions into infinity. The border of the forest expands and shrinks. History is chaotic. If things are "balanced", it's usually a temporary condition. Sometimes dynamic systems careen out of control. This isn't a violation of a balancing principle, it's also "what things are like".

If you're a wolf, you eat the deer. If you're a deer, you try not to be eaten. There is no law that these things balance each other, it's just how the chips land when the conditions are just right.

Beyond just being a construct, though, balance is also a useless one in almost every context.

Balance between good and evil? That's like asking for balance between being punched in the balls and not being punched in the balls, or a balance between being disease-free and terminal tuberculosis. Good and evil don't need to be balanced. That's a bunch of cosmic yin-yang hippie bullshit.

Star Wars said there needed to be balance between the light and dark sides of the force, but what was the real choice you were being presented with? Between a bunch of pretentious weirdos in funny robes and a guy who thought it was smarter to blow up planets than to conquer and tax them. They don't need to be balanced, they need to be institutionalized.

"Work-life balance"? That's just code for "I hope my company understands that I need to leave the premises sometimes." You're not taking time off from your job to rest, you're taking time off from your life to work. You don't need to balance the amount of work you do, you need to minimize it.

You think "smart" and "stupid" need to be balanced? You think both sides of the argument always deserve equal time? No, if you're asking for balance, you probably just mean "the other guy is winning and it's making me feel bad so please listen to me".

But if you're here looking for answers, I don't have any easy ones for you. We are wrecking the environment. You could say we're violating the balancing principle, disturbing the natural rhythms and this is causing a spiral into disorder. Beavers build a dam and it permanently alters the landscape. Humans wrecking the environment is a "natural" outcome too. But we're not going to solve any of that with calls for "balance," or somehow "balancing" our insatiable thirst for consumer goods and energy-intensive entertainment with our desire not to render the world uninhabitable for humanity. Nobody seeking balance ever achieved anything notable. You want to be somebody, you want to do something, you gotta go to the limit. Balance is for flywheels, gymnasts and chemical equations.