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## Voyages

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Voyages

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English from  
The College of William and Mary

by

Aaron Aubrey Barksdale

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(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

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Telemachus

...Wrapped in some sort of prenatal dream, warm and flying. He hears his mother's voice singing him awake, "Dats da mommies little pumpkin, that's the mommy's little man."

5           The dull light of the room blurs against her smiling face. He questions whether he is dreaming or awake? Remembering that he had felt like this before, and that sometimes couldn't tell the difference between the two states. "Five more minutes," says he, Jude Gnomon, turning over and nestling deeper in the blankets. He sighs in deep satisfaction, eyes still closed, in the warmth and stillness of the morning hours.

10           "Jude, you got to ready hon." She, Vanessa Gnomon, looks down at her son clothed in the cotton pajamas that she had bought for him. They have characters from one of his cartoons on it. *The Rugrats*? She prods him gently with her kind hands, and kisses him on his forehead. "Come on bookah-boo. You're gonna to make mommy late."

*It's really morning then. Ahhhh Mondays.* The sleep is still in his eyes as he walks  
15 a few paces from his room in their apartment to the bathroom while he hears his mother making food in the kitchen down the hall. He flinches as his feet touch the linoleum floor then standing on the step stool he looks at himself in the mirror. He recognizes his face in the looking glass, which he had often tried to walk through. He had pressed his fingertips against it while looking into his eyes. *Solid—no world on the other side.* Inside his eyes  
20 he sees himself looking back at himself, looking back at himself, in a strange hallway of reflections. Turning on the water he, Jude Gnomon, splashes his face. Looking into the mirror his reflection apes him, almost mocking his vain attempt to brusquely wake himself. He reaches for the towel, soft, blue linen, kind to the skin. He gently rubs his

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face into the textured cloth then drapes it around his head like hair. He tosses it to and fro  
25 in the mirror, posing and laughing at his feminine imitation. *Still looks like me.* He places  
the towel back on the hook beside the door and squeezes a strip of pink bubble-gum  
flavored toothpaste out the tube. He had begged his mother for the candy-flavored paste  
the last time they were at the grocery store.

She had initially said no, but after his sullen pouting through the store she decided  
30 to capitulate. “What harm could it do,” she thought to herself, “better than not brushing  
his teeth at all. It’s just so damn expensive for a tiny bottle.” Brushing his teeth with a  
Cyclops-modeled toothbrush: another trinket inspired from a TV show that he had  
pleaded with his mother to buy. He pushes the foamy pink paste around his teeth. He  
sticks his tongue between the gaps where his lower teeth had fallen out. *Shoff, shoff,*  
35 *shoff, patut. Warm, rinse, shhhhhhhhh, little waterfall. Glalallaalala patut. Teeth milky*  
*white cream colored but hard. Chomp chomp.* He envisions himself a T-Rex with small  
arms and sharp teeth as he grins at his double across the reflective screen  
He turns off the faucet as he scrubs. *I never let the water run no, no it might be fun but I*  
*never let the water run.* A purple dinosaur that sings about dental hygiene: how  
40 ridiculous, how funny, and yet still he has learned something. At school Jordan had asked  
whether the tooth fairy had brought him any money, and he told her that the tooth fairy  
wasn’t real. “Says who,” said she. “Says my mom!” He told her defiantly.

“Hurry up in there!”

*She never gives me more than five minutes.* The apartment is small, but seems big  
45 to a smaller person, clean, and tidy—his mother will not accept anything less. He hurries  
to his room and puts on the clothes set aside. First the socks, and the pants *one leg after*

*the*. Then his shirt *buttons button buttoned missed a loop*. He hurries to the living room and grabs his backpack from the closet. He looks for his jacket, but realizes that he left it in the car. He is disappointed with himself for not remembering to bring it inside the day  
 50 before because it was cold in the early August morning. She looks him over an assessment of how well he performs his daily rituals. It is a kind look yet entertained by his smallness and dependency on her for help. Smiling, more of a smirk, she fixes the buttons that he has missed on his shirt. "What am I going to do with you?" A rhetorical question, yet there is a bit of truth behind the comment. She, Vanessa Gnomon, a single  
 55 mother and divorcée, is raising a male a child on her own. *Lord gimme strength*.

"I have your breakfast and lunch money. Come on baby hurry up." *This boy, he drags his feet so slow in the morning*. Her voice is exasperated by the thought of full day's work ahead of her and then frustrated by her son's lackadaisical pace. Let's go Jude—on the double!"

60 Devil, he hears: *What does this have to do with him? If she says his name too loud he's bound to pop up*. Her phrases and sayings confused him, and that one in particular. The sermons on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings made him fearful of that name—the devil, Satan, Lucifer. *Mischievous, plump dark ghoul with a shrill laugh at his evil deeds*. He fears the demons and spirits spoken of in the scriptures, and pictured in his  
 65 illustrated bible. Yet he has a mild confidence in his assertion of divine power on his behalf. In frightening situations and encounters with the devil, usually in his sleep, he would chant Jesus, as if it were a curse word, louder and louder until waking up to the sound of his own voice in a cold sweat. The thoughts of spiritual matters weigh heavily on his mind, and he unintentionally contemplates them in moments of silence when he is

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70 vaguely aware of supernatural presence. The sound of his thoughts are always on, a kind voice, the Holy Spirit, residing inside him. *I am a C, I am a C-H, I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N and I have C-H-R-I-S-T in my H-E-A-R-T and I will L-I-V-E E-T-E-R-N-A-L-L-Y.*

He throws his backpack on the back seat and then climbs into the front seat of the car. Sitting down and he secures himself with the safety belt. *Click*, the satisfying  
75 metallic sound of the belt fastening in place. *Click*, he imitates the sound striking his tongue against the roof of his mouth and the back of his teeth. He looks up and sees the glow of the traffic lights and lampposts from the window. The glimmer fades in and out of the dark as he nods off and wakes up in the twilight. And so they ride to the bus station where his mother works as a driver. He puts on his coat, a difficult ordeal with the  
80 seatbelt restraining the freedom of his movement, which he found on the floor of the car where it must have fallen the day before. The cozy bundle of clothes cradles him softly amid the chill brisk air. The sun hovers slowly from its resting place on the other side of the world, and its rays light the condensation on the windshield. He stares at the sun, though he knows it's unhealthy, almost as if it's a challenge. *Amun-Ra— the sun god.* He  
85 is the young pharaoh is beaming in his heavenly opulence.

“Isn’t the sky beautiful,” says his mother, “The pinks and the corals, and the lavenders, and the blues.”

He nods in agreement both conferring her statement with silence and accordance. *How is the sun so hot and I’m still freezing?* He nestles one hand in his crotch for warmth  
90 the other against the vent of the car streaming heat. A thermos of hot chocolate like his mother’s thermos of coffee sits next to him in the cup holder.

“Why do you always sit like that?”

He shrugs his shoulders. "I'm cold."

95 She sighs and her response turns to smoke in icy air. He puts together two fingers  
and imitates Cruella DeVille. Tipping his fingers from side to side to shake off the  
imaginary ash. He peers out the window looking at the street signs, and his eyes strain to  
read them. Speed limit thirty-five miles an hour, Loisdale road... *Always have to squint.*  
Once he tried rubbing mud on his eyes to perform a miracle. *It didn't do much good. My  
fault it didn't work. Not enough faith.* He presses the dial for the radio.

100 *Monday, Monday, bah dum bah bah dum dum. So good to me bah dum.*

"This is my favorite song."

"Do you know who sings it?"

"Mhmm. The Mamas and the Papas."

105 "You don't know about them...you're too young for that. Hehe lord have  
mercy."

*Ham mercy? Just like on the Devil. Don't understand.* The people at the church  
always said ham mercy at service and bible study. And his mother always says on the  
devil when she wanted him to hurry. He thinks again about a portly little spirit with the  
menacing grin, but this time getting squashed by a foot every time she called out those  
110 words.

"Course I know. The oldie station is all I'm allowed to listen to."

"That's right you don't need any of that worldly music."

"Are we almost there?"

"Almost. You wait in the car while I get the bus ready."

115 She turns off the radio station. "Let's sing a praise song."

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The sounds of Kirk Franklin, Cece Winans, and Fred Hammond were the spiritual anthems of their humble home. Hymns about the lord and grace, and he, Jude Gnomon, is familiar with the lyrics of the songs.

120 “I will bless.” He sings in a round, repeating the words in echo like the continuous reflection in the mirror and his eyes. “I will bless—*I will bless*—Your holy name—*Naaaaame*.”

“Sing it baby!”

“I’ll give you, *I’ll give you*, all my praise.”

“Mm getting funky now. Hehe.”

125 “I will bless your holy name, I’ll give you all my praise. I will dwell in the shelter of the almighty I’ll hide under your wing. You’re my rock...and my shield. That’s all I can remember from that one.”

“We’re here.”

130 He has a view of the lot filled with Crayola yellow school buses. His mother parks the car and he watches as she performs the maintenance routine for starting the bus. She, he thinks, is an Israelite working one of the golden pyramids. She has a full belly, fleshy arms and legs, her breasts like two pillows, and her cheeks plump and sallow. He would kiss her cheeks, stare at her dark brown almond eyes, showing his affection with loving embraces and tender hugs. His mother is a slave, in many ways, working for a paycheck under the oversight of a taskmaster by proxy of timesheet. She toils for this master and 135 two others at two plantation-like jobs, and even with the assistance of his father’s monthly checks is barely able to make ends meet. He envisions her wading through the water of the Nile with a basket made of pitch and papyrus reeds, placing him inside and

140 sending him to the Egyptians. His other mother Nefertiti, who has her attendant fetch him  
 out of the water, is glamorous. Her neck is long and elegant, her hair perfectly coiffed,  
 and her make-up flawlessly applied; she is a queen and consort to the son of the sun. She  
 has ambitions of starting her own business, answering to no one but herself and God. Not  
 concerned with bills to pay but instead how the artists will commemorate her in  
 hieroglyphics on the sphinx.

145 He unclips his seatbelt and puts his face near the warm vent in the car dashboard.  
*Mm. cozy.* His mom had prepared a small breakfast sandwich for him that was resting on  
 the backseat. He sits back in the chair and pours a cup of hot chocolate from his thermos.  
 He remembers the napkins in the armrest, and makes a small place mat. *Better not spill.*  
 Closes his eyes and clasps his hands.

150 “Dear Lord I thank you for my hot chocolate, I bless the hands that prepared it  
 and this delicious breakfast. In Jesus’ name amen.” He tears off the bread of the sandwich  
 and dips it in the steaming chocolate blend. *Do this in remembrance of me. Yum.* Pushes  
 the button for the radio. *Eat, drink, listens, watches.*

*Time it was*

155 *And what a time it was, it was*

*A time of innocence*

*A time of confidences*

*Long ago it must be*

*I have a photograph*

160 *Preserve your memories*

*They’re all that left you.*

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As he finishes breakfast his mother beckons him to come to the bus. *Turn the key in the ignition off and put away the trash.* Grabbing his backpack and the keys he walked to the bus and took the seat behind his mother. “You got everything?”

165 *Books, backpack, keys, lunch...* “Yes.”

“Okay lets go pick up these chilren.” The inside is like a hollow tree trunk hewn out and artificially furnished with metallic insulation and thin leathery seats. The windows are rectangular slots, and the bus is no longer a tree but an aquarium and he and his mother are on their way to pick up the other fish in school. He hops from one seat to the next in the golden, gigantic, empty vehicle. Now it’s the inside of a volcano and the floor is lava. He climbs over the seats carefully avoiding the ground, jumping from one chair to the next.

“Jude,” says his mother, “Sit your tail down and cut out all that horseplay.” He trots back to the front of the bus; he is a centaur, *no more horseplay.* He pulls out his action figures from his backpack, *wonder how Mary Poppins can fit so much in hers—it’s a movie nothing’s real,* and fights imaginary battles. He kneels on the floor, using the seat as a bench and props the Megazord in his left hand, and the Transformer in his right. He had found the toys at a secondhand store, and the Power Ranger Megazord was his favorite: a composite machine made of dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures. The other was a robot that could change into a cassette player. *Crash. Smash,* plastic figures beating each other up. One good, one bad, light versus dark, good versus evil on the battlefield of the brown leather seat of a school bus.

He, Jude Gnomon, has invented an innumerable amount of ways for entertaining himself while his mother drives the bus. Sometimes he will hide underneath the seats of

185 the bus, calling out in little voices to the high-schoolers who ride in the morning.  
*Heelloooooo this is your seatbelt talking to you.* He wishes that he wasn't an only child.  
It would be nice to have fellows to play with when he feels like lonely Eleanor Rigby.  
And he would complain to his mother as he tagged along with her to her second job at the  
convenience store. "I want to have someone to play with after school. I want a brother  
190 who can watch me when you come home from work. And I want to have a puppy. If I  
can't have a brother or any fun then I least want a puppy." His complaints would neither  
tender a sibling nor a pet. That's the way life is. Win some lose.

Most days on the bus he sits calmly in his seat, the one behind the driver, reading  
one of his books either from the library or one from home. He has all different kinds of  
195 books from picture stories to novels, bible stories to fiction, science books and history  
books, and he immerses himself in the narrative of the plot. When he reads something  
funny he laughs out in an unselfconscious and uninhibited manner, throwing his head  
back, slapping his knee, and gasping for air. *Hawhawhawha*. His laugh is neither  
ashamed nor socially aware; it's his own private joke shared between him, the author, and  
200 the characters from the page. He delights in this secret knowledge that brings him such  
satisfaction and undiluted joy. This morning he devours the chapters of another book:  
Ramona and Beezus. He reads at a ravenous pace as though the words on the page are  
substantive and filling, and he is the sole guest to a decadent meal of literary bounty. He  
sits and reads gluttonously and soaks up every aspect of the author's work. The day  
205 before he had finished reading *The Twits*, a Roald Dahl book, which is one of his  
favorites. What's a twit? He thought when he began reading it.

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At the moment his literary enthusiasm is waning since he has been re-reading another one of his tried and true favorites. He bites his tongue and offers words of encouragement to keep his heavy eyelids from setting. The last time he fell asleep on the bus he chipped his tooth. He had swallowed the chip and was scared for it to come out of the other end. If it had he hadn't felt it, but if it hadn't he supposed it was all the same it should rot in his belly. The bus grinds to a stop as the first students board the machine, watching these massive figures cram inside alerts him.

He glances at the seat across the aisle.

215        Thing One: "Well did you see last night's episode?"

Thing Two: looks in her make-up glass: "No, I didn't get to see it. I was working late at the mall, and then I had homework."

Thing One: "Can I copy your notes from Peterson's class?"

220        Thing Two: "Yeah no problem. They're a little sloppy though it's from the day we had a substitute."

Thing-One: "Oh god, was it that old bitch with the mom pants and bad dye job?"

Thing-Two: "Yeah Mrs. Hawthorne. God help the world if all women were her sort. Down on low-risers and spaghetti straps."

Thing one: Of course! Nobody would want her to wear them.

225        Thing-Two makes gestures with her hands around her waist and they laugh, but Jude doesn't understand the joke. She flips her brown hair with a toss of her neck. *Pretty*. He apes her actions. *None to toss. Too short*. Questions whether his mother has seen him in the mirror. *No, she would have said something otherwise*. The two of them are as giddy as characters that live in a hat. They amuse themselves with shenanigans and inside

230 jokes, which intrigue him. He watches the students as they walk off the bus and peers out the window as they enter the gigantic school. Their bedeviled charm, a parade of green eggs and ham and a lyrical nursery rhyme, gives him an overwhelming desire to rush the aging process. There was a janitor outside scrubbing letters off the wall of the building.

“F-U-C-K. You!”

235 “Ugh graffiti. Bleh! I can’t stand it,” his mother said.

He muses, what does that word mean, and why did it elicit such a reaction from her? *Probably shouldn’t say it. Makes her mad. Wonder what our words mean in other languages. Does bear mean sorry in Spanish? Does hello mean F-U-C-K in French? Best not to speak English in a foreign country.* Bus empty again as all the high-schoolers

240 leave.

“Alright. Time pick up those young ones.” He sees her eyes from the rear view mirror and she smiles at him. “Yo tay key-arrow.” *Sesame Street Spanish.*

“I love you too.”

245 Once again they are alone together, which has become routine in their relationship. Mother and son: Madonna and child. He remembers seeing a painting in the large, white, gilded bible underneath the coffee table in his aunt’s house. Rarely used and covered in a thin film of dust he would open it to the pictures. Mary and the infant Jesus illustrated in glossy pages in between the gospels. She, Mary, mother of Jesus, is in a cloak of blue and he is in a swaddling cloth and glimmering halo. He peers around the barrier between his seat and his mother. She doesn’t take her eyes off the road. She wears a navy blue hoodie. *Mary the mother of Jesus.* “Did you finish your books?”

250 “Almost it’s pretty long.”

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“Are you bored?”

“A little bit...”

255 “Have you heard from your father?”

“I called him on Sunday and left a message.”

“And he hasn’t gotten back?” They locked eyes in the rear-view mirror.

“Not yet.”

“Humph. That Negro. I can’t stand him.” His father, a man, like Joseph,  
260 responsible in some way for bringing him, Jude Gnomon, into the world, but he knows  
that God is his true father. He, like Jesus, is of divine origin. His father, John Gnomon, a  
man who is barely literate, a man who reads aloud at a pace so slow that he, Jude, could  
have read ten times as much material. His father, who art on the earth, hallow be his  
name. He works with the drug dealers, prostitutes, and criminals, and, preaches the  
265 gospel of law enforcement to these wayward souls. And yet, in spite of his holy attributes  
his father too needs Christ. The temptation of the adulteress Mary Magdalene, with her  
full hips, light skin, and long hair, veered him off of the road less traveled. In a yellow  
wood where two paths diverge one with Madonna and child in blue and swaddling cloth  
at the end, and the other with Magdalene the black gypsy. He, John Gnomon, chooses the  
270 road more travelled by, and it has made all the difference for their family.

He, Jude, is one of many children. His father and Delilah, and Magdalene, and  
Sarah, and Hagar, and Mary, the mother of Christ, are each the members of an  
intertwined series of bloodlines that could be the bastardized version of a family. The  
children from outside the union between his father and mother, his half-siblings, are the  
275 nephilim. Their bones are stronger, frames broader, powerful daemons with a divine

quality similar to his own and yet different. He dwells on the last time he spent time with his father. A moment, a few hours or so, most of the time his father slept. He is always so tired. Never reads to him never plays games. “Watch some T.V.,” he would say, and so he did while Father God and Delilah smelled each other’s breath in the bedroom.

280 “Don’t be mad. He’s probably busy. Or tired”

“What did ya’ll do the last time you were at his house?”

“We watched TV.” He props his arms on the divider and rests his head on his folded elbows. “Then we had dinner at his girlfriend’s house.”

“Ms. Anne?”

285 “No Ms. Glenn.”

“Ha! He’s still talking to Grandma Glenn?”

Laughter. “I don’t like her as much as Ms. Anne. Ms. Glenn doesn’t know how to cook. Plus she makes faces when I don’t eat her food.”

290 “Well I’ll talk to your dad about that. Sit back in your seat we’re about to pick up them kids now.”

And the bus loads up with children from around the neighborhood. He stares at the houses, and thinks of them as homes. The apartment isn’t really home because you have to share it with everyone else, and yet it is all that he knows. A house with a backyard and fence would be nice, but for now a manger made of hay with animal  
295 neighbors who speak in indecipherable languages is just as well.

The students who come inside are his friends and he waves as they board the vehicle: Susan, Laura, Sam, Jessie, and Matthew. Their parents, mostly mothers, make conversation with each other and issue pleasantries to his mother. “How are you?” “Well,

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and yourself?" "Fine, thanks." His mother's voice changes a bit when she speaks to these  
300 posh white people from nice neighborhoods.

"Hi," he says as each one passes him and finds a seat.

"Good morning, Jude!" they reply. *Smile, wave, smile, wave, smile, smile, wave, smile, wave, wave, wave, the seeeeaaaaaaaaa. An ocean of smiles and hands.* In this  
305 moment he feels most content, moving on the bus and yet standing still. The chill of the  
early morning air warms to the crisp of this August day. Here in the town that he has  
known all his life—*There must be more than this provincial life. The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round, round and round, the wheels on the bus go round...and...round.*

The last stop on the bus route was at his school. He kisses his mother goodbye  
310 and he steps off the bus.

"I love you. See ya later"

"See you later." The door to the bus closes as he walks away and the procession  
of gigantic, yellow, protruding nose and flat nose caterpillars rev their engines and begin  
to drive away.

315 "Jude, come inside sweetheart." He looks up and sees the face of an elderly white  
woman with a blonde pixie haircut, blue eyes, and freckles. He comes toward her, and  
her familiar face reminds him of the sun from the Raisin Bran cereal box with her big  
golden smile and expressive eyes. He smiles back at her as she greets him. What a well-  
behaved child she thinks to herself. *He's just like my son was at the age, a mama's boy.*  
320 *He's so handsome, so precocious, so adorable, and so smart.* Even at age fifty-four, the  
children she encounters still amaze her.

“How are you Mrs. Walsh?”

“I’m doing well. You the same?”

“Yes ma’am. I got up pretty early this morning.” *Ma’am. Yes.* She laughs, feeling  
325 like the patron mother of the school.

“Is that so?” She holds the door open for him and traces the squeals of sneakers  
with the click clack of her heels against the linoleum floor. “Don’t be late to class. The  
bell will ring soon”

“Alright.”

330 She turns into the school’s office and he sees her through the glass pane taking  
her place behind the secretary’s desk. He waves and the staff inside smile and wave back.  
*Ocean.* The florescent lights glow on the floor. He watches the stationary lights stretch on  
the ground as he walks down the hallway underneath the light. Students flood the  
hallways on either side: a sea of kindergarteners through the sixth grade. He wades  
335 through the waters of Tech-Deck Dude T-shirts, light-up sketcher shoes, kick-roller-skate  
shoes, Spider-man backpacks, Looney Toons characters, Mickey, Minnie, Donald duck,  
Pooh Bear, JanSports, and sport jerseys. His own clothes are evident that his mother has  
chosen them from his buttoned down shirt to his pressed jeans, which make him feel  
vaguely dislocated. A forty-year old man stuck in an eight-year old body. The walls have  
340 posters of children in bright colors posing with books with the caption “READ!” at the  
bottom. There are posters of movie stars, athletes, and musicians with milk mustaches  
and the caption “got milk?”

“Hey Jude,” *Don’t make it bad. Take a sad song—.*

“Hey Daniel.”

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345 His reflection bounces back in Daniel’s glasses. A contrast between Daniel’s pale-pinkish skin, blonde bowl cut, and blue eyes and his own rich chocolate features, dark cropped hair, and tree-bark brown eyes.

“How was your weekend?”

350 “It was fine. On Friday and Saturday I didn’t really do anything, but on Sunday we went to church.”

“That’s cool. We didn’t do too much either. Still unpacking stuff.”

Lines of children swarm as they try to enter the classroom at once. *Rumble of voices from students inside*. Rabble rabble rabble. *Beep*—the first bell. They stand outside the classroom in a clumped throng of third graders. Blanca is in front of him. Her long 355 dark brown hair is much different from his curly black strands. “Brush out those naps,” his mother would usually say in the mornings, “You can’t embarrass the family.” And he would sigh as he had to painfully drag the coarse brush against his sensitive head. *Ouch*. She reminds him of a moment from one of his favorite books. *Ramona*. The time that she got in trouble for pulling the curly blonde springy hair of the girl who sat in front of her 360 during class—*Boing!* He imagines pulling Saraviya’s hair from out of the wrap—*something to do with her religion*—on her head and smirks—*how amusing, how devilish, what a joke*. One time Mark touched the wrap and she screamed so loud that you could hear it from the playground to the cafeteria.

Her hair, Blanca Gonzalez, had volume and beauty. Different than his hair, his 365 mother’s, or that of his teacher, Mrs. Buchanan, which is puffy and red. *Hair*. He would often think of what it meant to be black or white or a boy or a girl and the difference between them. He would pose in the mirror and tuck in his dweedle as he spoke in a

squeaky voice *I want to be where the people are...I wanna see, wanna see em dancing.*

He strokes his hair as they walk into the classroom, and paces his steps with her stride.

370 *Left foot, right foot, left fo—*

She turns to him. "Hi Jude."

"Hi. I like your hair."

"Thanks."

*Blanca. So kind!* He follows her into the classroom and they each hang their  
 375 backpacks up on hooks in the corner: a Spider-man and an indigo JanSport. Despite his  
 familiarity with the room he marvels at the colorful decorations and student art hung  
 around the walls. He looks at his own artwork proud and slightly obnoxious as he  
 compares it to others in his class. He can't wait for the next family event, so he can show  
 his mother his most recent creation. His eyes dance around the room. *Blue, red, yellow,*  
 380 *the primaries. Green, purpl—, two large white computers with the rainbow appl—. Gray*  
*carpet on one half and marble swirl tile on the othe—.* He glances at the hanging chart  
 with reward points and tickets. He had twenty-three. Each student started the month with  
 twenty-five and would lose one as a consequence for breaking a rule or misbehaving.  
 Last week he lost one for bringing in late homework, and for a time when he had kicked a  
 385 ball so hard it went over the roof of the building. He gleefully reminisces on the approval  
 of his strength from the other boys for kicking the ball so high.

Cubbies with each student's name—Boys: Colin, Alex, Eduardo, Jason,  
 Mohammed, Daniel, Nick, Mark, Victor, Jude, Kyle, Tran, and Ari; Girls: Sarah, Jordan,  
 Erin, Meha, Lauren, Saraviya, Blanca, Deidre, Belen, Jada, Nitra, Asia, Jamie, Nene,  
 390 Kim, Jannie, Nicole, Kara, and Maria. Large oak desk in the front, pens and papers and

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festoons piled on top. Twenty-eight smaller desks with wood paneling on top and hard plastic underneath attach to a plastic blue chair clusters in five groups of five and one group of three. Large windows on the left that looked out a courtyard.

395 He sat down at the triple desk cluster with Daniel on one side Saraviya at the other. A cup of crayons and art supplies was the centerpiece—blues: cerulean, indigo, cornflower, and aquamarine. *All the same color and yet different.* At the head of the classroom struts Mrs. Buchanan. *So kind!* Once he had fallen asleep in class and she gently woke him, and in a lucid daze he thought she was his mother.

400 “Good Morning,” She says. *Today’s lesson is brought by the letter...* “Respond if you’re present: Roger Abrams, Jordon Aviv, Deidre Bowers, Nitra Carr...” In between each name a voice pipes “here” or “present,” except for Nicole who is absent for today. *How do those decorations stick to the wall? Tape, glue, put—* “Blanca Gonzalez?”

“Here!”

405 As she calls out the roll he thinks about his name, Gnomon, in the Euclid. But now it sounds like the name of some maleficent and sinful being that filled him with fear. And yet his first name, Jude, is the name of a saint. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, and near second to last book of the bible.

“...Jude Gnomon?”

410 “Yes?” He looks around and hears laughter. He realizes that it wasn’t a question, and chuckles with the other students as if his mistake was intentional. She puts a check next to his name and then continues, “Eduardo Manuel? He marvels at his teacher’s height and appearance. *Orange fluffy curly hair with pale white skin and speckled with light freckles. Bright blue eyes colored like Crayola. Plain, white, high-waist pants.*

He focuses on the overhead projector as she places slides on the illuminated  
415 screen. “Alright class we’re going to continue our lesson on ancient world history in  
Egypt. Now the ancient Egyptians were a polytheistic people. Does anyone know what  
that means?”

She, Mrs. Buchanan, is recently married and embracing the newness of her job  
and this small-town city. She surveys the class and sees the regular hands are raised. The  
420 typical students who are always the most vocal volunteer the answer, Jude is among  
them. Her desire to encourage her more reserved students to participate counters her  
desire to choose one of the more gifted students. She looks at Saraviya. *She’s so quiet.*  
“Saraviya do you know the answer?”

Saraviya, of all people, thinks Jude. She doesn’t even have her hand raised. The  
425 answer to the question burns in him with a frustration to be recognized and yet he stays  
quiet. Silently, he broods over his teacher’s neglect towards his contribution. Why  
wouldn’t she choose me Saraviya probably doesn’t know the answer.

Saraviya’s face flushes and she is aware that the class is waiting on her for a  
response, judging her on her ability to respond to a simple question that everyone knew  
430 the answer. She sits there and says nothing in response, shrugging her shoulders although  
she wants to blurt out that it means they worshipped multiple gods.

*She’s so quiet.* “Well can anyone help Saraviya out?” says Mrs. Buchanan.

“It means that they had more than one god,” Jude exclaims. He feels a sense of  
satisfaction asserting his intelligence to the room. He relieves himself from the burden of  
435 silence and the social construct of “raising your hand.”

“That’s correct Jude.

He is elated by the affirmation of her comment, and it echoes in his head *that's correct...that's correct...that's...*

She sees the effect of her approbation *He has a touch of the bird about him—a*  
440 *little Mr. Dalloway with the egotist and yet the innocent blissful ignorance of childhood.*

“Last class we talked about the social structure of the Egyptian community and how that was represented in historical records, buildings, and monuments. Right?” She nods her head in response to the rhetorical question.

“In analyzing the myths and their religion we”—Beep!

445 “Good Morning Students!” Mrs. Clearwater, the vice-principal, starts the morning announcements and cuts off Mrs. Buchanan’s early lecture. “Join me in reciting the pledge.

Jude stands and stares at the flag. It hangs over the chalkboard, and he thinks that its small stature pales in comparison to the student made mural of the nations around the  
450 world. “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.... He recites the pledge like a prayer with his hand over his heart.

“Thank you,” chimes Mrs. Clearwater, “You may now be seated.” He sits down and notices that Roger and Mark do not rise from their seats and their disobedience to the ominous disembodied voice baffles him. He could never go without saying the pledge or  
455 not stand without his hand over his heart. Although he didn’t fully understand why, he had been told to do it; therefore he had to comply. *I wonder why they didn’t stand.* He looks blankly at the two of them, and zones out of Mrs. Clearwater’s statements. He tries to make sense of their motives, and why he admires them for their rebellion.

We're trying to gain a better perspective of what shaped Ancient Egyptian  
 460 society. *Mrs. Buchanan used to be Ms. Allen until she got married. Why is it always the  
 lady who has to change her name? I hate the sound of gnomon. Dark and mysterious. I'll  
 change my last name to whatever my wife's name is.* "Let's look at these hieroglyphics.  
 Remember Ancient Egyptians had a written language of pictures, yeah? The first  
 hieroglyph is of a falcon, which is representative of who? Does anyone remember?"

465 "Horus," shouts an anonymous voice in the room. She continues writing on the  
 overhead—*Wonder if that's how the writing got on the wall in the temple—H-O-R-U-S. I  
 knew the answer to that question. Why then didn't you say anything?* He converses with  
 himself and dwells on his inaction. He sometimes questions the non-stop activity of his  
 mind. *If you talk to yourself even if it's not out loud is that a sign of being crazy? Talking  
 470 to spirits.* He shakes the thought away by listening more attentively during the lesson.

Now Horus was the sky God, He hears Mark, Roger, and Collin laughing in the  
 desks behind him. He envisions the laughter and the lesson crashing into each other: both  
 pulling at the game of tug war for his concentration. *What could possibly so funny?  
 Doesn't she hear them? Should I tell? I'd just get the others in trouble.* The boys in the  
 475 back always snicker and jeer. Their sense of humor is in toilet jokes and the ooze. *What's  
 worth that much laughter?* He pulls down his shirt. *Maybe it's riding up in the back.* Still  
 muffled chuckles in the back. *Quiet now.* He feels the back of his collar to make sure his  
 shirt is tucked in, and smoothes out the front.

"Hey," calls Roger. His voice is low like that of a conspirator—*Judas. Perhaps  
 480 they wish to include me in the joke. Nothing is more fulfilling than an inside joke.* He  
 immediately feels embraced as one of them; a part of the boyish cult that can shun or

exalt whom they please because they are the cool kids. "Are you a Twinkie or a Ho-Ho?" He looks back to see Mark and Collin each smirking at Roger's questions.

His mind races as he contemplates the choices. *Sweets. Which one do I like more?*  
485 *Both cream filled, one's yellow and the other's brown. Should I be the brown one? Is that what he's expecting?* Should he experience this much anxiety; it's only a question, and it's supposed to be funny. And yet he struggles to find the logic behind it. "What?"

He repeats the question.

"A Ho-Ho" he whispers back afraid to catch the attention of his teacher or his  
490 peers. They all cackle with gleeful enthusiasm, and he knows that they have taken advantage of his naivety. He wishes he could think of a witty remark, and remembers the graffiti scribbled against the wall of the high school. Instead, he chuckles feebly as if he were in on the joke, resenting both them and himself. *A Twinkie or a Ho-Ho?*

Nestor

Fathers are a necessary evil. *When you were young you were the king of carrot flowers...and dad would throw the garbage all across the floor as we would type and learn what each other's bodies were for. And this is the chat room where I knew that I would love you and cyber-sexed as I masturbated on the floor to pictures of that secret place where no one dares to go. And your mom would pray until she was no longer speaking and dad would dream of all the different ways to die...each one a little more than he could dare to try. Blood is thicker than water...the son is drowning in the blood!*

Mucus and unborn children lay together in clumps of white tissues—A modern version of Medea.

Through the wire fence I could see them running. I tried to look inconspicuous as I walked past the team practice. It's too cold to run today, but I wouldn't want the coaches to notice me skipping practice. Not that it would matter—I'm not that good anyways and they know it. Still it's a shame that I won't get the chance to see John in those shorts. Best part of being on the team is lingering slowly behind his ass during the run.

*That's what I call love I bet you'd pick it up and mess around with it if I put it down—I loved this band. Turning up the volume on the click wheel. I looked across the street waiting for the traffic to die down for a moment to jaywalk—The blue jay way. The light takes forever to signal the pedestrian. Please don't be long. Made it to the median strip, but still have to wait for more cars. There are too many cars on the road. People should bike more places. It wouldn't take too long to get where you need to be—estar. I needed to do my Spanish homework as soon as I got home.*

Now the light's red. Crossing the street has become as bad as navigating Scylla  
 25 and Charybdis—*Beware of the beast with seven heads*. I couldn't feel my keys when I pat  
 down my pockets. Damn—I'll have to go around back if I want to get inside. Walking up  
 the driveway I pulled out an old library card from my wallet and gently slid it in between  
 the lock and the edge of the door. Humph—I wonder what the white neighbors will think:  
 “Look at the little black-boy breaking into that house.” We never introduced ourselves  
 30 when we moved into the neighborhood. Who gives a fuck about those Beaver-Cleaver  
 families anyway? Come on fucking card work! Push in gently and press down—be  
 patient...deep breaths—Push in gently and press down. *Pmph*—Finally open. Rubbing  
 my finger on the door I feel the weathered edges of the insulated lining. I have to stop  
 abusing this house.

35 I closed the door and kicked off my shoes on the kitchen's linoleum tile. The little  
 faces in the tessellated pattern frowned and grinned at me from different angles. She gets  
 home at five so I'll have a couple of hours to myself. Looking at the bare shelves I knew  
 she hadn't been shopping. I tossed my backpack to the floor and my homework spilled  
 every which way. Little insect-like books crawled out and I watched as they scampered  
 40 like roaches across the floor. I stepped on some loose papers as they tried to hide under  
 the fridge. I picked up the carcass from the floor to examine my kill. Still writhing, the  
 text on the page shook as I read it.

*I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,*

*On a white heal-all, holding up a moth*

45 *Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth --*

*Assorted characters of death and blight*

50                    *Mixed ready to begin the morning right,  
                          Like the ingredients of a witches' broth --  
                          A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,  
                          And dead wings carried like a paper kite.  
                          What had that flower to do with being white,  
                          The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?  
                          What brought the kindred spider to that height,  
                          Then steered the white moth thither in the night?  
 55                    What but design of darkness to appall?—  
                          If design govern in a thing so small.*

A sonnet. I was the mangled moth who should have been the spider. I flicked on the lights and the linoleum tile path to the fridge became a runway. I strutted my stuff to the photographers on my right and left. *Sashay Shanté!* Yes, hunty! Paris is Burning  
 60      lingered in my mind in those late nights of sneaking films on the DVR. Peppa LaBeija. All I do is pose dahling. Fierce! It's not just a runway; it's a stage with glitter on the floor and a gilded curtain—chocolate drops from the gilded six bits.

65      The refrigerator was as empty as the cabinets. "It looks like it'll be cereal for dinner tonight." Cue the audience's laughter as my close-up appeared on the imaginary screen. A joke at the expense of the camera, but I am alone and the only one laughing. A reoccurring theme in most of my humor, but if you can't laugh at yourself...

There's a picture of me on the fridge, and I wonder if my head was ever really that big? It's hard to imagine that I was once the image in that photo—a different person than I am now. And there he is. He's just standing there not saying anything, but I feel

70 obligated to tell him a story. He's staring at the picture as if he knows it's him, and he has  
a vague certainty that we are connected in some way. "It's a fiction." Benedict  
Anderson—who's he? And maybe he was referencing someone else. Now I'm engaged  
with this child and I'm telling him a story, our story. Of how I got taller, the time I got  
glasses, the time I got contacts, and when we moved out of the apartment. Tracing my  
75 life's events to this other person's life events to show that we are actually the same  
person—Jude Gnomon. *When you were young you were the king of carrot flowers...*

Sitting down in this domestic prison I could remember the last time I spoke to my  
father. *He sat across from me at the table flirting with her.*

"Get ova here girl." She rolls her eyes and I can only imagine that she's as  
80 irritated by his arrogance as I am—*You smug fuck! Stabbing his hand with a fork— He  
always plays the joker because it's an easy role, but I know he's more calculating than  
that.*

"Why she treat me like that Jude? Ya know?" He was trying to be funny but he  
doesn't know me. He's the joke—*and dad would throw the garbage all across the floor*

85 "I don't know."

"Huh-hah."

What kind of laugh was that? It sounded like the mangled cries of someone being  
strangled. He's so disgusting, his feet smell rancid, and his hair has naps. He comes here  
to sleep and then leave money—*Papa was a rolling stone, wherever he laid his hat was*  
90 *his home.* Fathers are necessary evil. He always said, "I made you. Remember that." He  
didn't know anything then, but I knew even less. "God made me," I told him. I was such  
a defiant little brat. Precocious too. The one instance when he was right and I was wrong—

“You know you’re the man of the house when I’m not here.”

“Right.” The man of the house, the man of the house—what does that mean?

95 What if I don’t want to be the man of the house?

I grabbed the remote and turned on the TV. *Oh... who lives in a pineapple under the sea?* The briny water rushes in from all sides of the room and there are obnoxious nautical creatures surrounding me. Talking marine creatures float by. I watched this show when I was younger. It’s another part of the fiction in this unending, seemingly circuitous nature of life. *What are you doing? I lay on the floor legs crossed and waving them like a tail. She sounded so angry. Nothing.* Swimming through the kitchen down to the office cove in the basement. The TV upstairs droned on in the background, and the water leaked out of the room.

I sat down in front of the computer. She had a put a picture of herself on the desktop—as if that were going to stop me. I put the picture face down and logged into my email. There were six new messages in my inbox from my profile on *Adam*. New Message Received December 17—one week till Christmas. Sometimes I felt bad about it. The time that she looked at my arm and saw shallow slices in the skin—*Cuttings. Why she said with tears in her eyes?* She knew the answer then just as she does now, and yet she continues to be an overly religious bitch. I can’t wait until I can graduate and be out of here—*I know why the caged bird sings.*

My mind was consumed by distractions as one window begets another and then one more. At first it’s a search in Google: Men’s underwear. I felt an unsatisfied sense of titillation from hard contours. I argued with my conscious: *Don’t click on the picture.* *Why not?* The picture of my mother mumbles words. The hard wooden desk muffles her

voice—*what was that word mother?* Login. *Blueboxers*. Password: \*\*\*\*\*. Firm oiled chests and abs appear in ads. I scrolled down the screen, and the images assaulted and caressed my eyes—*This urge, wrestle*. I glanced to the stairs. I thought had heard something, but no. It was just my imagination.

120 I looked at the fading scars on my arms from when I punished myself for succumbing to sin—*What saint strained so much?* Pleasure points firmed as his arms wrapped around me. My hand grasped it—*Resurrection of dry sticks*. There were sloppy sweet kisses of saliva, sucking, and nibbling at every orifice and limb. I tossed his hair and he scratched my back. I savored the pungent smell of sweat. Fingers. Mouths.

125 Bodies. Asses. We were together. So close despite the screen and time between us—*In my veins in my bones if feel it*. In that moment I lost control.

*When sprouts break out,*

*Slippery as fish,*

*I quail, lean to beginnings, sheath-wet.*

130 My body was wearied and I sat in a sedimentary state. The figures on the screen were still thrusting and exerting their strength. I grabbed the Kleenex on the floor and cleaned up the mess I had made. *Slam!* Was that a car door? I threw away the tissues, tucked myself back in my fly, and pulled up my jeans. I could hear the key turning in the lock. Oh God she's here! I kept looking at the screen and pressed the close. *Click-click-*

135 *click-click. Windows is Not Responding. Fuck!*

“Jude?!”

I yanked the power cord from the wall and plugged it back. The screen had gone black. I sighed with a bit of relief, but I could feel my heart pounding with anxiety. The blood pumped through my veins and my stomach lost its nerve.

140        “Where are you?”

          “I’m downstairs.”

The TV was still on. I could hear the wood creak as the stairs winced under her weight. She walked slowly down the stairs. She only walked halfway down leaning on the bannister. Her day job had her on her feet, and even from afar I could tell they were  
145 swollen.

          “What are you doing?” she asked.

It wasn’t a question it was the beginning to an interrogation. A bright light shined in my face in a dim lit cell, and she was there to play good cop and bad cop. I felt slightly ashamed, but angry more than anything else.

150        “I’m working on homework,” I uttered. I had pulled out some paper from the printer.

          “What are you working on?” She looked to floor, as if it would give her some clue.

          “This floor is dirty. We have to sweep down here.”

          “It’s an assignment for my Spanish class. I just got started,” I lied. I hoped she thought I sounded calm. My voice had quaked from the adrenaline of hiding my  
155 activities.

          “What did you do when you got home?” She looked me in the eye, and I knew that she knew that she had caught me in a lie. She just didn’t have any proof.

          We made eye contact. “I watched some TV and then took a nap.”

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Her tongue fished in her mouth and she pursed her lips into a frown. I could tell that  
160 she wasn't buying it. She started back up the stairs. Tenderly pacing her steps.

“I bought groceries. Unload the car while I get ready for church. We're leaving at  
quarter till.

She had two sides—*Eve Black and Eve White*. There was the woman who I  
remembered from the past. Sweet kind Christian lady; we could have been distant  
165 relatives of the Huxtables. If only Bill Cosby was my dad. I heard that he had an affair  
and a bastard, so he wasn't too different from my father anyway. Then she could be the  
black Margaret White. *You're not the person I raised...I'm against it because the bible  
says its wrong you're performing outside of your purpose—No more wire hangers!* What  
a bitch.

170 I grabbed the plastic bags from the car. The weight of the bags pinched my fingers as  
I carried the groceries through the door—ouch! *Boys don't cry. Now are you a man or a  
mouse?* I nudged the door open with my foot and let the food collapse on the counter.  
The television had been turned off. The house was silent, except for the sound of the  
shower on the second floor. I opened up the once bare cabinets and piled in boxes and  
175 placed the food into the fridge. *Are you crying? You better not be 'fore I'll give you  
something to cry about.* I hated her then. *I brought you into this world. I'll take you out!*  
Mammy done had enough, but I had to put up with more. There was the time when I tried  
to run away until I realized there was nowhere I could go.

I had finished unpacking food and realized that we wouldn't get a chance to eat  
180 before the service. She would be ready in just a moment and it was nearly time to be at  
the church. I grabbed a cluster of grapes from the bushel, and walked outside to the car. I

sat there in the passenger's seat listening to the radio and tried to piece together some existential bullshit about life's journey. Camus could do something with that Qu'en pensez –vous Monsuier Meursalt? What would I have said at Maman's funeral?

185 She had just closed the door and I saw her stride to the car. She always held her head high as if she had never done anything wrong. Her hair bounced in curls around her neck as she walked. She wore a black top underneath a red cotton cardigan. Her pants were pressed with a strong crease, and her entire appearance exuded control. Her gait in her black kitten heels was bit of a waddle. She was large, but that was what I loved most  
190 about her. The corpulence of her fleshy body was the one quality that contrasted the stoic perfection of her attire. We cuddled when I was younger and I remember nestling against the warmth of her plumpness.

She adjusted her clothes as she neared the car like she still was unsatisfied with her polished appearance. Had her feet marched to Jerusalem? I was half in love with her until  
195 I remembered that I was mad at her for a million inexplicable, but all valid reasons. I turned off the music. The last thing I want to hear is her complaining about my music.

“Unlock the door,” she orders. I pressed the button to let her inside.

“Give me the keys we're running late for the service.” I handed her the keys and turned the ignition switch. We rode in silence. What was there for either of us to say?

200 “Brush your hair.” She nodded to the brush in the cup-holder and I ran it across my hair. Nappy naps in the old oak tree.

I couldn't understand. Why did everything she said offend me? Or, why every question she asked sounded like an accusation? Was my defensiveness a response to guilt? And if so, what did I have to be guilty of? Is there anything unnatural in my

205 desires? All I wanted was to intimately love and be loved in the same way. If my feelings were projected on to a woman would they be justified? This feeling of confusion stood me up and then knocked me down. Had I lost my guide of right and wrong? I feel isolated. There is no one to talk to, nor anyone who would want to listen. What else can I do, but slip into the shadows and molest my innocence with images of copulation and  
210 heaving and heavy breathing.

I choked on the stifling silence of our quiet car ride. The soundlessness was the product of obligation, and duty, and the fear of others expectations of who I am or what I should be. Why wouldn't she confront me with sensitivity? Why doesn't she understand that although I'm different I'm still the same person? The first time that she found out she  
215 was angry, and shouting, and scary. The next incident she was weepy and sad, and I was remorseful, and embarrassed, and shamed. Both times there were tears from her and me more confusion, aggression, and sad dark feelings. I sunk into myself and discovered a deeper depravity than anything else I could have fathomed.

I had always felt ugly. White faces are wherever you go. Even now black people are  
220 stigmatized in the media and everywhere else. Pretty girls never looked at me, but that was ok. How could they when with bodies like Grecian sculpture sauntered through the halls and classrooms, the wrestling mats and the football fields, the cafeteria and the library. I didn't look like them my body was gangly and gaunt. My limbs were sinewy with barely a shred of muscle. My forehead was plagued with feverish acne, one of my  
225 front teeth was slightly crooked, and I had dark raw sienna Crayola skin. My hair coiled in short tight black curls, not the long flowing tresses of the boys with blond chestnut

locks. The thought that being gay was an act of cowardice occasionally crossed my mind. Maybe I wasn't man enough to be a man for a woman.

The only time I felt beautiful was when I was talking with someone through a screen.

230 In an instant message I could be whoever I wanted to be. I could sleep with anyone I wanted to have, and act out any fantasy I could have imagined with equally over-sexed individuals who were probably lying about themselves too. All my friends at school were coupled in heterogeneous pairs of boyfriends and girlfriends. I, the lone girl-boy stuck in the closet, tried to vicariously act out these binaries through their relationships. Virginit

235 had felt like a burden, but the consequence of sex had even greater repercussions for my emotions, anxiety, and passion.

We met over the Internet. First pictures were exchanged, next numbers, and then a date. He was man with a beautiful face, a beautiful physique, pale-rosey skin, and hazel eyes. No brown—I can't remember. I think he may have been in his thirties. Most likely

240 thirty-four. That seems right. I lied to my mother to meet him for a few hours. His hair was thinning a bit, but his body was fit. We swarmed together in his hotel room like a hornet nest. I could still remember the sting of his thorn. Playful bites and kisses. I missed him. What was his name again? Stephen—no. Patrick! Yes! I wondered what he was doing now, and who he might be with. Or, is it: whom he might be with? We never

245 spoke after our encounter. The muscles in his arms cradled me as he collapsed into my body. I was not his first and he had not been my last. It was a NSA encounter between a young boy and an older man—whippings and spittle.

We arrived at the building and the large plain glass windows of the exterior had a glare from the setting sun. For a moment I was Moses standing on Mt. Horeb, or was it

250 Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. The glint from the sun's reflection was the figure of "THE GREAT I AM," too magnificent to be looked upon by human eyes. When I was younger I thought that maybe God was a glowing sphere with at least six billion eyes one for every human. The church was a part of a rental complex and on either side there was a storage facility and a bank. Jesus should have left his seat at the

255 divine right to smite the solicitors closing in on the holy ground. I had always seen churches with beautiful stained glass windows, huge steeples, decoration at the thresholds, and wondered why we had to choose an office space. Would Jerusalem have been built amongst these satanic mills?

"Now say hello to everyone when we get inside." Her last command—do this, do

260 that. One of the ushers, Mr. Hamilton, stood at the door and opened it as we walked in. I had known him and his two sons since I was in grade school. His younger son was about my age and was always stoned, and his older son had left for college. No one spoke of Mr. Hamilton's wife. She never came to church except for the important holidays like Christmas and Easter.

265 "Welcome." He seemed so genuinely excited by our presence. I shook his hand and replied: "It nice to see you Mr. Hamilton."

The lush colors of cerulean and saffron project a sense of opulence. A monitor hung on the wall across from the entrance, and in between a series of slides playing there was a line of scripture. Revelations 3:1, "I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being

270 alive, but you are dead." It was a jab towards me—the closeted fag. It frustrated me to see that even though I didn't believe in any of those words there was a lining of truth to them.

Luxury gilded the building's interior with the exception of some peeling wallpaper and plastic plants. Praise music played at a subliminal volume throughout the hall. Two women, Mrs. Welles and Ms. Michaels, plastered in make-up were the next to greet us.

275 Mrs. Welles was a new member. She and her husband had made it their duty to become involved in every aspect of the church. If the minister had to blow his nose she would hold the tissue and her husband would spoon-feed him the cough syrup.

“Well hello!” said Mrs. Welles with an almost unbelievable sense of enthusiasm.

280 “Hi.” I wanted to laugh from her campy greeting, which made my forced smile into an authentic one. We embraced and then I turned to face Ms. Michaels.

“Hello my friend.” She always spoke as though she were reciting a Maya Angelou poem. Every time she saw me she would say that I reminded her of her nephew.

“Hello Ms. Michaels. How's Brian?” She was in her fifties, and, though I never asked, I wondered why she had never married.

285 “Oh you're so polite to ask. He's doing well.” I noticed mother from my peripheral vision beaming with pride from Ms. Michaels compliment, a testament to her parenting, while she spoke with Mrs. Welles. She seethed esteem from my actions in public, but I knew my private conduct would either disappoint or humiliate her.

290 “I got something for you,” said Ms. Michaels. She foraged through her clutch to retrieve a crisp twenty-dollar bill. She must have thought I was good Christian boy, who was well behaved and never committed any egregious sin.

“Thank you.” We hugged firmly, and her perfume reminded me of pure nard. Why was she so gracious? I appreciated her charity, but I was unworthy of it. I was too proud to accept it, and still too humble to say no thank you.

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295        My mother walked ahead of me into the sanctuary as I proceeded on a death march to the judgment that awaited me. I smiled and waved to members of the congregation. How would they feel if I told them about the real me—my mother would die on the spot. I had ostracized myself within this community. This place, which had once felt like home, was now a lion’s den and I was Daniel.

300        As I crossed the threshold of the sanctuary I saw rows of chairs tightly arranged like a game of Tetris. My eyes winced at the stage lights beaming from above the pulpit. I glanced at cameras positioned in different areas of the room. I felt like I entered one of those disgusting televised court shows. The judge is a comedian and both the plaintiff and defendant are caricatures meant to entertain the vapid masses that watch daytime TV.

305        A disembodied voice began to speak as images of doves, baptisms, and nimbuses float around a screen. “Welcome to the courtroom of Christ’s Sanctuary where our Pastor the Honorable Emanuel Cyrus preaches the word of God. The parables are real and the word is final.” The bailiffs opened the door to the sanctuary and usher the congregation to their seats. They aid the elderly members to the seats in the pews. My mother smiles at  
310 the bailiff and I shook his hand as he escorted us to our seats. The camera pans as the opening credits play in the background.

      The church secretary took her position as the stenographer’s table and the camera cut to the self-appointed church mother Ms. Bea Wilson. She hits the keys in an ecstasy of religious obligation.

315        I watched the congregation rise as the choir walked the steps to the pulpit. Their idiosyncratic costumes echoed one another. Each one took the stand to sing his or her testimony. The keyboardist played the electric keyboard, and the hymn lyrics came on the

screens hanging on either side of the room. Mrs. Welles stood front and center as the chorus of voices rose in theatrical vocal performance. “JESUS!” They bobbed and  
320 swayed in unison, welcoming the court to praise. I watched as the women raised their hands, bowed their heads in worship, and echoed each other in a chorus of hallelujahs. “Enter his courts with thanksgiving...” I heard the music, but I did not listen. I read the lyrics on the screen, but I would not sing. I shuffled my feet, but I would not even mouth the words. There were moments when the cameras would catch a glimpse of me on the  
325 screen, and I tried my best to ignore it.

The camera zoomed in on each member of the choir and caught the detail in their royal blue and gold robes. After they had finished the choir took their seats, and silence swept over congregation. The next person to take the stand was the pastor’s wife. She gracefully ascends steps of the pulpit her petite hand escorted by the bailiff.

330 “Good evening,” she said. “Welcome members and visitors. I am glad to see you all here tonight for our Wednesday night bible study, which happens every week at 6:30. We also have two services every Sunday morning at nine and eleven. Next Sunday there will only be one service to celebrate Christmas. It will be a day of celebration and fun, so encourage others to attend.” I could only concentrate on how her dress glittered in the  
335 lighting.

The stenographer pounded each key with a quick stroke of her finger. “And now,” said the Pastor’s wife, “Here comes your man of God to instruct in the word, Emanuel Cyrus.”

340 “All rise for the Honorable Pastor Cyrus,” said the bailiff. The entire congregation rose to its feet as a short man in a three-piece suit entered from a side doorway. He

strutted past the front row touting a bible firmly in his right hand. The pulpit was the Judge Bench. He cloaked himself in a black robe and took the wooden gavel in his free hand. "The court is now in session." I was now on the defense.

345 "Soaring to greatness through service. Prayer is man giving God the legal right and permission to intervene in his life."

"Amen. "

"Yes sir."

I could have choked on the affirmation and pompous cheers of applause at his vapid words—Service or servitude?

350 "...Prayer is man giving heaven an earthly license to influence the earth..."

I was the defendant and in the plaintiff and moved from my seat in the bullpen to the bar. "And when does that license expire?"

"Prayer is the only way to get God involved in your life..."

"If only it was that easy to make him go away."

355 "...You have to learn to serve others in order to soar to greatness. Luke 9:46-88.

The least of you: the one who is willing to lower the opinion of himself in order to serve others. The enemies of serving: selfishness, pride, arrogance, unbridled ambition, and deception. The attitude of serving is humility. Faith means I don't see nothing, but I do whatever the word says. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 says we must be trustworthy stewards of

360 God's mysteries. We are all entrusted with something. We are servants of God. The secret things: revelation from the word..."

"Know God's promises since for them there is no need to know the unknowable."

“...Skip down to Matthew 25:24-30. The characteristics of a good servant:  
faithful...pays close attention to detail...committed to the cause of serving...” 1 Samuel  
365 7:3, Jeremiah 29:13, Ephesians 6:7—Serve as if you are serving God because you know  
he will reward you...”

“Obligation versus appreciation, which is the sacrifice?”

“...Who are we in Christ? Without knowing who we are we will not be able to  
recognize the enemy. 1 Corinthians 1:30 : Because of Jesus God has given us wisdom.  
370 We are servants to one another in Christ. Jesus died for, though not excluding other  
reasons, fellowship. Galatians 5:13 Called us to be free. Friends of God and servants to  
one another. How do you serve? Serve with love. Fruit of the spirit: Galatians 5:22-23 .  
Cannot produce any of these without the spirit. Ability to serve is the ability in the  
strength of God. Philippians 2:14: Do not grumble...”

375 “Have no opinion then, and sacrifice any ideas and integrity? God owns  
everything while his servants scrap for any intangible spiritual matter they might receive.  
I remembered my mother once with tears in her eyes as she held two pennies. *Jude do  
you remember the story from Luke 21? The widow gave two small copper coins and Jesus  
said that she had given more than all the rest because they had given out of their wealth  
380 but she had given all she had.* Even then it didn't make sense.”

“...Proverbs 3:9, ‘Honor the Lord with your wealth, then your "barns" will be  
filled, so much that you may be a blessing to others. This emphasized in 2 Corinthians  
9:7—Do not give reluctantly or under compulsion... You will be made rich so that you  
may be generous to others...”

385            “There is a difference between thinking rationally and being humble. It does not  
require submission or deliberately lowering one's self on the hopes that a supernatural  
being will raise them up at some indeterminate future date in this life or the next. It's a  
perverse contract. How many of these people know the full terms of that contract? If they  
agree to those terms then they are obligated to follow them; however if they disagree in  
390 the efficacy of those terms one has the right to petition for change, or end such contract.”

“...The purpose of serving is to make other people successful...”

“Why not go after your own success rather than rely on others?”

“... Write this down. A characteristic of a server: dedication. Set yourself apart and  
attach yourself to the interests of others. As a Christian your interests should be attached  
395 to the word of God... Don't say yes to serve to just to please others. Say yes to serving  
the LORD with a spirit of excellence...”

*“Rationale, reason, would give you the information you need to clearly decide the  
terms of an agreement. If those terms would cause you to sacrifice your ethics, a  
compromise, then do not do it. Think selfishly with concern to your own interest. Do not  
400 think of others first for status or approval unless it is out of self-gratification. ”*

“...A true server gives God the glory...”

“The belief in any sort of higher power displays a psychological weakness, and  
it's only exhibited by individuals who are unable to deal with reality on their own  
through reason and the power of their minds.”

405            “... Turn with me now to Acts 2:42, "Devote yourself to others...”

“Religions have so many contradictions. They are all an anti-life philosophy built  
on collectivism and altruism: sacrificing for the interests of others.

“...What are things that can get in the way of serving properly? Luke 10:38-42.

Notice what the word says. Martha was too busy that she couldn't see what was most  
410 important...”

Supposedly, Martha did not have an established hierarchy of values. She valued  
Jesus as her highest value, but really her need to be acknowledged for her sense of  
humility was her greatest value. In Christ we are servants to one another we are servants  
to one another in Christ. The Old Testament story of the widow and her son who had no  
415 oil or food What man of god would ask her to give up the validity of her mind to give  
him all that she had on his behalf. Him! A stranger! Seeking altruism, the sacrifice of  
another on his behalf, all on the dim hope that he would come through. We'll it wouldn't  
be me! Might be she, but it won't be me!

“You need patience to wait for the fulfillment of God's promise...”

420 “This is the problem with religion and all mysticism. You deny the validity of  
your mind on the hope, emotion, belief, or better yet figment of your imagination that  
what you desire will "manifest" through some supernatural power: faith. When these  
things do eventually manifest you attribute it to God, but you will realize that you have  
done all the work. If you do not have a job then you won't be able to receive money.  
425 Asking God for money isn't going to help your finances, nor will giving away a tenth of  
your paycheck if you already have a job. God will not get you a job, but applying for one  
will.”

“You don't have the right to say no to God because a believer is a doer of the  
word...”

430           “Why would faith require any action if you know that god will do it for you? It's because the schemers who created the religion knew that you had to do the work and accrediting it to some supernatural being supports their flawed ideology.”

          “...1 Corinthians 1:18—God never says no, you just asked a miss...”

          “God neither answers no nor yes because he is not there to respond. "How long,"  
435 this is a question we all will ask and the Mystics will indignantly say, "How dare you?" and "That's doubt! That's unbelief!" Acts of intimidation, making man feel immoral in a reasonable response. However, man will accept this condemnation because he has been told that God is always right, that the bible is never wrong. Why is it innate that man does not want God to tell him what to do, and that he is inherently flawed from original sin?

440 Asking right is an excuse for the Mystics to claim why prayers are unanswered, but there's no one there to answer them. Any one that wants to be rational will see that this is true.”

          “If you don't know what to say then just shut up...”

          “This is a primary argument for faith, which really means to ignore reason and  
445 rely on blind emotion.”

          “2 Corinthians 1:20 God wants glory...”

          “Glory is not what man should want as his ultimate goal not from god or anyone else. To seek the approval of other men is to him a sacrificial animal without a mind of his own.”

450           “1 Timothy 6:12 "Fight the good fight of faith...”

“Fight the good fight of reason. It is impossible deal with an irrational person. They are motivated whims and emotions, neither of which is a primary bases for actions or establishing values.”

455 “When you search for your purpose in life go to God because he is alpha and omega, he knows the beginning and the end...”

“The end is the beginning is the end. Man should ask himself what is his purpose in life. He should choose a career that will bring him happiness. In turn for his personal and selfish ambitions he may benefit others, but that is only a secondary not a priority. He plans his life to that career for a lifetime of goals. Man's reason is not infallible, nor is he  
460 omniscient in fact it is because of these things that he must be rational and use his sense of reason.”

My appeals had fallen on deaf ears as they were slain in the spirit. Women convulsed and shouted and orgasmic like display. Each one a pythia got higher on a noxious display of religious enthusiasm. I sat in a row of chairs, not in a courtroom, but  
465 inside what felt like a prison. They had condemned before I had even committed a crime, and I felt like a character in a Kafka novel. This place, which had been called a temple, felt like a cell. I was a blinded Samson because I was weakened by my vulnerabilities, the result of my lust but I still had enough power to break the pillars of this temple. I wondered who were the Judges of the Ancient Israelites. Were their gavels buried in the  
470 sands of antiquity? The verdict had been guilty. My punishment was the self-inflicted silence and shame, and my sentence was to last for life. The crime is life itself and the desire to know. Knowledge had been the first sin. How else were they to discern between

good and evil? Could the people in this room tell the difference? They applauded homophobic rhetoric and praised rituals that dated over two thousand years ago.

475           Most frustrating of all was that I agreed with a lot of what was in that book—the simple things. Things that made sense like not killing people, or coveting others, or loving your mother and father. I glanced over to the right to see what my mother’s reaction was to the pandemonium I had witnessed. She looked sad, but I supposed she always did. Her sadness wasn’t one of depression; instead, it seemed like more like she  
480 was tired. It was the expression of a soul that had been broken. And yet, there was a faint shadow of hope in the darkness of her eyes. As if at any moment she would cry in absolution and then rejoice. I knew that she was wise and intelligent. She was too smart to be anybody’s fool. If she believed then I should too, but I couldn’t anymore. How could the world be made in seven days; how could a man live past three hundred years:  
485 how could anyone walk on water, or be raised from the dead.

I was distracted by the zigzag pattern on the chairs, the wigs of the women in the front row, and a few kids who had started to fall asleep. If I tried that she’d pinch me and give me a look of intimidation. I had heard I ought to fear God when I was younger, and I remember being very afraid. Any act was egregious enough to send me to Hell at the last  
490 judgment, or be left behind in the rapture of some post-apocalyptic world. I was scared then and now along with feeling guilty and ashamed. As the Pastor prayed they bowed their heads with their eyes closed, and in an act of rebellion I tilted my chin north and scanned the sanctuary throughout the prayer.

“Amen.” They said as he finished. The jury has spoken.

Proteus

I stand here in the middle of the room hating everybody around me and myself as the music blasts and conversation flows it seems like an out of body experience where I am watching myself talking to this girl and even though I can barely hear what she's saying

5 over the loud beat of the music that makes both the floor and the walls shake I'm not listening to what she's saying her mouth moves and I can't tell whether she's singing the lyrics to the song that's playing or telling me about her major. Ouch. Somebody bumps into me and doesn't apologize I'm not assertive enough to make a big deal out of it whatever maybe he just didn't see me I am wrapped in a state of holy solitude despite

10 being in a room crowded with people and solo cups and cheap beer and with giggly girls and bitchy girls and horny boys all with slingshots to aim at birds which is when I thought about him again as if I could ever get him off my mind I keep trying to tell myself that I didn't love him but that wasn't the truth obviously I had been with other men before who could make it past high school and still be a virgin but there had never

15 been anyone like him before he was so beautiful he's still mad at me and I am mad at him for being upset without a good reason and I remember how selfish he is and how he snubbed me the last time I saw him in person by pretending I didn't exist as he walked by my desk at work the little fucker I smile at the girl whose name I forgot as soon as she said it Nice to meet you I'm going to go find my friends I walk out the room and the

20 hallway is just as packed with girls and boys and boygirls and girlboys who all want to know which room the drink is in and whether I'm a brother Yeah are you rushing Yea he says that's cool man I point him in the direction of the rush chair and keep moving through a series of insincere greetings and conversations I haven't seen you all semester

have you done the homework lets not talk about work tonight you're right but she grades  
25 so much harder than I would have expected will you go to the bars tonight probably you  
look good thanks you too I like that headband thanks I made it myself you're such a  
hipster can we be best friends yeah oh my god I love you have you been to the dance  
floor yet no but it's always the same a bunch of hot sweaty grinding and there he was in  
my thoughts grinding in between his thighs in his room I felt like a real adult when he  
30 held me in his arms but reminded me of how much of a child I really was ok I'll see you  
later add me on Facebook alright everyone here seems too excited to be genuinely happy  
cards, cards I heard someone shout as I walked passed rooms they were playing kings  
over there and quarters over there laughing loud and clapping each other on the back I  
walk to downstairs and the volume of the music mixed with conversation and loud slutty  
35 clothing becomes deafening fuck me fuck me unf is all I can make out in the boom-boom  
of the bass lights, colors, pink, and blue in and out of sound music transcendental fire  
neon *ineluctable* shoe gazing pivots and sways bodies on bodies in a Bacchus of self  
satisfied young people from affluent homes and nothing better to do on a weekend night  
and I was just as guilty as every other indulgent person here but I still judge the messy  
40 girl vomiting in the bathroom and couple having sex in the corner of the dance floor an  
exhibition that rear ends decency in the back door music glows ears ring fingers hands  
hash smell shouting song lyrics with people on the floor something about diamonds  
something about being young laughing out loud with my friends but in daze in which  
only I know the punch line the laughter is cathartic and anonymous but I still feel crazy  
45 like Cadet Rousselle spinning on roulette table the size of Ferris wheel I want to call you  
so that we could resolve our relationship and so that I can find some closure, I don't feel

that I can express myself fully in texting so I have to leave you a message please listen to the whole thing or call me back I won't mind repeating myself I've had some time to evaluate our relationship since we haven't seen or spoken to each other in a few weeks

50 and I feel that what we had has come to an end I'm not sure I can call it a relationship without your consent or approval of that being what it was I want to apologize to you for anything that I may have done wrong or made you upset or feel awkward I understand that you're busy I am as well but it disappoints me that you haven't had the time to have a conversation to hash out the details of why our relationship has dissolved I need you

55 and yet I want to say that I don't I'm sandwiched in between two couples boygirllirgyob combination and both of the guys have their backs towards me and I feel the heat and the sweat from their bodies and the one on the left has blonde hair and I anticipate a punch in the face if I ever so slightly graze his ass with the palm of my hand but I do it anyway in a perverse bravery and it feels so warm and I'm hard in an instant just one more chance to

60 kiss the plum mellow yellow smellow melons of his rump like the times done before I can still remember each plump melonous hemisphere as I had mapped each one with my tongue in provocative osculation and my finger like Lewis and Clark and we had been like Bert and Ernie the last time he spoke to me directly was in a text "I am disenchanted with you as a person" It also disappoints me that we can't still be friends I felt that our

65 connection was more than romance but that we had also developed a friendship I shared things with you that I would normally keep private and I made myself vulnerable by investing so much in our relationship someone put a cup and my hand it was better than beer so I drank it because I was bored and wanted to forget but also to remember I wish we could have had a conversation where we could have worked out our differences

70 whatever they may have been when I said that I loved you I meant it now my horizon is  
broken in a drunken stupor I fell and look as messy as everyone someone should clean up  
that spill I understand that you have commitments and obligations but it seems unfair that  
I have to wait until its convenient for you before I can have a resolution it saddens me  
that you may not feel the same way anymore, but I would like if we could talk to each  
75 other and hang out and have it not be awkward, I want to respect your space and give you  
time to find the clarity that I feel that I have reached so I'll wait for you to meet me  
halfway I just want to end this by saying that I don't love you anymore in the way that I  
thought but I do still value you as a person and a friend and even though our relationship  
may be over I'd like to know that we're still cool I wish you the best and I hope that  
80 you're happy goodbye I keep trying to reenact scenes from a Patrick Marbury play why  
isn't love enough no one will ever love you as much I do I'm the one who leaves I'm  
supposed to leave still debating whether or not I want to speak to him at work sometimes  
I casually walk past his workspace glance through the window stalkerish it's the worst  
when you can't escape someone at your job but I so desperately want to run into him in  
85 this aggressive romantic comedy in which I am the writer director and star of the film and  
each scene represents a new layer of hell in which I am guided by a Dante figure who is  
actually me too in a narcissistic world kinda like in cartoons where small demon and  
angel versions of a character will pop up on their shoulder and offer good and bad advice  
just run up to him and kiss him and have your friend play the blue guitar while you sing  
90 to him he'll be wowed into forgiveness and the entire office will beam with applause in a  
standing ovation of the proclamation of your love I walk out of the building holding on to  
wall rough scratchy brink and then I realized that I'm deeply neurotic and overly

sensitive I read too much into things that make little to no difference body language tone  
and sarcasm I stifle the interpretation of others in a blundering means to express myself  
95 instead of saying what I think or how I feel taciturn cold hidden layers there's so much I  
want to say and yet I only get half of it across because I'm afraid of being honest or  
because this is how I think that I should act or be because that's what I saw in a show or  
in a movie and forget that real life isn't scripted and yet I wish that it was so that I could  
know what was happening or how to react with witty comebacks instead of sitting days  
100 later still thinking about the situation and what I could have said differently that would  
have been amusing or made them contemplate their place and yet I feel intensely sad  
because I realize I'm going to be alone forever and I've already spent so much time by  
myself I pat my pockets in search of my phone I'm losing things again it's a sign that I'm  
going crazy. I'm feeling depressed and trying not to show it I have to leave this place I  
105 need to go home and I gotta leave looking over my shoulder I see the lights and the dance  
floor and hear the music of the ritual that dates back to antiquity with sweat and flesh and  
wine and sex there's a rush of cool air from the chill night that makes me shiver I left my  
coat behind I'll get it tomorrow and then my friend appears and I try to smile it's a feeble  
one but he looks like he might be on something so he probably couldn't tell either way  
110 Hey Hey How are you Fine you Coming down From what Shrooms and I laughed  
because it seemed absurd but this is real life And how does it feel It was very he pauses  
as he thinks for the right word interesting I was very high on life *Or whatever we call that  
which we are and feel* I was with Rudy and we were seeing incredible things we watched  
the sunset and were listening to Pink Floyd Yeah Yes and it's clear to me that Pink Floyd  
115 was tripping shrooms *The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters bearing branches of*

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*enchanted stems* it was incredible and we experienced light and color and time and the sun we were walking around the woods around campus and when we came back we went to my room and turned off the lights and just listened to music fish the grateful dead *and I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness* There was a big difference

120 from when I was at the peak and I was riding the peak down but can still feel it With dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol And we just talked about the most ridiculous things like warm rain and cool rain and puddles Have you ever had a bad trip Once if you're ever gonna trip make sure you're in a good place I was going deeper and deeper down the rabbit hole honestly there's no other way to describe it other than I was

125 going insane *Yacketayakking a lost battalion of Platonic conversationalist jumping off windows out of the moon* I'm going to sleep *Eating lotos by day falling asleep in a half-dream we will wander no more* I'll see you later man Yea thinking about what he said made me curious and I wondered why he does it and why I do what I do and how come I feel the way I feel prowling around the internet looking for pornography and sex Are you

130 a twinkie or a ho-ho stupid things that you remember from childhood guess I'm both now and I'd to eat them both and get fat because no one is going to see me naked anytime soon walking past the bars I could see everyone inside having a good time and I checked my phone to see what time it was barely midnight the night was still young someone had sent me a tweet #And they're all in fifties costumes, and the man in the mirror who kills

135 himself with a gun on our way to go bowling. Ironic, right? I saw myself in the mirror and yet it wasn't me the vision is false he might try to tell me like when I dreamt and I would make the nightmares lucid so that I could take control and yet I'm still all over the place because my mind is or has always believed what it was told and I had never been

smart enough to take off the veil that was tied around my eyes as a child it was too strong  
140 to deny because it was disguised as love but really was to instill fear what am I afraid of  
going to hell living in a wasteland of torture and pain alone in blackness where I couldn't  
see a familiar face when I read the bible as a child I memorized verses and chapters  
expecting an outward change but it did nothing but perpetuate years of shame and self-  
indignation that led to mutilation and tears and further isolation I remembered listening to  
145 records in a room on fire hiding from the Nazis that were pounding at the attic door and  
when I left the room reality was seen through the transparent glass behind which I was  
only an observer never a participant I watched as I ran up walls, and cursed at everyone  
in a deep scary voice that did not match its host, the violent seizures the ran through the  
body whenever this other being forced me to touch myself and afterwards I felt like I did  
150 something dirty seizures like the time Lola had one and there were no adults and I didn't  
know what to do she had shaken, kept shaking, and was mumbling, her eyes vacant and  
her body tense. She released a stream of liquid that soiled her clothes and the carpet, and  
I wanted to retreat but I was afraid to leave her because she was family and also I was  
afraid to be blamed we were just watching TV when it happened and what scared me the  
155 most was that one day it could happen to me I never wanted to be responsible for anyone  
else again and I couldn't stop looking at her with this arrogant combination of fear and  
disgust where had the kindness of my heart gone it was then that I should have known  
that I had some deficiency in relating to others which is why it never worked out between  
us had I lost all my goodness so young thank god they were there to pacify her come on  
160 Lola, you can fight this, com'on back brothers always know what to say but I was never  
one to fraternize My foot is wet from walking through a puddle in spot where I had my

spill I wasn't even drunk so I had nothing to blame the accident on except my own  
stupidity when I hit my head on the sidewalk and went into seizures and then I bled to  
death and came back to life but it took less than three days and about five or six stitches  
165 now that they've healed I cant remember the number anymore the puddle went onto the  
man-made lake on campus and standing at the edge I can barely see my reflection in the  
black magic liquid beneath my eyes shone back at me in the dim light like a juju-man  
from some creole bog I know that its deep enough to drown in I could get some stones  
and bathe myself like Virginia Woolf the water felt cold against my skin and as I walked  
170 I lost my footing and slid deeper my pants are tight but I feel them billowing slightly I as  
submerge deeper into the calm pool ripple-less current-less body of water when it goes  
into my mouth I choke on the bitter taste that is a mixture of dirt and lichen I snort as it  
enters my nose and tingles the little hairs on the inside of my nostrils I close my eyes but  
can feel my contacts dislodging from beneath the lids he was mad at me still I was guilty  
175 until proven innocent and now I am both the judge executioner and criminal it's a sin to  
kill a mockingbird let the dead bury the dead the dead watching snow fall from a  
windowpane in Ireland my apologies meant nothing it's too little too late things will  
never be as they were before and before it wasn't that great seizures she came back as  
quickly as she faded a lady Lazarus she came back, but I knew it was still inside her and  
180 still in my dreams inside of me how will the crowd react when they fish my lifeless body  
out the water its one act for me but it's a performance that wont leave a dry eye in the  
house he'll be there and maybe then he'll be sorry why he'll ask was I so unkind to him  
and everyone will say he seemed so normal everything looked fine from the outside I  
gasp for air looking down at the juju-man in the water he has let me live but I'm too self

185 absorbed to actually do the deed as I walk away from the water there are still demons in  
my hair when I remember climbing into his mother's bed did you have a bad dream she  
would ask as we cuddled poor but happy when all we had was each other amor matris  
now I have no one but she still has god her embrace was the comfort I needed then but  
run from now in an escape from fire and brimstone and prophecies of ruin and  
190 abomination and what will people think I was always fearful to say out loud what my  
unconscious mind weaved in the linings of my head and illustrated on the canvas of my  
psyche to speak it is to give it life yet when I see them now in waking visions or night  
terrors there is nowhere to run and no one to whom I could run I have to face these fears  
alone in the darkness of the morning armed with nothing but streetlights and the faint  
195 glow of my cell phone I was afraid of possession yet it never seemed like I had any  
authority demons had always seemed the most real of any supernatural entity even more  
so than god still I am haunted by my own impotence to fight against the malevolent and  
ethereal and my only weapon would be Jesus Jesus Jesus I would say over again in my  
sleep until my mumblings became a shout and ended as I woke to the sound of my own  
200 voice my childhood was a repetition of scriptures and an affirmation of the power of  
words and confession the pastor would say confession brings possession but I am already  
possessed and there are spirits all around us in every subtle nuance and unintentional  
perversion I spent so much time in the sanctuary from infancy and till now and when I  
told her I did not believe first she was silent and looked at me in disbelief but it is the  
205 only way I can make sense of the world otherwise I would always be afraid of every  
bump in the dark and it's the only way to make sense of myself but she wouldn't  
understand and she drilled me with questions about why and she was mad and I couldn't

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defend myself with words so I stood there and took the abuse then I should have run  
away to Thebes but I would have had to slay my father and run back into my mother's  
210 arms asking her to hit me again and insult me spare the rod and spoil the child I know  
that she loves me because the pain she causes is better than the neglect of indifference I  
hated dreaming then and I still do it's when I'm most helpless and alone Jude will sleep  
no more following that blade that dagger that knife Macbeth and Duncan and the lady  
and the witches Hecate an atheist haunted demons in a noumenal universe existing both  
215 in and out of a spiritual limbo I the Gnomon and the nomadic no-man and noumenon and  
I'm sad stay awake eyes burning and warm salty streams scorch my sweaty face because  
she was yelling and she wouldn't stop yelling and crying and her face looked like death  
and anxiety and fear and crazy and she was angry and she hurt my feelings you're dying  
in front of me I didn't respond either I'm the liar or you are which one of us is the liar I  
220 would have never had you, you don't have a mother or a father if you come out to the  
family I will move to another country this moral degradation I would rather you be a bum  
on the streets are you going to get married I don't know so you engage in casual sex I  
don't know you well do you think everybody else at that church is still waiting for  
marriage I don't want to talk to you then don't talk me to then shut up shut up I don't  
225 want to sneak around but what other choice did I have dust to dust ashes to ashes we all  
fall down you're not the person I raised I'm against it because the bible says its wrong  
you're performing outside of your purpose outside your function I don't respect your  
opinions or beliefs, I could have helped you but you lied to me, there is a demon in you, I  
don't accept you and I will never and I never will, you only need me for money, our  
230 relationship down the road will split, you don't have to love me, what you do is

disgusting to me, I imagine you with another man and I want to vomit, when I find a man  
attractive I think he probably thinks he is too eww gross, all this for sex, what's the  
difference between having sex with an animal or masturbating, how can two people of  
the same gender have intercourse, you're confused, you've let other people tell you who  
235 you are, I can tell that you're ashamed or feel guilty of something, you're so young and  
you feel like you have all the answers I'm gay I wish you wouldn't say that every time  
you say that I feel like someone has poured kerosene all over me and lit a match, the  
majority of people agree with me and the way I feel did you think I was going to stay the  
same person forever mother give me that kind word Stephen there is no kind word to be  
240 given and if it is possible to receive could it be understood sobbing sob can't breathe I  
hadter breathing too quick cough hater hate her hate tears dribbling salty taste sobbing,  
cough fuck fucking cunt I hate her and him too where are you simba's dad died a hero  
and you are a monkey's uncle which makes me a gorillas step son a bunch of black apes  
one stupid silverback man and an annoying kid genius too smart for a chimp ape shit  
245 Diddy Kong Donkey Kong jackass my father and I and when I grew up people were  
always telling me how intelligent I am and I bought into their compliments because I  
liked the attention and I liked the adulation but I couldn't understand how someone so  
simple could be the fountain from which I was spawned I know I'm smart but am I really  
above average why do I judge him so harshly he spoke funny because of where he grew  
250 up and everything he said could have used better annunciation muffa or mother boat or  
bolt sans or science and I wonder what my mother ever saw in him I wonder what I ever  
saw in him as a child he was my hero and I idolized him and I thought it was her fault  
that he had left and then I realized that it was his choice and I found out it was because he

couldn't say no to anything in a dress that's how I became Isaac yet outnumbered by  
255 Ishmaels I was the one that was sacrificed on the altar but there was no ram or angel in  
the bush to spare me my fate because he spent all his time with them and I couldn't  
understand why he loved their family more since we were better than them their mother  
was a crackhead addicted to everything I could imagine drink cock drugs and so they  
needed him I guess but it still doesn't seem fair and even with all her problems he kept  
260 falling into her womb and in another year or two there would be another Ishmael and  
another till the children of Ham and the nephilim and demigods and they had everything  
and I had nothing by my intellect but its not even that which has stagnated my  
relationship with a painfully deep neurosis that borders on an unhealthy narcissism  
caused by a deep sensitivity to whatever I may interpret from others I looked down at my  
265 phone and saw that had a missed call and a voicemail from him whatever I call back later  
ironic because that what he always did with me and growing up I was jealous every  
family that I thought was normal with a mom and a dad in the same house not separated  
and in cramped apartments struggling to keep our head above water but I still feel like  
I'm drowning and going crazy thinking about him and him and her he said I was spoiled  
270 but I wasn't and she agreed well you should have been spoiled he said what would that  
have accomplished said she who could have spoiled me said I and with what money we  
were barely getting by then and we still are now you know nothing about barely getting  
by what didn't you get that you could have wanted there are a lot of things name one I  
couldn't because she had me so heated Jude you were well provided for you could have  
275 had anything you wanted that's not true I didn't ask for anything because I saw the both  
of you struggling and sorry I didn't keep an inventory of everything I was denied in my

childhood be quiet Jude no you be quiet don't tell me to be quiet I'm your mother Jude  
respect your mother he chimed in you can spit on my grave I'm dead but you will be  
quiet when I say be quiet I'll shit on your grave don't disrespect your mother just do what  
280 she say and suck it up I'll be quiet I won't say anything to you ever again every  
conversation with her turns into an argument she cant speak without irritating me and  
why can't she just listen to me and why can't I tell her I feel why am I always the one to  
repress my feelings murder I wrote murder she wrote in black proverbs you aint too  
grown to be put ova mah knee oh so you think ya grown huh you better go' on somewhere  
285 lil boy I aint one of your lil frands out in the street when I say jump you betta ask how  
high shoo no he betta don't you betta ask somebody na fix ya face and proverbs likes  
psalms of praise and worship fall on deaf ears and he and I are Daedalus and Icarus and  
I'm the child that spun out of control to be warped by the sun fated to death but where  
were you why didn't you tell me not to fly too high why couldn't you have caught me  
290 when you saw me falling I needed you and you weren't there you weren't there when I  
needed you admit that it was unfair because you're the parent and I'm the son and you're  
the adult and I'm the child, but I completely missed how hard my father tried to bond  
with me and how I pushed him away which leads to the deep regret I feel when we spend  
time together and I ashamed that am already bored, and waiting for him to leave as we sit  
295 in silence wondering whether the feeling is mutual held together by familial obligation a  
bit of love very quietly very sadly I wanted you to feel the same I think that was really  
cool he said buddy he called me he told me a story I don't deal with my family like that  
for real I remember I went over to her house one day and I was on foot one day on foot  
and I say to mah niece can you take me uhhhhh he was always fumbling over his words I

300 even hate to ask people to do stuff for me I do not like to ask nobody for nothin to do  
anything I said shorty can you take me around the corner she said ahhhh I don't know and  
some bullshit a cycle of disappointment from family member to the next a disappointed  
bridge here a burnt bridge over there what's waiting for tomorrow the sun'll come out  
tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day its all about thinkin thinkin and  
305 figurin out what is what he said and I cant stop thinking wait is someone behind me I hear  
footsteps but I don't want to turn around what if its someone I know I don't want to talk  
to anyone I just want to be a lonely messy faggot by myself and think about myself and  
not be concerned with anybody but myself like an Ayn Rand protagonist I am individual  
I want to be alone and lurk in the sweet sadness of my sorrows and not feel oppressed by  
310 those who may judge my melancholy because I deserve to be sad maybe I am depressed  
and I am a depressive but I've been through things so that gives the right to be upset I'll  
prostrate myself with pride and wear my shame like a badge of honor only in private and  
not against prying eyes footsteps growing louder behind me I hope its no one who I know  
Kafkaesque pursuit of some figure in my mind dare I turn around and see that no one is  
315 there should I verify that I am truly insane or out of sanity I'm a crazy boy can whoever  
is behind me can tell that I'm crazy from the way that I walk does my posture give away  
that I am not complete here or otherwise who was this person walking behind me I  
straightened my back and put power in my stride walking with confidence casually  
wiping the dried tears from my cheeks and rubbing balm on my chapped lips girls have it  
320 so easy they can touch up their face with a bit of make up but guys aren't allowed to  
there's something wrong with them I should buy some and cake the stuff on and then  
promenade around the campus in drag a sexy fierce lady-boy I glance over my shoulder

the person is looking down and it's so I can't immediately recognize him but he's wearing shorts and from his silhouette against the street lights I can tell he has great calves I  
325 wonder if he may be gay and whether he's interested in me and his pace will turn into a run and he'll grab me from behind feverishly caressing my body over my clothes then he'd take me to the bushes to fool around under the cover of darkness pricked by twigs and thorns and fallen dried leaves a mid summer romp in the middle of April and our actions manipulated by mischievous sprites and fairies his pace had quickened as he  
330 walks past me still directing his gaze toward the ground his blonde hairy calves continue to catch my attention but it's a sick vanity that will never be resolved the frenzy of the moor seemed to be but I am every principle character in the tragedy the villain spurred by lust and jealousy planting seeds of doubt and anxiety with something as simple as shroud and the two victims one a murderer and the other smothered by pillow a death such as  
335 mine should occur in bed strangled by his cock two lovers from Verona to in an ill-fated romance I'm disenchanted with you on a pilgrimage with the Freudian residents that linger in my brain on an aimless quest to pay homage to reliquaries jarred fragments that once belonged to someone significant but were lost and the host doesn't know the way and they won't stop talking hearing voices from inside my head telling stories and the first  
340 one tells an allegory about a rooster and a fox and I can't tell which one he implies I may be with the cunning of fox and the stupidity of a cock to have sympathy for the devil she didn't believe me when I said I lost my faith and he speaks in riddles and fables and his good advice is given backwards a chiding conscience that commits simony yet regrets it later a pardoner whose actions need severe reprimands but are disguised well enough to  
345 grant praise the speaker is tall which makes him seem an imposing and powerful but he is

frail and thin and barely talks above a whisper which allows the other voices to  
 overpower him the second one recites poetry in fragments attempting make sense of the  
 world by gluing images and sounds and textures and scents and flavors together with  
 Elmer's paste what thoughts I have of you tonight Walt Whitman for I looked down the  
 350 sides streets under the trees with a head self-conscious looking at the *fool* moon my  
 hungry fatigue I saw you Walt Whitman poking and eyeing in our solitary fancy I touch  
 we walk and then stand watching a boat disappear on the Lethe from the banana dock  
 under the huge shade tire and wily looking at the sunflower *my first memories black*  
*poems* razors condoms unholy battered thing you are you ain't never no locomotive we're  
 355 not our skin of grime new hip moon but me one day I am think of a color orange not of  
 orange of words how terrible orange is and life with a man with a blue guitar *his kind* and  
 her kind I have gone out a possessed witch a woman like that is not a woman quite a  
 woman like that is misunderstood and not ashamed to die and we touch and in another  
 country people die and what of the dead you do not do you do not do achoo bean-green  
 360 over blue the tongue stuck in my jaw and the language obscene they are dancing and  
 stamping on you I am a traveller from an antique land with trunkless legs of stone a  
 shattered visage nothing beside me remains my name is Ozymandias *king of kings lords*  
*of lords Jehovah-jireh Rapha Nissi* rising toward a saint they flare and falter wobble and  
 toss receding dwindling forsaking a weak mailed fist *and middle finger* clenched against  
 365 the sky hierarchic privacy eyesores a fairy dark night that search in the moonlight for a  
 bite to eat moonstruck eye's rotifer under the chalk white spire of the Trinitarian Church  
 all the bells say too late a bell-cheeked negro propped up by a plank ebony hands sweet  
 blues coming from a black mans soul I's gwine to quit ma frownin the stars went out and

so did the moon I wind reliquary hands through black swollen gates what words can  
 370 strangle this deaf moonlight slow tyranny of the moonlight *a ministering minstrel* Sir  
 Bones is suffed de world wif feeding girls I might as well be on Mars made weak by time  
 and fate, but strong in will to strive to seek and not to yield he kept speaking by arranging  
 lyrical sequences to form some truth he appears witty because of his use of rhetoric but it  
 is a façade he is in drag like the queen from a John Waters film campy and loud he is a  
 375 Touchstone who is more aware than the Orlandos and Olivers and Ganymedes though  
 deaf in his right ear and disturbing a gap in his front teeth the last one's voice narrates in  
 intervals of silence and then violence in a sequence of unconnected exclamations that are  
 sporadic and intentional he convulses as he speaks like he is wounded and shouts with his  
 flailing body movements he was a shape shifter first appearing as Eve with a reptile  
 380 weaving around her body then a hissing gorgon swarming with cobras and venom and  
 then Cleopatra beautiful with a snake's fang in her breast the other two voices wrestled  
 him as he changed shapes but his mutability was beyond their control but then all three  
 were silent swipe I open the door to my building and see a few vagabond students  
 lingering outside two in the morning the bars just let out but no one wants the party to  
 385 stop no one wants to go home the lights are too bright it feels like a hospital and I am the  
 patient #patience\_is\_a\_virtue and I walk down a long hallway the walls are all white  
 which somehow makes me feel dirty someone is studying in the lounge he's not wearing  
 shoes and even though he's not hot something about the way he crinkles his toes is erotic  
 the white walls shout at me that I'm a pervert #ifthesewallcouldtalk and they sound just  
 390 like mother there she was again in front of me with weeping saying with resignation that  
 she did the best she could she did do the best she could and I suppose he did too and its

hard to fault either of them because they tried and maybe I should take more  
responsibility because I know they each work so hard and I can be an ungrateful little shit  
sometimes and maybe in time she'll love me for all that I am and for who I was and what  
395 I am and who I will become how much more time will I have with either of them in this  
world there's no stranger feeling than watching your parents grow old in front of you  
once they could hit you when you misbehaved or pick you up to embrace you and now  
their bodies are frail and they complain about aches and pains and are always tired and is  
it worth it to stay bitter and in resentment or angry and which one of us will take the first  
400 step toward repairing the disappointed bridge will it be me the last time spoke with my  
father he kept saying Your mutha was so happy to see you, ya know, I could tell when I  
pickt her up from work, she was so happy, ya know, I guess dats da way it is with muthas  
when their child is away, but dads, ya know me boy, I know you off there doin ya thing  
but you gwine come back I walk into the bathroom click the lock too drunk to fumble  
405 with a zipper so I just grab my belt and wiggle out of my pants and let my underwear fall  
to the ground I sloppily aim at the porcelain bowl adding more piss to the already crusted  
urine around the eggshell lip pull up my pants and boxers and flush the toilet with my  
foot I stare at my reflection as wash my hands angular face deep dark brown eyes and  
brown skin that is red and ochre and gold and blue, and green and purple a variety of  
410 shades and hues and if I were rating myself on a scale of one ten I'd give myself a seven  
cause I'm starting to feel better about myself and I guess I'm slightly above average I  
pressed my fingers against the fingers on the reflective plane and became the reverse  
figure a mad hatter with a Cheshire cat smile in a universe of anthropomorphic deck  
cards playing drinking games with Bud Light and chess pieces and the knave of hearts

415 was making lewd gestures in the corner and a rabbit with a stopwatch ran in circles  
around me a golden stopwatch I give it you not that you may remember time but that you  
might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to  
conquer it and I ran out of the mirror breathing heavily push open the door and walk into  
my room the lights are out but I can tell my roommate is not home he's with his girl

420 usually every night because she has a place off campus and I guess since that time when I  
accidentally walked in on them while her head was in his crotch things were a little  
awkward and even though we laughed it off this is a more convenient arrangement still a  
little sad though I'm lonely and it's unbearably quiet save for the thoughts inside my head  
shuffling through the darkness I slipped out of my clothes and climb into the bed and

425 with my head at the foot facing the closet door which is open and the hanging clothes are  
shadowy figures vague impressions of myself a series of ghost prints and palimpsests that  
I use to cover-up my bits for decency and for a bit of flair flashy prints and loud patterns I  
notice a stain on the floor from the faint glimmer of my alarm clock. 2:45, really? Is the  
spot on floor, there, wine or blood and whichever it may be, is it mine and I remember

430 myself before I hung a cross with spikes in my hands and feet and put there by a  
centurion with a nail gun from Home Depot and before then when I sat to eat with my  
friends and we passed around a forty and pretended it was my blood and slices of pizza  
that were my body and I looked at the one who I knew would betray me and I told him I  
loved him but he wouldn't make eye contact with me because I guess he felt guilty and I

435 realized that he and I were one in the same two halves of the same whole that formed a  
parallax with me at the center and him at one end a he and she figure at another end a  
holy isosceles geometry of red yellow and blue noun adjective and verb spirit soul and

body each triangle was the face of a pyramid and on each side is a fresco one of Ptolemy,  
one of Euclid, and one of Pythagoras forming a shadow box for observing the cosmos oh  
440 comet beautiful and fierce who drew the heart of this frail universe to the golden fire and  
a horn blowing moon write so that I don't forget and then I can forget as a means of  
creative exorcism of the past present and future. Can anyone do what Flaubert did or  
what Williams did or Cezanne did or what Joyce did or what Rembrandt did or does it  
take a special person or a genius or a prodigy or just someone willing to work hard and  
445 how do you determine hard work and who makes up the rules or are they arbitrary  
writing and words and words and identity and thoughts and imagination and the real and  
the uncertain and gesture and nuance and speculation and childhood and how I would  
begin my days in a state of overwhelming and uncontrollable sensations of affirmation as  
he is...

**Voyages Annotated**

*Ulysses*, by James Joyce, is the foundation that undergirds the stylistic format of my novel. Arguably Joyce’s greatest work, it serves as my source text from which I have based the framework of my narrative. *Ulysses* is a very difficult text to navigate; however, Joyce provides a schemata, or framework, that outlines the plot, style, and thematic devices of the book. Similar to Joyce’s schemata in *Ulysses*, I also have a literary framework for my novel. The schemata explain the formal and conceptual breakdown of the novel temporally, physically, and philosophically.

Voyages Schemata							
Title	Scene	Time	Theoretical Concept	Style	Age	Date	Symbol
Telemachus	1. Bus Ride 2. Elementary School	5 AM 8 AM	1. Christian Theology 2. Gender Identity	1. Third Person 2. Free Association	8	Mon Aug 28, 2000	Ancient Egypt
Nestor	1. The House 2. The Car 3. The Church	3 PM 7PM	1. Pedagogy 2. Pornography 3. Epistemology: Theological Skepticism	1. Stream of Consciousness 2. Hallucination: Fantasy 3. Narration	17	Wed Dec 17, 2008	Screens, Courtroom
Proteus	1. The Party 2. The Bedroom	9 PM 2 AM	1. Psychoanalysis 2. Moral Epistemology: Ethics 3. Phenomenology: Disentangling of Memory and Sensation 4. Philosophy: Existentialism, Psychoanalysis,	1. Stream of Consciousness 2. Hallucination: Flashback, Foreshadow	20	Fri April 8 2011	The cosmos

Similar to the 24hr structure of *Ulysses*, the eleven-year events in *Voyages* are constrained within a 24hr period, over one week, and in the span of an academic year. The passage of time shows the mutability in the continuity of one person’s life. The seasons are significantly placed to follow an annual cycle that ends in the spring to coincide with the line “April is the cruelest month” from T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land.” The title of the novel is an allusion both to the *Odyssey* and the six-part poem by Hart Crane. These annotations clarify moments of particular ambiguities and obscure allusions, and explain my literary research. Their section number and line number, according to the lines numbers from the novel, organize the annotations.

**Telemachus:**

In “The Odyssey” the first section is told from the perspective of Telemachus who is waiting for his father to return from the Trojan War. He is persuaded by Athena to leave his island for safety. In the Telemachus episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen is coping with the recent death of his mother and the irritation of his obnoxious yet charismatic roommate Buck Mulligan and Mulligan’s foreign

**1.1...Wrapped in some sort of prenatal dream** Reference to the fragmented beginning

of *Finnegans Wake*, “riverrun, past Eve and Adam’s from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle Environs” (Joyce 3).

**1.11...She, Vanessa Gnomon** Vanessa was the name of Virginia Woolf’s sister, which is a reference to the style that the section emulates.

**1.13 *The Rugrats?*** Allusion to popular children’s cartoon from the 1990’s and early 2000’s

**1.19...the looking glass, which he had often tried to walk through** Allusion to Lewis Carol books *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.

**1.21-22...looking back at himself, in a strange hallway of reflections** Visual reference to a scene from the Orson Welles film *Citizen Kane*.

**1.33...Cyclops-molded toothbrush** Reference to the X-men, a comic book, cartoon, and live action franchise by Marvel. The franchise features characters born with special powers that are feared by society.

**1.37... *I never let the water run no, no it might be fun but I never let the water run*** Lyrics from an episode of the popular educational television show Barney.

houseguest. The themes Joyce examines in this chapter are Irish nationalism, the role of religion, and academia. Likewise, In *Voyages*, the story begins in the morning, and Jude encounters similar themes of religion, education, and his relationship with his mother and father. The style is in third-person-present free association much in the manner of *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf and *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham.

**1.72-73 *I am a C, I am a C-H, I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N*** Referencing lyrics from a popular children’s Christian hymn.

**1.85 Amun-Ra...** Referencing the sun god of the Ancient Egyptians.

**1.99...He had tried rubbing mud on his eyes to perform a miracle** Allusion to biblical act in which Jesus heals a blind man by rubbing his eyes with a mixture of saliva and dirt. Similarly, Jude tries to cure his own poor eyesight with the same treatment.

**1.101 *Monday, Monday, bah dum bah bah dum dum*** Lyrics from the song *Monday, Monday* by popular sixties band the Mamas and the Papas.

**1.117-18 *The sounds of Kirk Franklin, Cece Winans, and Fred Hammond were the spiritual anthems...*** He lists names of popular gospel artists, particularly in the African-American community.

**1.121-122 *I will bless. I will bless. Your holy name...*** Lyrics from slightly obscure Christian hymn, “I will bless.”

**1.132 *is an Israelite working one of the golden pyramids*** A reference to the Israelites’, God’s chosen people from Old Testament, enslavement to Egypt.

**1.136-37 ...She toils for this master and two others at two plantation-like jobs** A reference to the plantations of the American southern states.

**1.38-39 He envisions her wading through the water of the Nile with basket made of pitch and papyrus reeds** An allusion to the biblical story of Moses.

**1.141. Her neck is long and elegant, her hair perfectly coiffed, and her make-up flawlessly applied** Visual reference to the bust of Nefertiti, wife of Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten and mother of Tutankhamun.

**1.155-163 Time it was... They're all that's left you.** Referencing lyrics from the Simon and Garfunkel song Bookends.

**1.189 ...lonely Eleanor Rigby** Reference to the Beatles' song Eleanor Rigby.

**1.202...Ramona and Beezus** Allusion to the children's book series by Beverly Cleary

**1.216-27 Thing One...and they laugh** This exchange between two girls alludes to characters from the Dr. Seuss' children's book *The Cat in the Hat*, and the narration imitates a similar dialogue from Brett Easton Ellis's novel *The Rules of Attraction*.

**1.224-26 God help...to wear them** Direct quote from the final episode of *Ulysses*, Penelope, when Molly critiques their former landlord Mrs. Riordan.

**1.236 F-U-C-K. You!** An allusion to Salinger's novel *Catcher in the Rye*, in which the protagonist encounters profane graffiti at a museum. This reveals a loss of innocence or a particular kind of fall.

**1.244 Yo tay key-arrow...** English phonetic pronunciation of Spanish phrase *yo te quiero*, meaning I love you.

**1.265-266 who art on the earth, hallow be his name** Reference to the Lord's Prayer.

**1.268...Mary Magdalene** Jude compares his father's adulteress liaison with Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus's cohorts and known for committing adultery.

**1.269-70...veered him off of the road less traveled. In a yellow wood where to paths diverge one** Allusion Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken."

**1.273-74...Delilah, and Magdalene, and Sarah, and Leah, and Mary, the mother of Christ** References women of the Bible to the women in his father's life. Allusions to the Philistine temptress Delilah who seduced and ruined Samson; Mary Magdalene the adulteress; Sarah the wife of Abraham; Hagar, Sarah's mistress and mother of Abraham's first child Ishmael; and the Virgin Mary.

**1.277 Nephilim** The sons of God from the union between angels and human women from the Old Testament.

**1.296-297...now a manger made of hay with animal neighbors** An allusion to the Nativity Scene from the Bible and barnyard nursery rhymes.

**1.306 There must be more than this provincial life** Lyrics from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* "Belle."

**1.306-308 The wheels on the bus...round** Reference to the popular nursery rhyme "The Wheels on the Bus."

**1.339-42 The walls have posters of children... and the caption "got milk?"** A reference to the calcium and literacy campaigns in elementary schools endorsed by celebrities, which encouraged children to read and drink milk.

**1.343 *Don't make it bad. Take a sad song***— A reference to the song “Hey Jude” by the Beatles.

**1.358.** See annotation for line 1.203.

**1.368 *I want to be where the people are... dancing*** Lyrics from Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* “Part of your world.”

**1.399 *Today's lesson is brought by the letter...*** Reference to Sesame Street excerpts that highlight specific letters of the alphabet.

**1.404-05 ...Gnomon, in the Euclid.**

**...filled him with fear** Direct quote from “The Sisters,” the first in a series of short stories entitled *Dubliners*, written by James Joyce.

**1.418 *She, Mrs. Buchanan, is recently married and embracing the newness of her job*** The style emulates Woolf’s prose in *Orlando*.

**1.439-40 *He has a touch of the bird about him*** Indirect quote from Mrs. Dalloway, “a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious...” (Woolf 166). It’s also an allusion to Icarus from the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus’s escape from King Minos’s Island.

**1.466 *Wonder if that's how the writing got on the wall in the temple*** An allusion to the biblical story to the writing on the wall from Daniel 5:1-9.

**1.482 *Twinkie or a Ho-Ho*** Popular confections, each with a creamy center, and represent allusions to homosexuality or promiscuity, which become themes explored in the two latter sections of the novel.

## Nestor

In the next section of my novel, Nestor, the Jude is in high school and is venturing into the world of sexual maturation. It further weaves imagination and surreal perception. This chapter corresponds with the Nestor book in *The Odyssey* when Telemachus goes to speak with Nestor, an officer in the Trojan War who fought with his father, for information about Ulysses’ whereabouts. In *Ulysses* the Nestor episode Stephen Daedalus is at his job as a teacher for wealthy boys. Stephen also receives some anti-Semitic advice from his boss Mr. Deasy, an Irish man but also a sympathizer to British rule. This section is narrated in stream of consciousness, which is similar to the narration of Quentin chapter from Faulkner’s *Sound and the Fury*.

Likewise, the section combines elements from *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man* during a fire sermon. The plot of Franz Kafka’s novel *The Trial* and The “Circe” episode from *Ulysses* were the inspirations for the courtroom sequence in this section.

**2.1-8 *When you were young you were the king of carrot flowers...the son is drowning in the blood*** He is listening to music and is combing personal memories with the lyrics. The first song is “The King of Carrot Flowers” by Neutral Milk Hotel, which combines lyrics of sexual maturation, with parental domestic violence, and biblical scenes from the Garden of Eden. Jude intersperses his thoughts within the lyrics, remembering soliciting and engaging with men over the Internet.

**2.8 *the son is drowning in the blood*** This is a musical reference to “Say it Ain’t So” by Weezer. The song references parent-child relations, specifically between a father and a son.

**2.9-10 –A modern version of Medea**

Alludes to the Ancient Greek Myth of Medea who slays her children in an act of vengeance. The allusion compares her violent act to the Jude's masturbation.

**2.11 Through the wire fence I could see them running**

Alludes to the opening of *The Sound and The Fury* in which one of the main characters says, "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting" (Faulkner 3).

**2.17-18 That's what I call love I bet you'd pick it up and mess around with it if I put it down**

Once again, Jude is listening to music these lyrics are quoted from a song by The Strokes entitled "Razorblade." This song references a disintegrating love affair.

**2.18 Turning up the volume on the click wheel**

A direct reference to the controls on his music device.

**2.19 The blue jay way** This is a reference to The Beatles' song "The Blue Jay Way." The song narrates a seemingly mundane and oddly threatening journey. Likewise, Jude jaywalks across the street, which become a series of illegal actions he performs. These illegal acts foreshadow the trial in the latter half of the section.

**2.15 Please don't long** Another reference to the "Blue Jay Way," which Jude has applied to waiting on the light to change.

**2.22 estar** The unconjugated version of the Spanish verb for indicating emotions and location, both of which are constantly changing for Jude through the episode.

**2.24-25 Crossing the street has become as bad as navigating Scylla and Charybdis** Direct allusion to the mythical sea monsters that Ulysses encountered during journey home after the Trojan War.

**2.25 Beware of the beast with seven heads**

This is another allusion to the Scylla from "The Odyssey," which Homer describes as having six heads. It is also a more direct allusion to the sea beast with seven heads described by St. John the Apostle in Revelations 11:7 and 13:1.

**2.25-26 I couldn't feel my keys when I pat down my pockets.**

This is a reference to the seventh episode of Ulysses, Ithaca. In it the protagonist returns home but is locked out without a means to get inside. It represents a demoralized homecoming and an inability to perform sexually.

**2.30-31 Those Beaver-Cleaver families**

This is allusion to the popular sitcom from the 1950's-60's that embodied the myth of the American Dream.

**2.31-32 Push in gently and press down—be patient...deep breaths—**

**Push in gently and press down** This further references the allusions to Jude's sexual maturation as he enters his home.

**2.39-41 Little insect-like books**

**crawled out and I watched as they scampered like roaches across the floor** The scatter papers are compared to insects. This is an allusion to the films based on the short story "The Fly" by George Langelaan and *The Metamorphosis* by Kafka.

**2.43-2.56 I found a dimpled spider, fat and white...If design govern a thing so small**

A direct allusion to sonnet "Design" written by Robert Frost. The allusion further highlights themes of transformation, and poem questions the divine order of the universe.

**2.59 Sashay Shanté! Yes, hunty!** An allusion to colloquialisms used by drag queens in the film *Paris is Burning*.

**2.59 Paris is Burning** A 1990 documentary that focuses on the culture

of drag queens in NYC. The film was a touchstone for LGBT visibility.

**2.60 Peppa LaBeija** He was one of the featured drag queens in the documentary *Paris is Burning*.

**2.61 All I do is pose dahling. Fierce!** This is a colloquialism used in the drag community.

**2.62 chocolate drops from the gilded six bits** This is an allusion to the short story by Zora Neale Hurston, “The Gilded Six-Bits.” At a drag show the performer will usually receive tips from the audience, which Jude corresponds with the Hurston story. Moreover, the Hurston story examines African-American culture and sexuality.

**2.64 Cue the audience’s laughter as my close-up appeared on the imaginary screen** This yet another hallucination that references Jude’s pop culture indoctrinated imagination, and his surreal perspective on life.

**2.66 but if you can’t laugh at yourself...** An instance when Jude has a drifting thought.

**2.69 He’s just standing there not saying anything, but I feel obligated to tell him a story** This is an allusion to the sixteenth episode of *Ulysses*, Circe, in which Bloom hallucinates an image of his prematurely deceased son. Here Jude imagines that the picture from his childhood is standing before him. Similar to the hallucination from *Ulysses*, the figure does not engage with him; instead he remains present and static.

**2.71-72 “It’s a fiction.” Benedict Anderson—who’s he?** Here, Jude remembers a quote from a film that references Benedict Anderson’s philosophy on identity as a fiction. The film that he is thinking of is *Waking Life*, directed by Richard Linklater.

**2.76 When you were young you were the king of carrot flowers** Lyrics to the “King of Carrot Flowers.” See 2.1-8.

**2.80 You smug fuck! Stabbing his hand with a fork** This memory of Jude’s father flirting with his mother is interrupted by an allusion to a scene from the film *Requiem for a Dream*, directed by Darren Aronofsky, in which one of the main characters fantasizes about violently attacking someone during a dinner.

**2.83 Why she treat me like that Jude? Ya know** This is the first time when we get dialogue between Jude and his father, but it’s actually mediated by memory during a difficult stage in Jude’s life.

**2.84 and dad would throw the garbage all across the floor** Lyrics to the “King of Carrot Flowers.” See 2.1-8.

**2.89 Papa was a rolling stone, wherever he laid his hat was his home** An allusion to the popular song “Poppa was a Rolling Stone” by the Temptations.

**2.92 wron**— An instance when Jude has an incomplete thought.

**2.96-97 Oh...who lives in a pineapple under the sea?** Lyrics from a children’s television show *SpongeBob Squarepants*.

**2.97-98 The briny water rushes in from all sides of the room and there are obnoxious nautical creatures surrounding me** As he watches the TV show he hallucinates that he is a part of the program.

**2.100-101 What are you doing? I lay on the floor legs crossed and waving them like a tail. She sounded so angry.**

**Nothing** The TV nautical themed show prompts a memory, in which his mother gets angry with him for imitating a mermaid.

**2.106 Adam** Reference to gay dating site used specifically for engaging in sexual

encounters, and the first man created by God in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic faith.

**2.107-08 Sometimes I felt bad about it. The time that she looked at my arm and saw shallow slices in the skin—**  
*Cuttings* Here, Jude remembers how he once responded to his feelings of shame for acting upon homosexual desires by committing self-mutilation. This is also an allusion to Theodore Roethke's poem "Cuttings," which explores the poet's sexual experience and childhood.

**2.111 I know why the caged bird sings**  
This is an allusion to the autobiography by Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Similar to *Voyages*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* also deals with concepts of spiritual, racial, and sexual liberation.

**2.112 as one window begets another**  
He is browsing a sequence of images in windows on the internet that increase sexual explicitness.

**2.116 what was that word mother**  
The picture of his mother speaks to him, as does his conscious, imploring him not to act on his desires. This is a direct quote from the sixteenth episode of *Ulysses*, *Circe*, in which the secondary protagonist has a vision of his dead mother. He asks her for a word of comfort, but she only offers guilt. However, in *Voyages*, Jude uses this as a flippant remark.

**2.116 Login. Blueboxers. Password: \*\*\*\*\***  
This is a screen-capture of his entrance to a sexually explicit website. The censored password is an allusion to the gnomon.

**2.118 This urge, wrestle**  
A direct quote from lines in Roethke's poem "Cuttings." See 2.107-08.

**2.121 What saint strained so much**  
A direct quote from lines in Roethke's poem "Cuttings." See 2.107-08

**2.122 Resurrection of dry sticks**  
A direct quote from lines in Roethke's poem "Cuttings." See 2.107-08

**2.125-26 In my veins in my bones if feel it**  
A direct quote from lines in Roethke's poem "Cuttings." See 2.107-08

**2.126 When sprouts break out... beginnings, sheath-wet**  
A direct quote from lines in Roethke's poem "Cuttings." See 2.107-08

**2.163 Eve Black and Eve White**  
This is an allusion to the film *The Three Faces of Eve*, directed by Nunally Johnson, about a mother with a split personality disorder.

**2.165. Huxtables**  
The family name of the characters from the popular 1980s-90's sitcom, *The Cosby Show*.

**2.167 black Margaret White**  
An allusion to overly religious mother from the film *Carrie*, directed by Brian De Palma, adapted from Stephen King's novel of the same name.

**2.168 No more wire hangers!**  
A quote from the film, adapted by from the book with the same title, *Mommie Dearest*. The film and book detail the abuse that Christina Crawford claimed to suffer from her mother Joan Crawford. In one scene Joan goes on a futile tirade about wire hangers being a sign of a low social status, and then beats her daughter for using them.

**2.171 Boys don't cry**  
Reference to popular aphorism asserting male gender masculinity, and an allusion to the transgender inspired film *Boys Don't Cry*.

**2.175-176. Are you crying? You better not be 'fore I'll give you something to cry about. I hated her then. I brought you into this world. I'll take you out!**  
As Jude is unloading the groceries he has flashbacks of memories of an argument with his mother.

**2.176 Mammy** A stereotype of African-American matriarchal figures.

**2.183 Camus** Reference to Albert Camus the French existentialist writer, and author of *The Stranger*. The novel deals with themes of isolation and the meaning of life. The plot follows the trial of a man who commits a senseless murder shortly after his mother's death.

**2.183-84 Qu'en pensez –vous Monsuier Meursalt** French: "What do you think Mr. Muersalt?" Monsuier Meursalt is the protagonist from *The Stranger*.

**2.184 Maman's funeral** An allusion to the plot of *The Stranger*. See 2.183.

**2.194 Had her feet marched to Jerusalem** An allusion to "Jerusalem" by William Blake, and references her religious passion.

**2.201 Nappy naps in the old oak tree** African-American colloquialism on the tight tangled curls of ethnic hair.

**2.214-16 she was angry, and shouting, and scary. The next incident she was weepy and sad, and I was remorseful, and embarrassed, and shamed.** The use of and is a subconscious effort by Jude to join these fragmented feelings of his disintegrated identity and equally collapsed relationship with his mother.

**2.220 Pretty girls never looked at me** An allusion to a lyric from "Beverly Hills," a song by Weezer.

**2.225 dark raw sienna Crayola** Reference to his complexion and an immature means of viewing himself through the coloring crayons.

**2.246 NSA** An acronym for "no strings attached," sex with any emotional ties or commitment.

**2.246-47 It was a NSA encounter between a young boy and an older man—whippings and spittle** Reference to "An Encounter," the second in a series of short stories entitled *Dubliners*,

written by James Joyce. In the story two boys skip school, and one has an encounter with a possible pedophile that describes his pleasure for giving boys whippings.

**2.249-251 For a moment I was Moses standing on Mt. Horeb, or was it Sinai** Jude begins to dismantle Christian myths and the biblical fiction by noting continuity errors in the bible, particularly the location where Moses receives the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 19:20-25 it is at Mt. Sinai, yet in Deuteronomy it is said to be Mt. Horeb.

**2.251 THE GREAT I AM** An allusion to Exodus 3:14 when the lord appears for Moses and claims to be "I AM WHO I AM." The response is to the sacred name of the Hebrew/Christian God that's name is never spoken. The capital letters are a reference to typography when addressing

**2.259 Would Jerusalem have been built amongst these satanic mills?** A reference to William Blake's "Jerusalem."

**2.267 The lush colors of cerulean and saffron project a sense of opulence** This language marks a change in the narration, which becomes more elevated than the rhetoric that Jude uses earlier in the section. The shift in narrative tone parallels the various styles the Joyce writes in the fourteenth episode of *Ulysses*, Oxen of The Sun.

**2.292 her perfume reminded me of pure nard** An allusion to Mark 14:3-9, in which a woman anoints Jesus with an expensive oil in preparation for his burial, much to the disapproval of his disciples.

**2.298 now a lion's den and I was Daniel** Reference to the biblical story of the prophet Daniel in Hebrew Bible and Christian Old Testament, in which the

prophet is thrown in a lion's den for his religious conviction—Daniel 6:16-28.

**2.305-06 A disembodied voice—around a screen** A new change in the narrative style from the formal tone to an exaggerated courtroom drama.

**2.337-8 Emanuel Cyrus** The pastor's name references both the philosopher Immanuel Kant and Cyrus the Great, the King of Persia who freed Jews from their captivity. Cyrus ends Jewish exile and builds a temple in Jerusalem.

**2.348-49 I could have choked...vapid words—Service or servitude?** New change in narration in which there is a legal argument between Jude's thoughts and the Pastor's sermon.

**2.355 Luke 9:46-48** An acted parable rejecting self-centered ambition.

**2.358 Faith means I don't see nothing** Use of a double negative to reference the AAVE (African-American Vernacular English), and also the paradox in the religious rhetoric.

**2.359 1 Corinthians 4:1-2** In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he chides them to be servants of God.

**2.363 Matthew 25:24-30** The parable of master and bad servant.

**2.364-65 1 Samuel 7:3** A lesson in serving the Lord, and abstaining from idol worship.

**2.365 Jeremiah 29:13** The prophet of the Jeremiah admonishes the exiled Israelites not to lose their steadfast relationship with the Lord.

**2.365 Ephesians 6:7** Relations between slaves and masters, and obedience to divinely sanctioned authority.

**2.367 Obligation versus appreciation, which is the sacrifice** This rhetoric is influenced by Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, which sees altruism and service as moral cannibalism.

**2.369 1 Corinthians 1:30** Another biblical parable admonishing Christ as

the source of wisdom, righteousness, and satisfaction.

**2.371 Galatians 5:13** The behavior of those called in freedom to live by the Spirit. Paul presents a Christian ethic in reply to those demanding observance of the law from the Galatians.

**2.372 Galatians 5:22-23** Catalogs the virtues of ethical instruction in the Greco-Roman World.

**2.374 Philippians 2:14** Expresses the diligence with which Christians should follow God's commands.

**2.378 Luke 21:1-4** The widow's offering. In the parable Jesus values a poor woman's offering over the rich.

**2.381 Proverbs 3:9**

**2.382-83 2 Corinthians 9:7** God's for how to give.

**2.405 Acts 2:42** Describes the devotion of Christ's followers and the Lord's Supper.

**2.408 Luke 10:38-42** An enigmatic account affirms the importance of listening to Jesus and at the same shows the Jesus's openness to female followers.

**2.413 The Old Testament story of the widow** Jude is alluding to the biblical story of 1 Kings 17:7-24 in which the prophet Samuel asks an impoverished widow and her son for act of charity.

**2.433 1 Corinthians 1:18** In his letter to the Corinthians Paul acknowledges his preaching is foolishness to the educated elite, which Jude considers himself a part.

**2.435 the mystics** Ayn Rand's rhetoric for spiritual leaders.

**2.446 2 Corinthians 1:20** In this bible verse Paul's rhetorical questions mock the educated elite by means of culturally specific dignitaries. Jude is obviously a bright youth, but may rely too much on his understanding of intelligence.

**2.450\*1 Timothy 6:12**

**2.463-34 Each one a pythia got higher on a noxious display of religious enthusiasm**

The pythia was an Oracle from Ancient Greece to perform acts of divination. The pythia also had to be replaced frequently because they were under the influence of chemicals that spurred their “mystic” talents and also damaged their health.

**2.466 I felt like a character in a Kafka novel** An indirect allusion to Kafka’s novel *The Trial*.

**2.467-68 I was a blinded Samson... of this temple** A reference to the Israelite warrior and hero Samson whose downfall was his lusty affair with a Philistine woman.

**2.462 they were slain in the spirit** An African-American aphorism, particularly used in Southern Baptist Churches, when

**Proteus**

In the final section of *Voyages* Jude is a student in college. This final phase completes the cycle of the *bildungsroman* narrative that culminates in the scholarly, cultural, and artistic maturation. Proteus is the completion of a journey for Jude. He starts at a disingenuous party, embarks on a long walk home, and then performs an act of creation. In “The Odyssey,” Telemachus speaks with Menelaus who tells him the story of his journey home from the Trojan War. During his travels Menelaus was landlocked and had to force Proteus, Poseidon’s second in command, to tell him how to get home by holding onto him while the mythical shape-shifting character took different forms. In *Ulysses* the Proteus episode follows Stephen’s walk across the beach as his mind wanders from phenomenology, the philosophical study of perception, to epistemology, the philosophical study of knowledge, to

someone is so overcome in religious ecstasy that they lose control of their bodily faculties.

**2.469 who were the Judges of the Ancient Israelites** This is a reference to the Old Testament bible book of Judges. It a nod to the courtroom setting of the section, but shows Jude’s misinterpretation of the bible. The judges of the Old Testament were community leaders before the Israelites conquest into the Promised Land.

**2.472 Knowledge had been the first sin** A reference to the fall with Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge in Genesis.

**2.478 pandemonium** An allusion to John Milton’s epic poem “Paradise Lost.”

aesthetics ending with Stephen writing an uninspiring poem. In *Voyages* this shape-shifting quality is performed in constant allusions and the complex narrative, which is told in the form of a polylogue. The polylogue is the narrative technique Joyce uses for the final episode of *Ulysses*, Penelope.

**3.1-7 I stand here in the middle of the room... telling me about her major**

This party scene and narration are similar to the opening sequence in Bret Easton Ellis’s novel *The Rules of Attraction*.

**3.7 Ouch.** These periods that separate this moment of being bumped into becomes a discrete instance, which call for emphasis with a period. For a moment, Jude is physically jarred from his thoughts to confront the outside

world. These periods are among the few punctuation marks in the text.

**3.11 horny boys all with slingshots to aim at birds** This is an allusion to the “An Encounter.” See 2.246-47.

**3.12 as if I could ever get him off my mind** This is the first in a series of memories and thoughts associated with Jude’s failed relationship.

**3.18 I smile at the girl** Throughout the chapter Jude slips in and out of the present by remembering specific moments or drifting into fantasies.

**3.21 and whether I’m a brother** Jude has joined fraternity during his time in college.

**3.26 a hipster** A member of a counter-culture movement, and often subject to mockery or jest.

**3.30-31 I’ll see you later add me on Facebook** In another one of his casual encounters throughout the night this person who engages him asks to add him on the social network.

**3.32-33 cards, cards I heard someone shout ...clapping each other on the back** This scene is an allusion to a game of cards in another short story by Joyce from *Dubliners*, “After the Race.” In the story, a young man squanders his wealth in lecherous activities with shallow acquaintances that he believes to be real friends.

**3.35 unf** An allusion to an Internet meme that has become onomatopoeia for the sound sexual intercourse.

**3.37 ineluctable** Allusion to the opening sequence of third episode of *Ulysses*, *Proteus*.

**3.37 a Bacchus** Reference to the Roman god of wine and consumption, and the Greco-Roman orgiastic celebration in an act of worship and spectacle.

**3.40 Vomming** Slang for the act of vomiting.

**3.45 Cadet Rousselle spinning on roulette table the size of Ferris wheel**

This is an allusion to both “After the Race” (See 3.32-33), and the satiric popular French song Cadet Rousselle.

**3.55 boygirllirgyob** This combination of words into a palindrome shows the mutability of Jude’s thoughts and his also reflects his position within mass of people. The word shows where he stands physical in between a boy and a girl and a girl and boy. It also is a reference to the androgyne motif throughout the novel. Also, Joyce used palindromes frequently in his literature especially in *Finnegans Wake*.

**3.60-61, 62 plum mellow yellow smellow melons of his rump like the times done before I can still remember each plump melonous hemisphere...**

**provocative osculation** A direct quote and allusion to the seventeenth episode of *Ulysses*, Ithaca, when the main character lusts over his wife’s body.

**3.62-63 Lewis and Clark and we had been like Bert and Ernie** Jude references these male relationships as analogous to his homosexual affair with another man.

**3.70-71 now my horizon is broken** A metaphorical and literal description of him falling down.

**3.80-82 Patrick Marbury play why isn’t love enough no will ever love you as much I do I’m the one who leaves I’m supposed to leave** An allusion and a direct quote to the play *Closer* written by Patrick Marbury. The play deals with the complexities of modern relations and the futility of both love and romance.

**3.86 a new layer of hell in which I am guided by a Dante figure** A reference to the “Divine Comedy” by Dante Alighieri.

**3.89 the blue guitar** This is an allusion to the poem “The Man with the Blue

Guitar” by Wallace Stevens, which was inspired by the Picasso painting *The Old Guitarist*. The poem has melancholy quality to it as well a lyrical song, which are narrative tones emphasized throughout *Voyages*.

**3.103-4 it’s a sign that I’m going crazy.** This is one of the few periods in this section, and it marks a specific transition in Jude’s journey in this part of the narrative. He has an overwhelming anxiety of madness, and the period is used as a declaration of a discrete moment within the mind.

**3.106-07 the ritual that dates back to antiquity with sweat and flesh and wine and sex** This is another allusion to the Bacchus. (See 3.37)

**3.107-08 I left my coat behind** This is an allusion to a moment from the “Telemachus” section when Jude has left behind his coat in the car (*Voyages* 1.49-50)

**3.110-17 Hey Hey How are you ... the grateful dead** In this conversation Jude has with his friend who is coming down a narcotic experience on psychotropic mushrooms, the dialogue is distinguished by capital letters instead of quotations marks. The capitalization sustains the flow of the narrative, but is inconsistent as Jude begins his psychological drifts while talking to his friend. Also, this friend is an allusion to the lotus-eaters from “The Odyssey.”

**3.12-13 Or whatever we call that which we are and feel** While listening to his friend Jude remembers this a direct quote from Percy Bysshe Shelley’s analytical and epistemological essay about life, entitled *On Life*.

**3.13 Rudy** Although Jude’s friend who describes his experience on “shrooms” remains anonymous, his talks about the having this psychotropic experience with a friend named Rudy. The name Rudy is

an allusion to Leopold Bloom, one of the protagonists from *Ulysses*, and his dead son Rudy. Rudy appears as a drunken hallucination during the sixteenth episode of *Ulysses*, “Circe.”

**3.15 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters bearing branches of enchanted stems** Jude remembers lines from “The Lotos-eaters” a poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson, which was also inspired by “The Oddysey.” These lines are not always quoted exactly or in sequential order to show the mutability of memory. Also, *lotos* is the Greek origin of the English word *lotus*. In Tennyson and Homer’s works the lotos is an island tree that bears a fruit that induces euphoria and sleepiness, which, in both poems, causes the travelling mariners to abandon their desire of returning to their native land.

**3.18-19 and I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness** Jude remembers lines from “Howl” a poem by Allen Ginsberg. The reference to the poem, aside from drug content, emphasizes a self-destructive energy that leads to nothing. This energy manifests itself differently in Jude than it does in his friends, yet it is a ubiquitous force in his generation.

**3.124 deeper down the rabbit hole** A cliché reference to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, which also has references to psychotropic mushrooms and dream-like events and hallucinations.

**3.125-25 Yacketayakking a lost battalion of Platonic conversationalist jumping off windows out of the moon** Another reference to “Howl.” (See 3.18-19) This emphasizes their relationship, as well as Jude’s encounters with various acquaintances throughout this section, as platonic conversationalists.

**3.126-27 *Eating lotos by day falling asleep in a half-dream we will wander no more*** Jude remembers other lines from “The Lotos-Eaters” (see 3.15), which addresses a fluctuating state of mind change and an ignominious ending to a journey.

**3.129-30 *Are you a twinkie or a ho-ho stupid things that you remember from childhood guess I’m both*** A reference to a moment from the “Telemachus” section when Jude is teased by his peers (*Voyages* 1.483)

**3.134-35 *#And they’re all in fifties costumes, and the man in the mirror who kills himself with a gun on our way to go bowling. Ironic, right?*** This is a reference to the social network site Twitter, that punctuates communication with others using a #, hash-tag, sign. The tweet doesn’t make sense, but in a modernist way it addresses sentiments of temporal dislocation, identity, mental illness, friendship, and confusion.

**3.136-37 *I saw myself in the mirror... I could take control*** Jude is looking at his reflection in a window and is reminded of “false visions,” which spurs a memory of a childhood fear of dreams. He then contemplates his ability to control his dreams, how his childhood had affected his subconscious and conscious thoughts.

**3.140-44 *what am I afraid of ... and further isolation*** Jude reflects on how he has felt stigmatized by his religious devotion from childhood through adolescence. He also muses over his motivations for believing in God, which he feels are due to a fear of damnation. He then remembers moments from the “Nestor” section when he had performed acts of self-mutilation.

**3. 144-45 *I remembered listening to records in a room on fire hiding from the Nazis that were pounding at the***

**attic door** This is a reference to the musical album by The Strokes, *Room on Fire*, and to *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Both works address sentiments of being lonely and maturing out of adolescence.

**3.146-150 *I was only an observer... I did something dirty*** This scene references the 1973 horror film *The Exorcist*, directed by William Friedkin. Jude imagines that he was once possessed by a demon, and that was a reason why he performed homosexual acts.

**3.150-53 *seizures like the ... her eyes vacant and her body tense*** This moment is a metaphysical explanation for Jude’s fears about possession, which counters his religious fears. He recounts an event in which one of his half-siblings has a seizure when there is no parental supervision. The drugs her mother used while pregnant with her potentially cause the seizures that Lola has. This event dismantles the heroic quality that Jude attributes to them in the “Telemachus” section by referencing them as the “Nephilim” (*Voyages* 1.277). This also concludes with a period, one of the few punctuation marks that highlight a discrete moment of heightened awareness.

**3.162-64 *walking through a puddle in spot ...five or six stitches*** Jude is constantly moving throughout this section. During his walk through the city and campus he reaches an area where he had previously had some kind of accident. He connects this incident with Lola’s seizures and Christ’s resurrection.

**3.168-69 *I could get some stones and bathe myself like Virginia Woolf*** A reference to Virginia Woolf’s successful suicide attempt.

**3.169-174 *the water felt cold against my skin and...dislodging from beneath the lids*** This sequence of

events is a fantasy in which Jude contemplates suicide by drowning in a lake. This is a reference to Woolf's suicide (see 3.168-69) and also Quentin Compson's death in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*.

**3.174-75 he was mad at me ... I am both the judge executioner and criminal** In between his contemplation of suicide Jude continues to reflect on his argument with his estranged lover. It's ambiguous throughout the section why he is mad at him, which is an intentional choice to show how the polarizing nature of relationships between young people. In one moment a relationship can be intense love affair and in the next it is an illogically irreconcilable fissure. Jude tries to achieve this realization throughout the chapter but is too heart-broken to fully understand this phenomenon.

**3.175-76 it's a sin to kill a mockingbird let the dead bury the dead** An allusion to Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**3.176-77 the dead watching snow fall from a windowpane in Ireland** An allusion to "The Dead" another short story from James Joyce's *Dubliners*, which reflects on the schism in the relationship between a married couple.

**3.178-180 She came back...in my dreams inside of me** Jude thinks once again of his half-sister's seizure as a death, from which she can also be resurrected. He compares her to Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus," which also references Jesus's miracle of resurrecting Lazarus in John 11:1-46.

**3.183-86 outside I gasp for air looking down at the juju-man in the water he has let me live but I'm too self absorbed to actually do the deed as I walk away from the water there are still demons in my hair** In ending this

hallucination Jude stares down another mystic double in his "juju-man" reflection. However, there are really vain and petulant qualities about Jude, such as his deep narcissism, that he would never actually commit suicide. The demons in the hair are reference to the water, and that Jude is learning to live with his personal issues despite not being able to conquer them.

**3.187 amor matris** Latin for a mother's love.

**3.194-203 armed with nothing but streetlights ... nuance and unintentional perversion** This sequence of memories and real time perceptions reveal the depths of Jude's obsessive fear of possession, which is really the result of the emotional anxiety he has about his mother not accepting him as a gay man. There is also a mounting tension between an overwhelming dark presence and a waning light, which leads to mystery and confusion.

**3.203-206 when I told her... sense of myself** Jude recounts the time when he tells his mother of that he is both an atheist and gay, and her reaction is frenzied response. Jude affirms his choice because it is his only means for establishing his own phenomenological concepts.

**3.208-10 I should have ...hit me again** This is an allusion to Sophocles tragic hero *Oedipus Rex*. In many ways Jude is a tragic hero destined, in some ways, to be estranged from larger social constructs such as friendships, romantic relationships, and family.

**3.210-11 spare the rod and spoil the child I know that she loves me because the pain she causes is better than the neglect of indifference** Jude references the bible verse from Proverbs 13:24 to rationalize his mother's behavior as a

twisted form of showing how she cares for him.

**3.212-14 Jude will sleep no more following that blade that dagger that knife Macbeth and Duncan and the lady and the witches Hecate** These are all literary allusions to William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which is another tale about a tragic hero.

**3.214-15 an atheist haunted demons in a noumenal universe existing both in and out of a spiritual limbo** In these though Jude is noting the oxymoronic notion that as an atheist he is haunted by creatures that he doesn't believe exist. He also references Immanuel Kant's noumenal universe, which is a universe of knowledge that cannot be perceived by human senses. It is the closest form of modern philosophy to potentially identifying or quantifying a spiritual world.

**3.215 I the Gnomon and the nomadic no-man and noumenon** Jude is playing with rhetoric and morphology by placing similar sounding words of different meanings in a continuous sequence. Gnomon is his last name as well as the raised part of a sundial that casts the shadow, and a geometric disjunction of a parallelogram. The nomad is someone without a traditional definition of a home, continuously moving, and it parallels Jude's journey narrative. The no-man is a homonym for gnomon, and addresses Jude's misplaced sense of identity. Finally, the noumenon is Jude's approach to both epistemology and phenomenology in understanding knowledge and perception of the real and imagined events.

**3.218-237 you're dying...lit a match** This long tangent is one of Jude's memories about his mother's hostile reaction to his openness about his sexuality and religious beliefs.

**3.239 give me that kind word Stephen** (See 2.116)

**3.240-42 I hadter breathing too quick cough hater hate her hate tears dribbling salty taste sobbing, cough fuck fucking cunt I hate her** In this scene Jude is very upset with his mother's reaction to his revelation. He is swept up in the emotion of his sadness and anger, and while cries and stumbles through his speech with words like "hadter" he affirms his momentary anger towards her disaffection.

**3.242 simba's dad died a hero** An allusion to the Disney film *The Lion King*.

**3.242-44 and you are a monkey's uncle ... one stupid silverback man** The "monkey's uncle" is a quote from *The Lion King* as well in reference to the villain who usurps the rightful king's throne. In *Voyages* Jude uses the title of "monkey's uncle" as a racist insult for African-Americans in a comparison to less sophisticated *Homo* (humans). He continues this barrage of self-deprecating racial terms by naming other primates.

**3.244-45 an annoying kid genius too smart for a chimp ape shit Diddy Kong Donkey Kong jackass** Jude makes more references to African-Americans as primates by alluding to the video game characters Donkey Kong and his younger side-kick, Diddy Kong. The name Donkey leads Jude to envision his father as a jackass, which shows his lack of respect and their distanced relationship.

**3.250-51 muffa or mother boat or bolt sans or science** Jude picks apart his father's dialect of English, which he mistakenly disregards as a sign of ignorance.

**3.254-55 I became Isaac yet outnumbered by Ishmaels** This is a

reference to Genesis 16:7-16, when Sarah conspires to have her husband, Abraham, marry and produce a child with her handmaiden Hagar. However, in Genesis 21:1-21 when Sarah and Abraham have a child of their own he inherits the right of the covenant and Hagar and her son are forced out. Jude compares himself to Isaac as the younger sibling who was born within the marriage covenant in contrast with his older-half siblings that were all born out of wedlock.

**3.255-56 I was the one that was sacrificed on the altar but there was no ram or angel in the bush to spare me my fate** Here Jude references the testing of Abraham and the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22:1-19, in which Abraham must prepare to give up Isaac his promised heir. Abraham obeys God's command. God spares the life of Isaac and offers an alternative sacrifice to honor Abraham's dutiful faith. Jude sees the time that his father spent away from his mother and him a sacrifice on his father's part.

**3.257-59 their mother was a crackhead addicted to everything I could imagine drink cock drugs and so they needed him I guess but it still doesn't seem fair** Jude analyzes his relationship with his father, and how it has disintegrated overtime. He also examines his relationship with his father in comparison to his half-siblings. In this sequence of thoughts it is revealed that his father's mistress, and the mother of his half-siblings, is an addict.

**3.261 the children of Ham and the nephilim and demigod** Jude keeps thinking about familial lineage, legacy, and inheritance. He feels that these are important fictions that are no longer valid forms preserving an identity. He references Gen 9:20-27 by mentioning

the children of Ham, also known as the Canaanites who inhabited the Israelite promised land before the biblical conquest in Judges and Joshua. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans used the biblical verse in which Noah curses his son Ham's offspring to be the slaves of other nations (Gen 9:26) as a means for legitimating racial hierarchy and an explanation for dark skin. Jude also references the nephilim (See 1.277) that parallel the demigods of classical mythology.

**3.268-69 like I'm drowning and going crazy thinking about him and him and her** The first "him" is his anonymous lover, the second "him" is his father, and the "her" is his mother.

**3269-83 he said I was spoiled... repress my feelings** These are excerpts from an argument between Jude and his mother and father. The argument reveals his frustration of not being understood by either of his parents, and his more immature character traits.

**3.283-87 she wrote in black proverbs... fall on deaf ears** Jude recalls a series of cliché African-American aphorisms used by his mother on different occasions. These aphorisms are written in AAVE dialect.

**3. 287-90 he and I are Daedalus and Icarus ...you saw me falling** This moment is somewhat of an elegy, in which Jude tears into the heart of his discontent with his father. There are allusions to the myth of Icarus and Daedalus' escape from the island of Crete. Furthermore, Jude references a fall from grace and a fall from innocence that he wishes his father could have protected him from.

**3.297-301 he told me a story...ahhhh I don't know** This is a memory that Jude has of spending time with his father, and seeing that they actually have something

in common, which is their disappointment in familial relationships. Jude's father tells him a story of how his niece refuses to perform an act of charity while he's down on his luck.

**3.302-03 disappointed bridge here a burnt bridge** The "disappointed bridge" is a reference to an inside joke made by Stephen Daedalus in the "Nestor" episode of *Ulysses*. The burnt bridge is a common cliché that emphasizes the feelings of missed connections and separation of Stephen's quote.

**3.303-tomorrow the sun'll come out tomorrow** A reference to the popular 1977 musical *Annie*

**3.304 tomorrow creeps in this petty paces from day to day** An allusion to Macbeth's final soliloquy marking on the futility of life. This passage from Shakespeare seems like a 20<sup>th</sup> century existentialist assessment of life.

**3.308 An Ayn Rand protagonist** This is an allusion to both of Rand's novels *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*, in which the protagonists are predominantly solitary heroic figures.

**309-19 I want to be alone ... tears from my cheeks** This sequence shows Jude rejoicing in his solitude and a desire to be alone with his thoughts. It also reveals Jude's paranoid unraveling, and unfounded obsessive anxiety.

**3.324-28 I wonder ... fallen dried leaves** This another sexual fantasy spurred by Jude's imagination and libido. It's also an allusion to Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like it*, in which couples partner in a mystical forest.

**3.28-29 a mid summer romp in the middle of April and our actions manipulated by mischievous sprites and fairies** This is an allusion to William Shakespeare comedy *A*

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which classical mythic characters intervene in the romances of four young people hiding in a forest.

**3.332-35 I am every principle character... should occur in bed** In his sexual fantasy, Jude likens himself to Iago, Desdemona, and the titular character of Shakespeare's play *Othello*

**3.335-36 two lovers from Verona to in an ill-fated romance I'm disenchanted with you** Once again Jude compares himself and his failed relationship to Shakespearean characters. This time it's Romeo and Juliet from the eponymous play.

**3.336-38 on a pilgrimage... doesn't know the way** This is the start of "The Canterbury Tales," by Geoffrey Chaucer, inspired portion of the journey narrative. Jude's psychoanalytic mental components, the superego, ego, and id, are different pilgrims from the text.

**3.339-47 The first one tells an allegory... overpower him**

The first pilgrim that is described is the Freudian super-ego, which acts as the moral guide or conscience for the mind. He is characterized by the stories of the nun-priest who narrates an allegory of a rooster that is deceived by a cunning fox. The pardoner, whose acts of simony cheapen his religious rhetoric, also characterizes the superego. The pardoner and the nun-priest are both religious moral figures, yet one is an amoral character. This comparison draws on the complicated understanding of morality and definition of right and wrong. The superego is described physically as tall and thin with a weak voice. Jude also portrays him as easily overpowered by the other mental figures.

**3.341-42 the stupidity of a cock to have sympathy for the devil she didn't believe me when I said I lost my faith**

This a reference to the nun-priest's tale about the Rooster Chanticleer, but the word cock heightens a sexual allusion. Also the phrase "sympathy for the devil" is a reference to the song by The Rolling Stones. Finally, Jude is further contemplating his mother's disbelief of his atheism.

**3.347-75 the second one recites poetry... a gap in his front teeth**

The second pilgrim is the Freudian ego, which is responsible for interpreting phenomenon in relation to the desires of the id. The pilgrim recites poetry in a nonlinear emotive expression of energy and sensate experiences. He is described as loud and Jude gives him a drag queen like persona. As the ego he is responsible for the perceptual faculty of the mind, yet he is also described as deaf, which suggests that the senses are not always a reliable source of knowledge.

**3.49 Elmer's paste** Reference to an attempt at joining, which is a thematic concept explored throughout Voyages. The idea of bringing things together, sometimes by artificial means relates to the separation of the gnomon.

**3.49-52 what thoughts I have of you tonight Walt Whitman ...disappear on the Lethe** These lines are non-linear disjointed quotes from Allen Ginsberg's poem "A Supermarket in California." The poem draws on Walt Whitman as a spiritual and artistic guide for Ginsberg. Both poets are credited as homosexual, although Whitman's sexuality is a debatable topic. Jude references this poem as an aesthetic parallel to his journey home. Whitman's role as a guide for Ginsberg is analogous to Ginsberg's role as a guide for Jude's phenomenological interpretation.

Ginsberg also mentions the river Lethe from classical myth, which complements

Jude's thoughts about death and the occult.

**3.350 fool moon** Jude either remembers or intentionally changes Ginsberg's words from "full moon" to "fool moon," which address the problem of memory. It also speaks to the moon as a symbol through the later half of the section, and its role as a cosmological and perceptual phenomenon.

**3.352-55 the banana dock ... we're not our skin of grime** These are more disjointed and non-linear quoted lines from another poem by Allen Ginsberg, "Sunflower Sutra." The poem is about the perversion and disintegration of nature by machinery and technology. The poem analyzes romantic, social, spiritual, and familial relationships in modern society. The flower is represented as a figure with a lost identity, which Ginsberg's speaker tries to affirm. The sunflower is a parallel figure to Jude since they are without an identity either due to rejection or corruption.

**3.355 New hip moon** This is another line from Ginsberg's "Sunflower Sutra" and further references Jude's perception of the moon through the lens of literary agents.

**3.355-56 but me one day I am think of a color orange not of orange of words how terrible orange is** This allusion is a direct quote from Frank O'Hara's poem "Why I am not a painter." It's important for Jude to reference this poem because visual artists have to engage and respond to perceptual phenomena, such as color. This poem also addresses a theme of the creative process, which culminates in the bildungsroman narrative. The "Proteus" section is Jude's transformation into the artistic figure he is destined to become.

**3.356 life with a man with a blue guitar** This is another allusion to the

Wallace Stevens' poem "Man with a Blue Guitar," which is placed by the Frank O'Hara to create a visual tension in the reader's mental perception of the complementary colors of orange and blue.

**3.356-58 his kind and her kind I have gone out a possessed witch a woman like that is not a woman quite a woman like that is misunderstood and not ashamed to die** Jude's memory is

alluding to the Anne Sexton poem "Her Kind." Jude reverses the gender by musing over "his kind." The poems themes of gender and a self-destructive creative energy correspond with Jude's personal development.

**3.358-59 and we touch and in another country people die and what of the dead** This allusion is a quote from another Sexton poem "The Truth the Dead Know," which was written about her disenchanting relationship with her parents at their death. The thematic content of this poem is analogous to Jude's often-ambivalent relationship and feelings towards his parents. The idea of touching, used in the context that Jude remembers the poem, discredits the value of romantic encounters in a world filled with suffering. It also is a means for trivializing his problems as a coping mechanism for his anxiety.

**3.359-61 you do not do you do not do achoo bean-green over blue the tongue stuck in my jaw and the language obscene they are dancing and stamping on you** Jude's anger towards his parents is emphasized in his memory of the poem "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath. The color of the snot and action of sneezing corresponds with slime like ooze, which is how a reader might describe Jude's mental state. The anger and schadenfreude that Plath feels towards her father and her husband

parallels the sentiments that Jude has to his father and ex-lover.

**3.361-63 I am a traveller... Jehovah-jireh Rapha Nissi**

Jude references the poem "Ozymandias" by Percy Shelley. Ozymandias is the Greek name for the Ancient Egyptian pharaoh known as Ramses II, and the images used in the poem describe the pharaoh's funerary temple. Moreover, ancient Egyptians viewed the pharaoh as god manifest, which Jude plays on by addressing him using different names for the Hebrew god YHWH. Jehovah-Jireh means the lord our provider, Jehovah-Rapha means the lord our healer, and Jehovah Nissi means the lord our banner. Jude's allusion to this poem references the ancient Egyptian motif in the "Telemachus" section of *Voyages*.

**3.363-65 rising toward a saint...clenched against the sky** This a quote from Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Armadillo." The poem is a simple narrative about an illegal use of fire balloons to celebrate the martyrdom of a saint. Although the fireworks look beautiful, they cause chaos for the animals in the wild. The sole survivor of the event is the armadillo. The armadillo is a figurative symbol for Jude as someone that is apart of a larger community yet separate from it. The addition of Jude's "*middle finger*" further emphasizes the strong sense of will that Bishop portrays in her armadillo.

**3.365-66 hierarchic privacy eyesores...white spire of the Trinitarian Church** This allusion pulls words and thematic concepts from nonlinear quotes in Robert Lowell's poem "Skunk Hour." The poem is compressed narrative with a structured emotional climax, which has similar themes to Bishop's "The Armadillo."

The notion of survival, Christianity, legacy, inheritance, homosexuality, romance, and disingenuous remnants of pop culture that appear in the poem are also present within Jude's journey towards asserting his own identity. This quote also references the moon.

**3.366-67 under the chalk white spire of the Trinitarian Church all the bells say too late a bell-cheeked negro propped up by a plank** These quotes

are allusions from two Lowell poems the first is "Skunk Hour" and the second is "For the Union Dead." "The Union Dead" is significant to Jude's narrative as a discussion on the treatment of minorities by society. These series of poetic allusions are how Jude's ego is interpreting the events leading him home. Here Jude is actually passing a Trinitarian church and he is propping himself up on wooden debris near the church. However his perceptual faculty of his mind filters it through these poems.

**367-68 ebony hands sweet blues...so did the moon** This is an allusion to Langston Hughes's poem *The Weary Blues*. In the poem an African-American man is singing the blues literally, and yet he receives no retribution for his hardships. Similarly, Jude sings the blues throughout the "Proteus" section, and like the protagonist of the poem he's tired, physically and figuratively, from his troubles. This quote also references the AAVE cultural dialect. It further highlights the motif of the moon.

**I wind reliquary hands through black swollen gates what words can strangle this deaf moonlight slow tyranny of the moonlight** These lines are quotes from Hart Crane's poem "Voyages," which is also the where the novel *Voyages* derives its name. The poem is written in six sections that detail Crane's

gay love affair with a merchant seaman. The "reliquary hands" are a very powerful image because relics are objects that once belonged to a saint or potentially Christ, and therefore had mystic or divine abilities. However the access to the power of relics has been blocked by either a literal or physical boundary. Similarly, Jude is trying to access his untapped potential yet his vices are the gates, which restrain him accomplishing this feat. The moon, a symbol throughout this section, has a role that indicates time, perceptual phenomena, and both figurative and literal guidance.

**3.370-71 a ministering minstrel Sir Bones is suffed de world wif feeding girls I might as well be on Mars**

This is an allusion to John Berryman's poem "Dream Song No. 4". The dream song poems are lustful elegies for the dead. The structure of the poems is the now archaic and racist minstrel shows of American pop culture in the early to mid twentieth century. Similarly Jude plays with stereotyping his own culture as means to form an identity. Also, the overt sexual themes illustrate a loss of innocence that burdens Jude throughout this section.

**3.371-72 made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive to seek and not to yield** This is an allusion from Lord Alfred Tennyson's poem "Ulysses," which is also inspired by the "The Odyssey." Ulysses is the speaker of the poem and he is complaining about the mundaneness of domestic life after his adventures during his journey home. Likewise, Jude has a very restless quality that this Ulysses also embodies; however, Jude is much less heroic. His desire to affirm his sense of self is renewed in this declarative statement of not yielding.

**3.374. John Waters** A gay film director known for his highly exaggerated and debauch films, such as *Dirty Living and Hairspray*.

**3.374-75 he is a Touchstone who is more aware than the Orlandos and Oliver's and Ganymedes** Jude makes the metaphor that his ego is the comic intellectual from Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* in contrast to the principle male characters and one cross-dressing male character.

**3.376-82 the last one's... was beyond their control** The final voice in the interior "Canterbury" pilgrimage is the voice of the id, which is the primal agent of the Freudian psyche. The id is driven by desire and functions solely for gratification. It is the most protean aspect of the section as a literal shape shifter. The mind and its desires change frequently and are often hard to control, which is why this last voice is most wild.

**3. 379- 81 first appearing as Eve... a snake's fang in her breast** The different forms that the id takes are all reptilian figures that have played a key role in either history or myth. The first form is the serpent in the Garden of Eden that was possessed by the devil, and was instrumental in initiating the fall. The second form is from the tresses of the villainous gorgon Medusa from classical mythology. The final form is the cobra that killed Cleopatra. Each form is destructive and this psychoanalytic figure is the primary source for Jude's inner conflict.

**3.386. #patience\_is\_a\_virtue** Reference to the social networking site Twitter, and also a cliché term.

**3.389 #ifthesewallcouldtal** Reference to the social networking site Twitter, and also a cliché term.

**3.400 repairing the disappointed bridge** See 3.30-03.

**3.400-04 the last time... you gwine come back** Jude remembers his most recent conversation with his father as he tries to put his relationship with his parents into context. His father further communicates using AAVE by replacing words such as going with "gwine." Jude sometimes interprets his father's use of language as unintelligent, which illustrates how he sees himself as a black man.

**3.404-07 I walk into the bathroom... flush the toilet with my foot** This moment references the penultimate episode of *Ulysses*, "Ithaca," that climaxes in a urination scene between the two main characters.

**3.411-415 I pressed my fingers... ran in circles around me** Jude is once again playing with the idea of doubling and images, and the imagery is a more perverted allusion to Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*. This scene references a similar moment when Jude is before the mirror in the bathroom in the "Telemachus section." (See 1.19)

**3.416-17 a golden stopwatch...trying to conquer it** This quote is from the Quentin chapter of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Quentin's father gives him this watch when he starts his studies at Harvard. The idea of time as something that can potentially be conquered is very significant in the structure of *Voyages*. Also, the stopwatch is symbol for the patrimonial legacy of inherited object or traits.

**3.424-25 With my head at the foot facing the closet door** This is an allusion to the protagonist in *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom, who sleeps with his head at the foot of the bed. The closet door is also reference to Jude's homosexual identity.

**3.427-28 Is the spot on floor, there, wine or blood and whichever it may**

**be, is it mine** Another allusion to Wallace Stevens “The Man with the Blue Guitar” (See 3.89). This is also a reference to the Christian ritual of communion, also juxtaposes images of pleasure and pain.

**3.429-34 I remember myself... I guess he felt guilty** This scene is a modern retelling of the last supper from the gospels of the New Testament. This is another joining attempt by Jude to fuse modernity with Christian myth.

**3.434-39 and I realized that he and I were one... a shadow box for observing the cosmos** Jude is asserting himself by affirming his sexual identity and his identity as an artist. The concept of parallax and the geometric references solve the missing portion of the gnomon. He references art and mathematicians who appear in Raphael’s fresco “The School of Athens.” Jude appropriates these identities to become, if only briefly, a complete realized individual and artist.

**3.39-40 oh comet beautiful and fierce who drew the heart of this frail universe** This is quote from Percy Shelley’s “Episychidion,” a poem about madness, friendship, and unrequited love. The themes of the poem correlate to Jude’s experiences, and the cosmological references suggest a grand sense of hope.

**3.440-42 write so that I don't forget...the past present and future** This explores the limits and ability of memory and show Jude in the moment of the creative process, and how it affects him.

**3.447-48 and childhood and how...sensations of affirmation as he is...** Jude’s spontaneous moment of inspiration drives him to write a story about his childhood and that story becomes the beginning of *Voyages* with

the Telemachus chapter. The ellipses connect the beginning and the end in a metafiction that addresses Jude’s creative cultivation as an artist.

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