

## TRAVELERS DISSOCIATION

What's important while we are away? A question asked only by those fortunate enough to find their ways away from home. Means to travel poses quite the economic barrier, categorizing the experience of man who boards the plane. Those who fly east and west move differently from those who fly north and south. Both men are no more paramount to persons on a boat. All of which falters in comparison to the children who'll see no further than the village in which they were born. Synonymously, in context, the favelas. What these people carry is informed by their experience before crossing state lines. What I brought to Brazil is different than what my peers took. If you asked the affluent white body what she brought to Latin America, she'll tell you bikinis and sunglasses. If you inquire what I brought from the States, I'd tell you perspective. My backpack holds many items, all of which, are contemporarily purposeful. But nothing reins more useful than the luggage I carry, constructed by institutions on American soil, that you can't see. Not with your eyes anyway. And the travel I mean, is not one of physical orientation. It is the traveling of man from one place to

another as his person remains. The transgression of ideas prompts one to say: “I want that again”.

I wish I could look inside the brain behind my eyes. The ability to take certain thoughts and mutilate them. Or if not mutilate, drag, and drop them into the trash bin to which they would promptly sit for 30 days before being deleted forever.

I would not recover them.

They would sit in the iCloud, and I would delete those too.

I don't know what makes a memory, memorable. I know that the ones that hurt me are the ones that stab, poke, and cut me the same way all other bad memories do; except I can't utilize their existence. I haven't trained to use... whatever feelings are evinced by shaming your father for things out of his control. Or mocking your mother's grief, as she cried over her firstborn that she forfeited to the adoption house. Those memories hurt me to talk about. I know that as I sit before myself today, I'm not talking to anybody.

I write with the stated intention of pushing my everything onto the paper; and the unstated intention of allowing everybody into my life. A plea, to my peers. To my parents. An address that says, “I know I fucked up and I am sorry”.

Age-old pseudonym: “Time heals”, but why doesn't time make it feel better? Why do I change that song when it plays? Why do I walk alone at the weary hours of the night passionately searching for purpose? Maybe searching for purpose is my passion, and I'm only passionate about it because I hope to evince my telos.

Poetic.

Paradoxical.

Just fucking stupid.

Earlier (hours ago), I listened to Kiese Laymon talk about a newfound hate for discussing his work on the grand

stage. He opined that it hurts to portray the image of a broken man who isn't hurting, that we only know he is broken because he told everybody. I reflect on how his work, separate from inspiration, invites me to be vulnerable. Fill my blank pages with emotion. To engender the texts that range from short to long but that nobody will read. I want somebody of stature to see what I'm writing because I feel as if it is of substance. Every day I sit down and crank out something. Sometimes it is cogent, other times not. Some days I'll sit for an hour and translate my right now into ink that will last forever. It's not that I ever run out of things to say, ideas to engage, or pain to employ; but most days I sit to write and engage nothing. I think too critically about the transgression of narratives and how word choice arranges delivery. I ponder word usage and spend countless (insert varying units of time) just writing and rewriting the same sentences. Maybe that's what I need to write better.

I am not an academic.

I like to think so.

I am not.

Struggle does not capture the odyssey that is my experience reading for my classes at Vanderbilt. Read a sentence.

Re-read.

Read the next sentence and re-read the previous sentence because I already forgot the context needed to understand the latter.

Highlight words and look them up because somehow "belie" is not a typo. It is not an error in the same sense that my passion for purpose is faulty.

Both miss the ending necessary to provide readers with a sense of relation. To read something in text and reflect on their own experience. But the critically engaged will read something incomplete and fill in the gaps. Informed by interpretations of their life. There is something

resoundingly magical about creative and abstract writing. How words printed on screen or manilla paper mean something inside the brain. But they only mean anything to the one who reads and understands.

A book is a book until it is read. Then it is not just a book. It becomes a person's memory of the text and the thoughts they thought as they read. The feelings one feels, the emotions one experiences. A book transforms an expressed concern for the contents inside. Because once somebody begins to read their mind starts to work.

I'm not reading that shit.

I know.

But it's okay. I wonder how much the most decorated authors write for themselves in comparison to the writing they do for others. The ability to pencil in works of illustrious essence. To paint the page full of color, with black ink. The charismatic pauses, indentions, and section breaks. The creative ability within reverence, to write something that your readers too, can relate to. The pique blinking cursor that saves them from our minds.

Your experience is displayed and detailed precisely as you want it because you are in control. To detail your forthcoming in a way that other people can grapple with.

What's the point of writing if nobody reads it?

To which I would ask:

What's the point of living if nothing really matters?

You explore ways to provide an application to the things you want to say.

For the things you must say.

I write to crutch my mental health. If I write in a way that hints towards mental suffering, and somebody reads it, maybe they'll ask if I am okay.

Fuck that.

I am writing at 4:31 am and I am not okay.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> day in a row. Maybe I will submit this to my school. Maybe I will send it to the people that I

usually send it to who probably don't read my stuff anyway. Maybe I'll start writing direct messages to people in my work because the likelihood that my ex-girlfriend reads this is high. I want to forget about us the same way that I want to forget about the things that I said to my parents.

I do not want another trimester casting grief.  
Of weaponizing my mental health against the people closest to me.

I do not want to hurt you.

I wish I could say it wasn't my fault.

I cannot.

I am sorry for the tears you shed last night. I do not know that you shed them, but I know you shed them. Maybe I will not share this work at all. Maybe I want to edit what I am writing because I prefer to have essays of substance, and writing about you relinquishes the right to call this piece substantive.

I write in a way that presumes a posture of admitted guilt.

I didn't do anything.

Maybe I did and I don't want to tell you because it will nullify the hurt I feel and exacerbate yours.

Maybe that is the fruit for taking and a reward for making it to the end.

An ending that comes soon as the clock keeps ticking; yet tomorrow, class will commence at 11.

This is not of substance.

I know it's not.

But who will know?

Just me and the brain behind your eyes.

What is important while you are away?

Why do we forget our lives back home?