

I must tell you something. But first, make sure there isn't a mouse behind you.

If there is, you are already lost.

I can't even begin to tell you how much fun it is to put a mouse in a shoebox and shake him around a little bit. A light little up and down and a squeaky little squeal, ah, yes, the life. It's not the best thing in the world; I must admit. There's something better about being self-employed, you know, your own boss. That's what's good. That's what's real good, not having anyone tell you how to live your life, not having anyone tell you what to do about this body you got hunked to your marrow. I feel like the body could just slide off itself at any given moment, say, at a fancy dinner with respected dignitaries in your respective field of analysis and learning, my body would slide off of me, and I'd be revealed for who I truly am: a heap of meat and hard white cellulose.

Currently I have four people. They don't have names. I refuse to give them names, I just call them mine. I have my people tied around a pole, they're close and learning about each other, and apparently, they know enough to send that message of hatred out into the world, that call for bad times and poetry rhymes that gets you down in the dumps and gets the cops called.

Right. Poetry. I think that the best poets, at often times, forget that they are poets. Like me, I forget, at often times, about my desire to perform acrobatics on the political stage, you know, go full Bulworth one of these days and tell the politics people that, yes, not only am I a poet, but like you, I have people, in my basement literally, and in this country figuratively, trapped, tied, binded, bound, begging, begging, they scream, louder, they're screaming so loud now that

someone may hear their screams, oh can you just take a moment to listen? There you go, listen, listen to the violin shrieks and cello cries, music, music, a symphony of fear becoming a roaring, real lion. I will roar, like my people, on that political stage, and like most of the people scurrying around these dimly packed streets, they won't bat an eye or take out their headphones for a little double-check, no, they'll keep walking, they'll keep going, but at this rate, I'm just so sure someone is going to call the cops, idly, I'm so sure, just to be safe, I'm so sure, and they'll keep walking, my people will keep screaming, I'll keep dreaming about politics, and reminding you that I am, indeed, like all the greats, sometimes a poet.

In fact, I have found inspiration, why, for here is a verse:

Infinite eyes and rat suicides

Infinitive meat puppet never to be

Masked elbows and crows in a tree

Mashed potatoes as a shoe-in side

The man I rent this basement from has a name. I have a theory. Take an object. Do you have a pencil in your hand? Good. Throw it away. Find something else. Is that a paperclip nearby? Good. Grab it. I have a theory. Unwind that paperclip. Like a child. You are the child. You are at a funeral. It is raining. There is an umbrella above you. Someone you love is holding it. You are a child at a funeral and you are bored. You find a paperclip in your pocket. Good. Unwind it. See what shapes you can make out of it. Good. I have a theory. You can now take that paperclip and kill someone you love. They're holding the umbrella and you begin to despise them. Is your

paperclip unwound? What shape have you made? Is it beautiful? Good. You can take that paperclip and shove the thin metal in the eye of the one you love who is protecting you from the cold rain above. Of course, you cannot do that because you are but a child and would need the strength of a man, but in theory, you could. In fact, my theory is that you can spare someone's soul with any object in the world. I killed the man I rent this basement from with a shoe. I put it in his mouth and went from there. Simple, scientific method.

God bless a good giggle. I like to laugh. Find your pleasures. I'm a hitman, self-employed, no boss, just clients that in their final twinkle of true sight give me what I need: moooooolah. I read plenty of discourse. In fact, I am most of the discourse. I will analyze this on the basis of class, as all the exemplarily thinkers end up doing, for I have their academic ammunition and they have, like scholars always do, no clue to my talents and insights. I have no money until I work. I love my work. I work hard. I provide for myself and countless others I've spared from doing the same thing. This is the achievement of the American Dream, being above all other living things that crawl around the concrete we, as a nation, share. That makes me in the top one percent. I am classless and theorists have their mouths around my words and they thank me for all my hard work.

I'm shaking that box right now, and the mouse is learning how to scream.

Anyway, be your own boss, like me. Imagine clocking in. Imagine walking into your place of business, have some guy with a hat on that says pizza or something like mechanic or, I don't know, whatever hats are job hats, you know, imagine that guy being like 'time to clock in' and

then imagine clocking in, doing what you're told like a mouse in a shoebox. You're flailing around, shook by the hours and the time and ahalfs and the same thing you did yesterday, and you don't know what the hell to do, and you're scared, you're scared for your life because what the hell is all this anyway? You're faced with this thing called death, and when you get called into work, you are reminded that you work till your shift's pretty little end, and you hate it and you hate the hours and you don't get enough tips because you're not quite nice enough which causes massive problems at your job because you tend to shake folks to their souls which is not considered a happy thing to do but you're not quite sad, per say, you just wish every day that it weren't so and that one day the sun will set for the final time and you can share with your brethren your true fears of, not darkness, but not seeing, not as if you're blind, no, even the blind see, but that there is no more things to look at, it's not nothing, but it's an in-between where you can't reach far enough to escape but you can't get your feet right where you are because you aren't anywhere, but again it's not nowhere it's just a thing that's not, and it's a time where you can't count even if you wanted to.

That's why you must be self-employed, like me.

You see, the beauty of being your own boss means that you understand this concept which I try to jam through my clients' skulls, this question, this idea that only death makes us ask why we are alive. I don't have a purpose until I wake up and wonder what is it I'm supposed to do, you see, I ask questions that drive me, keep me doing so I don't slip and fall down the deep dark canyon on either side of my thin two foot tightrope. If I were to fall, I'd be employed, sad, and dead.

Ok, but, for real, enough of that. Here's the situation. A bit of a pickle, and not one you can bite, not one that soaks like so many things in vinegar until it can be consumed, no, I'm talking about an idiom here, idiot. Stop reading and clock in. Stop reading and clock in. Stop reading and clock in because otherwise you'd fall, your hands up and wagging around, and, yeah, you might not think it's so bad, but stop believing you are no longer a person in this world. It seems the most popular opinion these days is to be a person. I disagree. It's not being more, or less, it's about being surreal, incomprehensible, it's about the people who cry when they see you, it's about making people beg, learning who people truly are, a detective of character of sorts, with a knife to the nape.

Yeah, there's like fifteen or twenty cops with nothing better to do with their lives outside this little basement of mine with guns and cars and big loud sirens that remind people who's really in charge, who's really free, where the power be and how you can't obtain it unless you believe more lies, and that's a lot to ask of folks. I honestly feel pity. I do. I feel like these four red faces around my pole deserve some sort of mercy. That's why I have the mice nibble at their feet, because every living thing deserves to consume, and mice love to nibble at some uncut and disgusting toenails. Seriously, if I know anything, it's to cut my toenails.

And poetry.

Glopulous Flarbicide

Figmatious Frindle

Boltentarianism Denied By Rule Of The God-King Grundle

Fargaling Didedict Maternalist Klimacide

Some things you lose, and some things you don't. A couple days, weeks, years, eons, no telling, could've been today, but most likely yesterday, or a few days ago, ago, I was sharpening my knife on some grainy metal I found while hauling lifeless-truthful bodies through the dry river towards my favorite door in the ground. There is a delectable impending doom that waits for me beyond that door, and its call is like the sweet honey that bleeds from the strings of a violin played by this world's few master musicians. Sharpening knives while toting inoperable meat muppets is quite the feat of dexterity and should not be taken lightly as any form of accomplishment. The call of the door rose. It demanded the body. It said now, now, now like an adult at a theme park in line for a cup of warm nostalgia. That's damnable, if you ask me, which you are, that is, asking me, demanding answers from me, begging for beautiful insights of this old, replaceable world. I had to leave the knife against the metallic sharpener. I laid the blade against the grain and set my strength on the body and my mind on my favorite door in the ground along the banks of the dry river. It was there I forgot, not left, the knife in my mortal ignorance, just a few measurements before the door. Which just so happens to be green. How lovely.

I'm wanted for crimes. Kidnapping, murder, blah, blah, blah. To be wanted is a desire by almost all thinking, feeling beings, and I love being wanted. There's a system, built on 250 something years of representative democracy fecal blizzards that wants me. *Me. Me. Me.* They want ME. I'm feeling something. It feels warm. It's flowing through my body, it's shaking my life force, lord, blood is everywhere inside me, my penis is awake, my mind races, there is a truth and it is

within me and I must share it because I am wanted! Praise the president, the district attorney is my bestest friend and I love her like I did my sewing factorial suicidal mother before she asked me one day to end her stupid-by-the-hour misery, misery, misery, and I did and I did not feel half as good as I did now, oh, these sirens, these loud demands all for *me*, I must look pretty because I *feel* beautiful, like my old buried mother, praise the president, she must be rising from the dead. I almost forgot, but this bliss has made me remember, I am a poet, and I have found another verse etched like stone in my bones.

There's a bad man in everyone

No matter who you are

There's a plagiarist, rapist, or politician

Living in your tiny heart

Anyway, I gave a promise to these coppers, some people call them pigs, and that's okay, except a pig is kind of how I model my approach to life and chess. A pig plays a lot of games because it does not know who's stomach they're going to be in. And that's just beautiful, a whole life bred for consumption without the knowledge of where you're gonna go and how you're going to be digested. YUM. But don't play hope chess. Pigs don't play hope chess, which is when you make a move with the idea your opponent won't notice or react. Pigs eat out of their troughs not because they hope it will feed them and make them big and tasty, but because they know the trough tastes good. Though pigs cannot look up and see the stars, in the moment when their snouts are snuffin' the trough's bounty back inside their throats, they, these beautiful creatures feel the power of the universe rush inside of them, though they do not see, they feel. My brothers

and sisters, I ask you, what tastes good? What makes you whip your head and stare at the stars and say ‘fuck you. I’m bigger than the cosmos. I was born to taste good and that makes me god.’ So don’t call cops pigs. That’s disrespectful to me. Call them golf clubs, because at least that’s something that’s pointless and blunt and forceful and most importantly not alive but powerful and with one benign and dirt ditch dumb purpose.

Which is not to say that all inanimate objects are benign, or to reference another great thinker (there is only one and he knows no time), “dirt ditch dumb.” There is a green door in the ground along the banks of the dry river, and it has a calling which I must fulfill. I am no great servant, but to the great master that lives beyond that door, I am anything the great master wants. The call from the door is loud and has a grim cadence to the untrained ear, but the door does not simply demand that you listen, no, it demands that you act, and though the door may seem to open to the macabre, the door is really a manifestation of joy for all who are flagrant enough to enter. That’s me. I am the servant of the great master who lives beyond the door in the ground along the banks of the dry river. I moved from the grain where I regrettably forgot, but not lost, my knife. I heaved the body in my baroque hands through the sand and the rocks that were once the saucer of a flowing ecosystem, and the body’s feet mangled their way over the coarse, once hidden grain.

I found the door glowing gold at the hinges. There was a *pat, pat, pat* beat bouncing the door up and back down from the earth. To me, it was like the welcoming arms of a withering grandmother, to you, probably, it would be like the screeching of utensils against an empty plate. To me, the door is a warm meal, hot supper of supple meat and mashed potatoes, to you, it’s a

starving thing of eviscerating energy and, of course, a grim cadence. The door was locked. I had to drop the body smat on the sand and use two hands to try to bust the knob back off the door. It didn't work. I wondered; do I need a key? The answer, if I were as wise as I am now, is yes, I did need a key, but because I was stronger than I am now, I tried to use the parchment originally intended for keeping the limp flesh in a single bundle as a pulley system. If I only had the momentum of life that once rushed through this riverbed, but with that force of life, the door in the ground would have never had found me. Of course, because I was such a young boy and now, I am an old, wise, salient man, my method didn't work. The door wanted the body badly. I knew that. But what was I supposed to do? Do you blame me? What do you think? Then, like a bullet from a cop, it hit me.

God, who is me, this is taking a long time. I promised the cops I would give my people their purpose with a knife, but I forgot it. All I have is a fire poker from a guy who gave me money. I take my client's money and one object, but if you compare me to one of those trophy killers people like to prop up on the news and documentaries and podcasts to create a stream of weird to murder to infinite infotainment to money, I'll be a little distressed. I only take things I need, and I forgot to stoke my fire the other night, so I grabbed a poker.

I like to burn shoeboxes.

A cop is at the door now. A golf club who wants to kill, how pathetic. I take one of my people and put their head at the door. I tell the cop to come in. And it does, it takes a step into my world and quickly learns the truth, the real truth, as I misuse my fire poker, tricking it to think that a

fire is a man's face, and I connect those two dots right through that thing that refuses to slide off and into the other thing that gives everyone their most crazy ideas, ideas like genre and flash fiction and genetics and other things like chess moves like the fried liver attack, my favorite.

What I needed to do at this door of mine along the banks of the dry river was something special, but nothing spectacular. You can be special without being spectacular; my clients who I experiment on do not understand this. Everyone wants to be spectacular and highly regarded and famous and loved but by doing that you almost always sacrifice your ability to be special. A mother hugging her child after the child gets beat to a pulp for playing with paperclips. A professor quitting their job to start a lawn service company. A coal miner smoking a cigarette. No, not spectacular, but special.

Like my prophetic skills at creating poetry.

A small scrap of paper

Meets the northern wind

Ironically and not proper

It winds down south

What I needed to do was open the door, what I needed to open the door was a person, what I had was once a person. This door taught me that people are much more alive and incredibly more useful when they no longer have to worry about waking up, when their feet drags and mangles on the rocks of the dry riverbed. I did have some strength back then, for sure. I put my hands

softly around the once-buzzing head. I cradled my fingers on the back of this skull and put my thumbs on the windows to the soul, as the eyes are called in cliched English classes across the globe. I squeezed, lovingly. My thumbs dug into the eye sockets, deeper, and deeper. It felt cold. There was not much movement other than my contracting hands and my digging thumbs. Eventually, progress. People think progress is an immediate thing. No. Growth happens when one thing happens unexpectedly, and the dirty mind and the tiny heart take that thing and marinate it over eons until you know some version of the truth which is beholden to all brainful animals.

The skull encased in my hands caved, and the gushing geyser of memory spewed forth. It unlocked the door. Inside, there was a garden of green flora. The great master thanked me for watering his plants. I was so moved by this gesture that I forgot my knife. I did not lose it, but special events made me forgot it. Like you, I am merely a victim of circumstance.

Anyway, my person is screaming. *Shhhhhh*. Don't do that. You can scream after I'm done because up there there ain't nothing else to do. So, I do what I must. I have bigger hands than most, and they fit perfectly around necks. My adversaries tell me I'm strong, and I like to use that strength to tell them the truth, like how I did with this person of mine. I told it the truth and threw it against the brick in my basement until it can scream forever and always. You should have seen the skull give up. You should have seen the limpness of it all, the wet limpness of truth becoming so apparent, so magnetic with a smell so sweet and spicy. SO pretty. Great God-Kings and Peasant-Princesses, I'm a poet, for God's sake, and I'm inspired, as I always sometimes am.

Dostoyevsky's death

Righteous killer poet told the truth

Ultimate beautiful rest

He now knows the secret of all youth

Oh, they're really coming in now. There's tear gas. That's a funny thing. There's nothing funny about tear gas, yet it makes me cry exactly how I laugh. That's joy, right there, this tense situation of crying and laughing and their meeting is the highest bar of experience, and it's what I'm going through right now. I can't see, but I can hear, I can hear golf clubs swing and mice beg for the box. My eyes are swollen shut out of pure ecstasy, but I can smell smog of the city stuffy and burly and I can feel liquid poetry of fingernails scratched down to numbs and I can smell the orgasmic release of thinking you're going to die and knowing suddenly that it's true. The orchestra of truth is holding their pitch, and I float between the waves of awesome octaves.

A mouse runs in a field of flowers. He does not appreciate the overwhelming sense of joy this gives the grass.

Ouch. That was what's known as a gun, and its son the bullet has said hello to my sliding, slithering muscle wrap. I think now is the time to tell you the truth, and here it is, since you've been begging for this to end, probably. The truth is I am you, and you are me. I am in your skin spreading my wings like a butterfly, and I am everyone and everything but most importantly you.

Also, close your eyes and run full speed. The first thing that makes you fall is the idol you shall worship.

Don't thank me, just pray. And you'll be okay.