



\$14.28 is More Attractive Than \$14.00
Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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Preparing to Peruse a Historical Monograph

.748 - .762 - .742

Prelude: With a fair amount of ambivalence, knowing as well as anyone that Nikos typically spends the hours of 3PM through 7PM, Monday through Friday, verifying the European origin of his dietary tract, I approached Mr Kazantzakis at 6:59 PM, ambling toward the screened-in patio of his modest row house located spitting distance from Garden City, and began as such:

I
(.748)

Well Mr Kazantzakis
if I'm being honest with you
completely honest with you
if I'm holding back next to no honesty whatsoever
I should note that
yes
it's indubitably true
that of late
I've found myself gluttonously chewing
four to seven slices of gum in simultaneity
for a variety of reasons—
in fact
it was just yesterday afternoon
prior to leaving our apartment to go grab a coffee
that I indiscriminately
shoved an entire pack of gum
into my mouth
and exuberantly chewed this large ball of gum

wondered if chewing gum was actually good for your
teeth

when the thought occurred to me:

Is emo the highest form of classical music America
is historically responsible for?

When discussing American music

I thought while chewing an entire pack of gum
a litany of genres

from post-bop jazz

to experimental rock

to avant-metal to the so-called

classically trained composers of American descent

are discussed as ‘the truly classical music of America.’

‘But what if emo is the truly classical American music?’

I thought to myself

chewing an entire pack of gum

preparing myself to pay full-price for a coffee out
somewhere

despite the fact I had an entire pot of coffee at my
apartment

waiting to be imbibed for free.

The primary conceit of emo music

is that its creators are young and white and male

and that they originate from neighborhoods

that are safe if not opulent and utterly hate their lives.

Nothing

it should be noted

is ever proceeding well for the emo band

as the slightest deviation

from the emo band's best case scenario is always
apocalyptic
despite the fact that
sociopolitically at least
they have everything going for them.
The emo participant exists at the apex of the American
totem pole
and despite this fact
everything remains essentially objectionable to them.
Nothing is going well! The emo song is
in practice
the antithesis of the virtue signal. And it occurred to me
as I left my apartment to pay four dollars for a coffee
that would inevitably be co-opted by an art school
professor
with no regard to socially acceptable decibel levels
pontificating about people as brands to a foreign
exchange student
that this type of wide-eyed narcissism
that this unironic ignorance of sociopolitical totem poles
this obsession with direct
lived experience at the expense of everything conceptual
is perhaps the apex of what should comprise American
classical music?
And I nodded my head at this notion
as we entered the Honda
asking Tina if she'd be willing to play
'One-Eighty by Summer' on our way to the coffee shop.

II
(.762)

I suppose you could say it was fortuitous
if not a direct product of fate itself
that with these thoughts in mind
while browsing my Shopping List on Amazon dot com
while considering the merits
of the so-called university professor
after my encounter with this pea-brained art professor
 from Yoleni's
I noticed that the Constantine Eleven monograph by my
 old college professor
Marios Philippides
was now on sale—reduced from the borderline-insulting
 price
of ninety dollars for the hardcover
to the increasingly palatable price of nine dollars for the
 Kindle edition.
I'd had no communication with Philippides
since my time at Massachusetts
which is unsurprising
as I doubt strongly Philippides recalls me in the least
as almost the entirety of my late adolescence
was marked by my dedication to my dissipation-process
which I'd extended into an era some may choose
to characterize as a post-youth era
so the two of us had no need
no reason to communicate with one another

primarily because Philippides had no idea who I was.
Just because two persons ostensibly share
a modicum of so-called ‘Greek blood’
in no way means they should communicate with one
another. For Philippides’s part
he has no idea who I am
and for my part
my only interaction with Philippides
took place in the midst of my dissipation-process
of which I was dedicated to—
yet being that I’d been looking for a monograph on the
so-called ‘last emperor of the Greeks’
and being that Philippides was the only author
with a recent monograph published on the final so-called
Constantine of Helen
it just so happened that our paths would once again
cross
this time on the Kindle app of my iPhone. Perhaps it was
fate
just as it was fate that I’d sit through an ebullient
bloviation session
from a pea-brained art school professor on one day
then on the next day find my own old professor’s
monograph fortuitously on sale
reduced to a price more appropriate for the proletariat as
such.

III
(.742)

After confirming the price reduction multiple days in a
row

I finally pulled the trigger and bought the book
only downloading said book during a solitary circular
sojourn around Foxwoods

Ike busy attempting to continue his luck on the slot
machines—

having won two hundred dollars
on one roll prior to our high class Chinese dinner
which he magnanimously comped
and Tina passed out in the car
tired and hungover after an ill-advised decision to
daydrink

prior to our venturing to the casino for the night.

At first

in preparation of my reading

I sat in line at Dunkin Donuts
surprisingly the only coffee shop open at the expansive
casino

and bought a medium iced coffee for myself with almond
milk.

Three men stood in front of me
and struck me as abutting old men
until I began to consider they very well could be the
same age as I

clinging

it struck me
to perhaps some fading beacon of youth
one of them adorned in deluxe Michael Jordan sneakers
the other making a long speech to the Dunkin Donuts
barista
about how much he likes his Caramel coffee yet
curiously punctuating the note
by repeatedly saying he's not that picky. In the rainforest
casino
sipping my iced coffee
with water audibly falling all around me
I got my five dollar double poker game out of the way
realizing slowly that the first two machines didn't work
then slowly realizing I completely forgot how to play
double poker
despite being so exuberant at the thought of finally
finding
a double poker machine to play.
I googled 'How to play double poker'
but couldn't seem to find a concise explanation
an explanation that would allow me to play double poker
immediately
which was the extent of everything I wanted at the time.
Leaving the double poker machines
after immediately losing five dollars
I decided to spend the last of my cash on an ice cream
cone
then begin reading Philippiides' monograph.

The ice cream barista informed me there were no cones
left
which was disappointing in the extreme.
Feigning no disappointment
I ordered two scoops of the cappuccino gelato
and was subsequently given a spoon half the size of my
own pinky finger
which isn't a particularly large pinky finger
I've never had my pinky finger described as abnormally
large by anyone
to the best of my knowledge
to scoop out both scoops of ice cream from the
surprisingly deep cup. I didn't object
instead feeling curiously lucky to pay seven dollars for
this ice cream cup
then walking around to find myself quite enjoying said
ice cream
the end-game of said ice cream of course being
that I ate the last half scoop essentially with my bare
hands
walking around by myself
enjoying nothing more than eating this ice cream
with both an absurdly tiny spoon and also with my bare
hands.
Finally
after washing the cappuccino gelato off my hands in the
Foxwoods rest area
I sat on a park bench and opened up my Kindle app
to open up Philippiades' monograph

on the final so-called emperor of the Greeks.

Contemporary Shootings

.766 - .724 - .787 - .729

.692 - .714 - .752 - .764

.755 - .723 - .726 - .764

I
(.766)

Well
I guess it's been
give or take
seven years since
I first experienced
the sublime delight
of smoking the hookah
at Pasha on Allens Avenue
and nearly three and half
since I was introduced
to the venerated ice hose
so I suppose
I'm now at the point
in my life
where an equidistant
amount of time
has elapsed
since I experienced
the regular hose
as well as the ice hose
both hoses
that I'd of course recommend
although our country's rapid rate
of inflation has impacted
the price of each substantially
while the rapid spread

of the COVID-19 virus
has turned smoking hookah
into an increasingly frowned
upon practice.

II
(.724)

It was an era
of lingering socio-economic
commotion
when my friend Curtis
and I experienced
somewhat of a dual rough patch
romantically—
Curtis recklessly divorced
after an eight year relationship
and nine month marriage
while I remained in less than
infrequent communication
with a person I'd inadvisably
become involved with in a variety of ways
while at the same time
I'd inadvisably entered
a subsequent relationship
with a person I'd
perhaps unsurprisingly
eventually have
a dramatic falling out with.

III
(.787)

More often than not
it seems our lives
are little more
than a series
of ill-advised relationships
that whenever
we escape
from one ill-advised
relation we find
a subsequent ill-advised
relation waiting for us
patiently—
for my part
I'd acquired
a custom of chasing
the ill-advised
in an almost
mechanical manner
as if the ill-advised
had some sort
of direct line
into my very being
and in retrospect
it feels as if circumstance
in the case of my life
has played an outsized role

that my approach
to my life
has been a simple sculpting
of inescapable circumstances.

IV
(.729)

I still hold both owners—
Jack and Sal—
in the highest esteem
and
in fact
it was just
this past Christmas
that I stopped
in Pasha
with Tina
and said a jovial hello
to Jack
indulging in my first ice hookah
in what seemed like eons
Tina and I sitting at the counter
having exactly one beer a piece
already somewhat inebriated
watching a Mavericks game
that was curiously
void of Luka Doncic.

V
(.692)

It's never necessarily
advisable to admit
that an exotic dancer
quote-unquote
'fell in love with you'
yet in my particular case
it was an irrefutable burden
I was forced to bear.
Although at the time I attempted
with some degree of success
to deny that
my charismatic character
was capable
of making said set
of events possible
if not inevitable
yet it was appropriately
catastrophic
for my mental well-being
as I took full responsibility
for both my charisma
as well as my inability
to resemble a father-figure.

VI
(.714)

These precise circumstances
led both myself
and my friend
Curtis into the ready-made arms
of the Pasha
hookah hose
at least once a week
for years on end
as there exist times
in someone's life
where there's no choice
but to disassemble themselves
in the most reckless of fashions
smoking and drinking
excessively and engaging
in ill-advised long-term
relationships excessively—
the quality of the hookah
at Pasha was of a height
that was hard to fathom at the time.

VII
(.752)

We unravel ourselves
attempting to reach
a core that's always
unapproachable
being told by Byzantine monks
that our center remains
as ineffable as God's Essence
sending ill-advised messages
to love interests
that no longer have
any interest in us.
An innocent exotic dancer
falls in love with us
and we choose to use
the full extent of our critical faculties
to disassemble
this person over and over again.
Continually drawn to this person
we ruthlessly destroy them
critically until the situation itself
becomes intoxicated in the worst of ways.

VIII
(.764)

And after all of this is over
we go
to Pasha
on Allens Avenue
and we enjoy
the highest quality hookahs
at least every Wednesday
unraveling becomes
just another hobby of our's
and we drink vodka
with just a splash of water
and the bartender
liberally indulges us
with a tall glass of this vodka
and then we drive up the street
and we laugh hysterically
with Curtis as we mindlessly
toss currency
at a dark stage
comprised of nudity
then we drive downtown
to order
a meatless burrito
at a highly regarded
Tex Mex establishment.

IX
(.755)

One common mistake
to eschew
both at Pasha
and other establishments
offering so-called hookah
is the conflation
of ‘more’ with ‘better’
with regard to flavors.
Waitstaff will invariably
highlight the fact
that a patron
can order
a litany of flavors
at no extra cost
implying that receiving
more flavors for the same
price is a ‘good deal’
that ordering
a blueberry-peach-mint-creamsicle
flavor hookah
will be enjoyable when
a sensible hookah
should be restricted
to at most two flavors—
I personally recommend
blueberry mint.

X
(.723)

Sitting at the bar
at Pasha smoking
a scrumptious hookah
with my friend Curtis
watching an exciting
Celtics contest
I had the misfortune
of assiduously studying
my surroundings
with the intent
of recording them
so to speak.
In short
I believed events
could be recorded
via recollection
and recreated
through creative faculties
when it's now clear
that nothing was further
from the truth
at Pasha smoking hookah
I believed I could create
a nonfictional account
an autobiographical element
when autobiography

and history
are only
the most
elevated forms of fiction!

XI
(.726)

Our memories
are by far
the most specious
things about us
have you ever wondered why
our official histories
are almost immediately checkered
biased before
the first drafts
are completed
why human beings
are believed
to have existed
for tens of thousands of years
yet if we even glance
a paltry millennium
into our past
we witness nothing but
foggy notions
and bitterly
conflicting opinions?

At times it seems
I'm made up of
nothing but memories
yet all of these memories
seem to have
minds of their own!

XII
(.764)

Ultimately
while the relative risk
of loitering
at Pasha
on Allens Avenue
is at this point
well-established
and while the prices
of the median hookah
have inflated exponentially
I'd still be hard-pressed
to sit here
and recommend
a better place
to smoke hookah
in the Greater Boston
metropolitan region.
Frankly
I've always considered

it a bit of a bourgeois
cowardice to avoid
places solely
because of
a low probability
chance you'll get shot
even as we age
it can still be beneficial
to embrace
the ill-advised
once in a while.

An Aborted Anime Opera

.783 - .816 - .692 - .847 - .888 - .711

.707 - .753 - .695 - .844 - .759 - .881

.691 - .765 - .740 - .834 - .760 - .707

.804 - .742 - .672 - .709 - .703

(01)

Flipping myself ass up
at the colonoscopy
before it was appropos,
there's no longer a notion of sanctity in abstract
expressionism,
quantum mechanics and nonlocal relations or
something—

John Bell was correct about the physical universe.

Writing “muttering my constant curiosity got in the way
of my suicide” to myself
in a somewhat ironic tone
but muttering nothing at all.

The older woman had no interest in geriatric footwear
yet wouldn't stop speaking to me of my destiny after
eight o'clock at the Wrentham outlets,
aged thirty six Portuguese dancers
inform you in minute detail of your own acute misery
then walk away unconcerned—this is why Christ had his
feet rubbed.

(02)

Dip down
like a quick bath
into the DMT-like essence
of what seems poetic,
breakfast and coffee spots close so quickly
yet I find myself yearning
for an Americano and omelet a little after four.
The clouds over one forty six south
consistently look like oil paint,
prior to the mental health revolution
adolescents were forced to internalize trauma
many of them becoming complete assholes
in the process. I've soured on the beach—
skin care I suppose has become a bit of a priority—
sand is somewhat of an annoyance.

(03)

Two midgets eating delicious
looking rice bowls at Xaco Taco,
repeating the phrases

“There is no image.” “There is no memory.”

There’s no image
and there’s no memory.

Sans image and memory we can start to approach the
fundamental nature of the universe as such.

Triple egg omelet with the kalamata olives,
a chest crevice stained in a permanent ink of sorts.

Cuddly beavers eat vegetables
from the hands of well intentioned human beings,
the small bottles of soju were only
eight bucks a piece.

(04)

The saki at Somo was possibly the worst
alcoholic beverage I've ever sipped,
the can looked like an anime juicebox,
it appealed to me.

It struck me Tiny Bar had a pretense about it
that just struck me as completely out of line.
People from various backgrounds
making fast friends
as I ate breakfast out on the patio at Domenic's,
considering going to Chilango's,
once again deciding against it,
the condo
complex looked like total shit,
real estate as an investment has always struck me as less
than a no brainer.

(05)

Blue light eyeglasses with the black wire rims
I look like a complete douchebag,
there's a document titled password is password
with the dollar signs after the A.
Proust was a renowned fan of male prostitutes,
they think Nietzsche died of syphilis.
In my mind I'm the last of a long line,
made American English into Ancient Greek,
consider me the twelfth Constantine,
genocides are just a matter of taste,
“anatoli” just means East.

(06)

Gregory of Nazianzus implicitly understood the nature
of quantum physics,
of nonlocal relations, it's possible the Occident has clung
to an initial linguistic reversal,
a reversal creating an illusion of perspective.
It's possible the perspectivism discovered by people like
Nietzsche was in fact
a simple byproduct of this initial reversal of the
Occident,
this idea of a perspective,
it seems totally illogical to me.
No pun intended, ice hookah with the tzatziki
I wasn't quite in my right mind at the time.
Samurai sword in Washington Park
the car seat saw too much,
videography is archaic in retrospect,
the science of phonetics is still ambiguous,
the conversation faded of its own accord.

(07)

Siberia is beautiful this time of year,
all art is not necessarily ipso facto for everyone,
the flesh of the human being wasn't universally
 appealing
believe it or not.
Emotional baggage lost in transit after I woke from a
 strange dream,
my yiayia informing me she's out of sorts with smudged
 lipstick
as I clutch a nephew that isn't mine.
There are many regional differences to take into
 account,
we construct linear states in retrospect
then spit on a street in Izmir.
The rolled down window was like a picture frame,
memory was juvenile delinquents spraying graffiti,
the Providence cop was satisfied with the answer we're
 just conversing.

(08)

The unspecified bug trapped in the spider web
on the railing of the employer's entrance
made me consider metaphors or something.

The cashier at Job Lot of ambiguous ethnicity
needs to employ social media
to assist her pursuit of establishing herself as a
photographer,
her favorite food is pizza.

The colonoscopy was unsuccessfully rescheduled on two
occasions,
it struck me that “Russian whore” is one of the few
misogynist phrases
still acceptable to say aloud in so-called mixed company.
Sure it was nice enough to have the assistance
of Giovanni Guistinianibut
but not if he insisted on retreating the first time his chest
caved in.

(09)

I found Marios Philippides' monograph on the last
Constantine to be
so pro-Latin to be nearly unreadable
which was unsurprising
because it seems as though there are almost no true
Greek intellectuals in the West,
only faux-Greek intellectuals
that shamelessly sell out their own history,
who rubber stamp Anglo assertions that the Hellenic era
ended
after Socrates fondled Alcibiades,
I often have an urge to spit on these so-called
intellectuals,
these scholastic imbeciles,
these Levantine Benedict Arnolds,
these cowards of the spirit,
while I painstakingly transform American English into
Koine Greek
I have to deal with people of my own ancestry
obfuscating in the service of secular popes.
When there's nothing below a secular pope,
it's why at times I feel like retiring to a monastery or
something,
sometimes you have to ask yourself what's the point.

(10)

A bit depressed without palpable cause,
slowly noticing a variety of polka dots
on a pristine two thousand sixteen Honda Civic
clearly due to the douchebag
incessantly moving his white pickup in the parking lot.
Inebriated and peeing
on Enzo's door handle in two thousand and fourteen
two years prior to the Civic being issued,
the scallops at Maria Cucina
were succulent yet ridiculously overpriced.
Curt alleged the pork was kind of dry.
Slowly noticing Milagro is a halfway decent tequila at
Vino Veritas.

(11)

Black eyebrows plucked with a muted sense of glee,
the center of gravity is ultimately elusive,
there's a πρόσωπο that becomes an ουσία
but not quite vice versa,
we begin with the individual and think this is freedom.
There is no individual. The individual is no organism.
The organism is the first fallacy,
I've never been a big fan of sense perception,
prose is some form of telepathy.
This is perilous.
I've only intermittently believed this is good,
my beliefs are purely theatrical,
there's no better opera house than belief.
She asked me an asinine question and laughed.
I chuckled nervously.
It marked the beginning of a horrendous era for each of
us.

(12)

Leaving the apartment for the first time all Friday the
fresh air was a revelation.

Liberian with the mask on at the Greek pizza spot,
rub and tug with the open sign across the street,
might get my VCR repaired at Cho's Electronics.
Speedway stuck up by the black dude with balloons
tucked under his shirt,

he picked my key up for me on a random Sunday
afternoon,

I always found him a nice guy personally.

Take a right onto Alexander
and pass the basketball courts
two thousand eighteen flashbacks.

Taken aback

by my note but as much of an asshole
as you can be it's essential to remain a man of your word,
otherwise there's no redemption arc.

(13)

It became gradually apparent as I made incidental eye
contact

with a girl with a gargantuan fake ass
that I'd slowly lost the ability to type words coherently
into my iPhone.

Memory is perhaps as a concept slightly ill-advised,
I considered while eating an entire rotisserie chicken
at a later date.

Yes it was inadvisable in retrospect
to give an overarching historical recap of the late
Ottoman Empire

to two seventy somethings I'd never met,
senses get muted with age,

I failed to notice the effervescent backside
ambling across India Point
until Katreena accused me of looking at it.

Orifices are ultimately negligible phenomena,
Jesus didn't give much credence to bank accounts
I considered eating an entire rotisserie chicken
at a later date.

Chanting the words "turn my bitch up"
in a soft whisper

as I strenuously edit the HTML
of a bootleg Tumblr page

I feel at peace with the world.

Ten calendars on females with two kids

I feel at peace with myself.

Ten mezcals enter an eleventh dimension

I feel at peace with the world,
with the charlatan nature of mathematics.
My mother ditched me at Nick-A-Nee's
but truthfully I didn't want to reveal my new
Audrey Horne tattoo anyway.

(14)

On Mineral Spring getting my eyebrows threaded by
Cheryl
a self-identifying Spanish lady
with a curiously Arabic accent attempts to sell off a pair
of air pods
to help support her alleged four children
and I was a little dubious to say the least.
Defecating at the gentlemen's venue,
off-brand dude wipes from The Christmas Tree Shop.
Writing essays is reprehensible,
having sincere opinions is basically worse than climate
change in my mind.
Boycotting semicolons,
the irony of my New York Knicks fandom has slowly
fallen by the wayside with age.

(15)

Pulling my penis out
with a child-like sense of jubilation,
I require more podcasts is the only conclusion I've come
to of late.
It's the only logical conclusion.
There's simply a severe lack of podcasts in the current
era.
We've ruthlessly deprived ourselves of others' opinions.
Reading a Robert Ashley libretto
while stroking my beard
in a fashion
that evinces a solemn contemplation.

(16)

Honduran medium roast in the Mister Coffee.
Brown basmati with two teaspoons from the za'atar bag,
only extra virgin olive oil from the cold press.
At this point I think we need to admit
we've made some mistakes
in an adult and calculating manner of speaking,
I'm even-tempered by nature.
Office space two feet by four feet
with the stapled carpet made
from recycled styrofoam or something,
reading impassioned reddit posts
about the heterosexuality of male masturbation dildos.
Toss two cubes in the ice hose
and try to see dead people,
one of the most profound friends
I've ever had was a floor fan.

(17)

Tyranny of the four-four,
meaning is negotiable,
the doppelganger appeared only intermittently to me
on a mild Sunday afternoon,
reminded me of a missed call
I received five or so years ago.
But I discarded the memory
to the possibility of eating a self-salted french fry,
the dude who stuffed the young corpse into his trunk
lived in an upscale apartment complex
and didn't resemble your typical pervert murderer,
eye contact is quantum computing.

(18)

Four walls encapsulate horrendously repetitive
phenomena
right around decade anniversaries,
at the Italian-American club
I engaged in an emo conversation
regarding geographical tendencies
for no particular reason.
Turquoise crystal covers the stab wound
between the collarbones,
parts and wholes are necessary,
didn't need to inform myself it was slightly ill-advised.
Gazing mindlessly at your own history a little aloof,
succumbing to nefarious literalism with friends.
To be frank I couldn't comprehend
how anyone would come to think political opinions
are anything but art,
it never occurred to me
that my passion could be misconstrued as sincerity.

(19)

The deceased raccoon looked serene
like it was sleeping on the side of one forty six,
I saw Curtis texted there wasn't a cunt hair of a chance
the Italian ass was authentic
and I agreed,
I thought about the raccoon corpse again,
about the nonsensical nature of biology,
about the big bottle of Soju I'd bought at the so-called
discount liquor store
which seemed to price items higher than MSRP.
Thoughts may be physical phenomena
that haunt us no different than poltergeist,
I can't honestly say I always select my phrasing
in the most careful of manners,
some names you shouldn't say.

(20)

Discussing espressos
blackout drunk with Emilio at Amedeo.
Half pound of the pulled pork
but only if it's completely unseasoned,
succulent (pause),
being the only car on Memorial
brought on a somewhat nonsensical sense of foreboding.
I felt an intense foreboding.
Could it have been the Casamigos Blanco,
this continual disrespect of the agave,
an ad claims to unravel the meaning of agape.
The Big Fat Greek Wedding franchise
does nothing but perpetuate a generic sense of ethnicity
that's as inane as it is counterproductive,
something especially ironic
coming from the so-called Greek east,
the relational essence par excellence,
Nia Vardalos it should be noted
is simply no Cappadocian,
this conception of essence
is embarrassingly faux-Hellenic,
back to Manuel at Manzikert.

(21)

Half Greek vacuum cleaner in a mid-August malaise,
fortune read unsolicited at two pm on a Sunday smoking
a ten dollar cigar
drinking a vodka on the rocks.
Half barbarian eleventh Constantines,
eleven Constantines is sufficient,
half Nikola Jokic, typing the word “kindly” in emails,
I was flummoxed at the amount of redskin on the
redskin peanuts,
middle aged podcast host
repeatedly using the phrase “sphincter clenching.”

(22)

Ingest the special star shapes
there's a club above an arcade,
there's a seven am showing of an uneven Netflix anime,
two homosexuals dance sans irony
and there's an album that will preferably be
disavowed at a later date.

A man my age is now dying a slow death,
incoherent epidermis,

I used to hit the bottle hard too.

Indeed I painted six hours at a time
with the Sobieski by my side,
screwed and chopped Bjork,
a sense of adolescence existed.

Markos Vamvakaris wrote about the water pipes
and call girls of turn of the century Piraeus,
shirt unbuttoned all the way down
with profound hiccups
to drown out D'Andrea's dead body,
but can we confirm the Puerto Rican girl behind the bar
is aware.

Does the butt wipe at the bar bathroom
realize Ryan's died?

I don't discriminate between organic entities and
otherwise,

another man our age is dying,
second cousins we never see drop dead in Florida
yet dude was always an asshole anyway.

Ingest the special star shapes

there's a club above an arcade,
I used to paint six hours at a time
with the Sobieski by my side.
I found it enjoyable for the era,
cigar bar with Lams,
I'm well aware
my charisma is unorthodox in character.

(23)

I can no longer consume spaghetti alio
yet I've gradually come to terms with this trying state of
existence.

Surgically inserting substances into the very essence
of one's buttocks is a pure roll of the die
in my humble opinion,
yet a female's sexual history is frankly
none of our business.

We tend to view the vagina as a tissue or a kleenex
when it's essentially reflexive in character,
like a unique phrase or laconic collection of lexicon,
that's more or less how I view
the contemporary vagina at least.

I was a little taken aback at the fact
the wing spot only offered curly fries,
that regular fries
were nowhere to be found on the menu.

Postmodern Novelists
(.771)

I
(.785)

Approaching the automatic entrance
of Fresh Shore's
on Mineral Spring Avenue
hoping with
all of my heart
that their prepared foods
were in the ballpark
of what my mom
generally discovers
at Dave's Supermarket
I glanced
across the street
and saw the old building
of Ken Wok Chinese Cuisine
halfway torn down
and I took out my phone
and made a brief note
on the indefatigable impermanence
that remains
so pervasive all around us
as I do each time
a building
I felt some sort of
nonsensical connection with
on Mineral Spring Avenue
gets knocked down.

II
(.822)

In any case
it was August first
of this year
that I felt as though
I was rapidly approaching
the end of my so-called rope
in an over decade-long plus
dissipation process
the fact of the matter
was my dissipation
had extended its prime
in a way that was
at once mildly impressive
yet simultaneously
severely depressing.
Perhaps with that being the case
it was on the night of August first
the second to last night
of my thirty-fifth year
that I experienced
a dream sequence
where I was suspended in air
above a desolate plain
where a skyscraper-like
tall building comprised
solely of mirrors

sat in the bright sunlight
where a portion of said
top corner
reflected said sunlight
in a violent fashion
and I found myself
lifted to said section
where a voice
I identified
with Gregory of Nazianzus
spoke to me mellifluously
of the futility
of ephemeral things.

III
(.851)

But perhaps
we should pose
a subsequent question:
while there are
a litany of instances
of novelists attempting
to ape the stylistic
idiosyncrasies
of Homer's Odyssey
while there's seemingly
an endless line
of English-speakers

and Euro-adjacent folks
who've shamelessly aped
the Athenian baboons
of the Antique era
without pause!—
are there any
that we can think of
that have mimicked
the mannerist quirks
of *The Divine Eros*?
Because it recently
struck me
in re-reading
Symeon's central work
that in many ways
it reads like
an epic poem
cum postmodern novel?

IV
(.808)

After all
it was none other than
the notable
postmodern novelist
John Hawkes
who said so sternly
'I began to write fiction
on the assumption
that the true enemies
of the novel
were plot
character
setting
and theme.'
And in this way
the sprawling
politically-metered
spiraled verses of Symeon
track the conceptual Hawkian novel
to the Nth degree
or perhaps vice versa!
Should we perhaps
even pose the question:
How acquainted was Hawkes'
with the Byzantine monk
in the era of said quote?

We should perhaps note
Hawkes was to an extent
a disciple of Nabokov
who
in addition to penning
a few novels postmodernly
prodding into the
do's and don't's
of seducing underage females
was raised in a Russian milieu
still pre-Soviet
so to say
an essentially
Orthodox milieu.

V
(.833)

The modern novel
which in our era
is essentially
the postmodern novel
because it seems serious
modern novels no longer exist
only spurious
commercial novels
that perhaps ape
old modern novels (poorly)—
no

today
to the extent
the serious novel
still exists outside of
say
thesis advisory boards
all serious novels
are now essentially
postmodern novels
and with that being
the reality
I suppose I'll refer
to the postmodern novel
as just the modern novel
as there are
no modern novels anymore
just postmodern
so the postmodern
for myself and my peers
is ipso facto the modern.
The modern novel
to Hawkes' credit
no longer requires
anything of narrative
of character
of setting
of theme—
in fact
even indulging in

such antiquated attributes
is typically a sign
of poor taste!
For myself
when and if
which is hardly ever
I begin a novel
with a fervent urge
to tell me a story
I'll place
the item back
down immediately
at least somewhat
disgusted at its
brazen narrative inclinations.

VI
(.737)

Symeon's Eros
on the other hand
while indulging
in bombastic dialogues
while tearing itself apart
in a perpetually appropriate
fashion—perhaps
the so-called refrain
of Symeon's work
is this very tearing apart

is essentially
a postmodern epic poem
which if we consider
the many attempts
to turn the epic poems
of Homer into
the modern novels of
say
Gogol or Joyce
then it almost goes
without saying
that Symeon's epic poem
is already
a postmodern novel
in many ways
as the addiction
to pure prose of the novel
the addiction
to the non-metrical methods
of placing words
in conceptual order
is perhaps another lurid quirk
of the novel
that would be better off
set to the side!

VII
(.761)

Of course
the beauty
of the Divine Eros
of the so-called
kontakion form
(of which both
Symeon and Nazianzus
are essentially book-ends to
if not entirely indulgent in)
is that
it mimics the metaphysics
of these Byzantines
itself of course
being a poem
and an essay
and a story!
The digressive hymns
of the Divine Eros
must be all three
in simultaneity
verses
and stories
and essays
because if they're
just verses
or just essays

or just stories—no
that simply won't work
at all!
To describe
a select hymn as a verse
or as a story
or as an essay
instead of all three simultaneously
yet not as an amalgam
but instead
as an individual essay
an individual verse
an individual story
in the same breath
to do that would
almost be heretical in itself.

VIII

(.738)

Whereas Descartes noted
'I think therefore I am'
Athanasius said
'Has the Father ever existed
without His Son?'
The most important aspect
of the Divine Eros
what makes them
essentially novelistic

in perhaps the postmodern
sense of the word
is that they're at once essays
and verses and stories
individually
but they're non-amalgamous!
The Eros is all of them
at the same time
but also each one of them
individually as well;
whereas Descartes noted
'I think therefore I am'
the kontakion is only
an essay because it's a poem
but it's only a poem
because it's a story
and so on and so on—

IX
(.718)

Hawkes said
'I began to write fiction
on the assumption
that the true enemies
of the novel were plot
character
setting
and theme'

while Athanasius said
Has the Father ever existed
without His Son?
Is The Divine Eros
of Symeon
the New Theologian
a postmodern epic poem
and as such
also the postmodern novel
par excellence?
Perhaps we should
inquire further
into this term ‘postmodern’ however
namely as to how exactly
it’s said to differ
from the term ‘modern’?
One of the more modern
notions of our era
in this instance
I’m speaking of modern
as non-postmodern
whereas previously
(perhaps foolishly)
I used modern
as a synonym for postmodern
is this conception of The Big Bang
which has achieved jihad-like popularity
in our era.
Perhaps the most modern

notion of all
if we're attempting to
inquire about the
modern-postmodern divide
is this notion
which has achieved
a jihad-like belief system around it
of the Big Bang.

X
(.709)

Now
personally
I'm not exactly
a proponent of this notion
primarily because
it strikes me as idiotic
with all due respect
to the scientists who developed it
it strikes me as an idea
that's attempting
to improve upon
a previous notion (God)
but in practice is taking
the idiocy of said previous notion
blindly believing in God
and making it somehow more idiotic.
There's an idea

that there was nothing
then something occurred
and now things are occurring
in an outward fashion
at increasing speeds.
There's an idea that our sensory faculties
which are unable
to accurately officiate feelings
at a bar after three beers
are somehow capable
of taking clues from billions of years ago
and somehow empirically postulating
what occurred billions of years ago
trillions of miles away.
But this idea of the Big Bang
is more in line with
say
Descartes
than
say
Athanasius.
It's an idea that's essentially antithetical
to the idea that a father
only achieves being
through his son
that the father and son
while existing independently
of one another
only achieve

being because of one another
that without one another they
in many ways
cease to exist.

XI
(.810)

It's only been of late
that I've found myself
craving the classic cookies
and cream flavor
and it's been ice cream
in particular
that has struck
my cravings acutely.
In our era
now I need more or less
at least one night of indulging
in ice cream per week.
Yet at the same time
alongside this peculiar craving
for cookies and cream
I've found myself bending
to an equally acute urge
to try something new
hardly satisfied
with this cookies and cream craving
despite the fact this cookies and cream craving

more or less just came over me
I often find myself saying things like
'I don't know
maybe that chocolate chip cookie dough is good?' or
'What if I had a milkshake? I feel like
I don't know
maybe a milkshake
would really hit the spot right now?'
Of course the only result of such prevarication
of such mindless deviations
is the indulgence in
non-cookies and cream items
and the inevitable remorse
of the initial craving
remaining unquenched!

XII

(.741)

There's an idea
that there was nothing
then something occurred
and is still occurring—
the postmodern novel
as well as Symeon's Divine Eros
do away with the first
portion of this formula
disassociating themselves
from this idea

that there was nothing
and also from
the idea that then
something occurred
instead restricting themselves
to the is still occurring.
For both Symeon
and the postmodern novel
something is still occurring
however
we're not quite as concerned
with the idea that there
was at one time nothing
or with this idea
that then something occurred.

XIII
(.781)

If we were bold
and I'm feeling
decently bold at the moment
having indulged in a long day
all of my days these days
seem exceedingly long!—
but also feeling as though
all autobiography is absurdist fiction
we might say that while
the modern novel

says something adjacent to
'I think therefore I am'
the postmodern novel
states something akin to
'He is the Father because
he eternally has a Son
through whom he affirms
Himself as Father.'
But this is perhaps
even too speculative for our tastes;
it's in all likelihood
beyond the scope of this inquiry!

XIV

(.738)

Yet of course
this could be
considered controversial
as the median
postmodernist ostensibly
loves nothing more
than flaunting his
reckless atheism—
what the postmodernist
adores more
than anything
is to flaunt his atheism—
if the postmodernist

becomes peacock-like
about anything
it's without a doubt
his fervent disbelief
in God.

Yet is it possible
that a Byzantine monk
penned the first truly
monumental postmodern novel?

It's an interesting query
although I have a feeling
it would disgust
Hawkes if not Nabokov
but most likely
Nabokov as much as Hawkes.
Nabokov
and I'm basing this
on little to nothing
strikes me as someone
who would be loath
to be grouped together
with Symeon the New Theologian.

XV
(.790)

In his fiftieth hymn
Symeon sensually notes
'she reached out to me like a breast
for me to suckle imperishable milk'
we should inquire
into this note further
as perhaps curiously
our author even refers to the Father
(or the Son)
in this quote as αὐτή
the feminine pronoun
hence the quote
was rendered in English
as She rather than He
yet another
postmodern element
to be found in the Eros
referring to the Father
in the feminine conjunctive
in the Eleventh Century!
(Perhaps even
the late Tenth!)
So many of us
to this day still blindly
refer to the Father
employing primarily

the male conjunctive
yet I've never
personally subscribed
to this conjunctive conditioning myself
although I usually refrain from
engaging in public statements
regarding conjunctive matters.

XVI

(.756)

Ultimately
both the postmodernists
as well as
Symeon the New Theologian
recognize the for
lack of a better phrase
quantum character
of our material existence—
while the postmodernists
in many if not all cases
tend to either form or support
various crusades due
to this characteristic
Symeon did the opposite
instead rescinding completely
and making no explicit
political statement on
the conjunctive character(s)

of his world.
(Yet of course
there is the speculation
that Symeon himself
was of a conjunctive deviation
so to speak
unique to his milieu
that of the eunuch
although we don't know this for certain.)
The world
its quantum character
was no call to reform to Symeon;
no it was a sign to rescind!

XVII
(.734)

For my part
I certainly can't deny
that my personal predilections
fall closer to rescinding—
not a week goes by
that the thought of entering
a monastery
doesn't become
at least momentarily appealing!
The monastery
to me
at times

seems like a second home
despite the fact
to the best of my knowledge
I've never stepped foot into a monastery
of any sort.

Yet where could I possibly
belong more than a monastery
with few to no possessions
and nothing pressing
to do besides monitor
my own fleeting thoughts
isn't the assessment
of one's own waves
of fleeting thought
a full-time job
in and of itself?

How could we possibly
have time for anything else
if we're attempting to
maintain a modicum
of honesty
with ourselves?

XVIII

(.785)

Approaching the automatic entrance
of Fresh Shore's
on Mineral Spring Avenue
hoping with
all of my heart
that their prepared foods
were in the ballpark
of what my mom
generally discovers
at Dave's Supermarket
I glanced
across the street
and saw the old building
of Ken Wok Chinese Cuisine
halfway torn down
and I took out my phone
and made a brief note
on the indefatigable impermanence
that remains
so pervasive all around us
as I do each time
a building
I felt some sort of
nonsensical connection with
on Mineral Spring Avenue
gets knocked down.

The Plane of an Ottoman NYC
(.682)

“So anyway we were at the Hot Club for the first time in ages, a bartender I hadn't seen in at least four to five years was still behind the bar, she recognized me immediately,

with a new purple dyed haircut that, although probably a smidgeon young for her age, suited her nicely, I thought. She poured me a healthy amount of Mezcal into a short glass,

and only minutes later I'd notice her carrying a bottle of Del Maguey Vida, my favorite brand of Mezcal, back to the bar, and right then I surmised that I was drinking my favorite type of Mezcal.

Of course healthy pours are double edged swords when you have a tendency to chug whatever's in front of you, which for better or worse is a tendency I've never entirely managed to discard,

especially when in social settings. Socially, historically, I've always found myself sprinting toward liquor, with reckless abandon almost I perform fifty yard dashes toward

whatever my spirit of choice is that month, and even though on balance I've reduced these excessive tendencies with age, I'd be lying to both myself and you if I said I'd discarded them completely.

And to be honest I'm unsure if I'd wish to discard them in totality, to extinguish my child-like idiocy once and for all, because sure from a certain vantage point I suppose I remain a

man-child of sorts, but on the other hand man-children are necessary, no? It's man-children who make the greatest philosophical strides. To think like an adult is to take on the guise of utter rationalism, which hardly ever if not never innovates, which refuses to become idiotic enough to alter fundamental axioms, as axioms are inevitably created by the child-like thinkers, by idiots of the spirit. Even God Himself allegedly said Let there be light, which is a man-child like statement in my opinion. Personally I still refuse to sleep in the dark."

"The dark is contemptible in my mind." "There's something inherent in being itself that's synonymous with light in my opinion." "But how was Hot Club?"

"It was interesting, intriguing, better than I anticipated, given the last couple times I'd been I felt the atmosphere to be a bit too clubby for my tastes, a tad too adolescent for even my man-child palette. I saw the doorman from The Parlour there, because apparently he works security at Hot Club as well?"

In any case as the party increased in size Katreena and I ended up engaged in an extended conversation with a petite fair-skinned female who adamantly claimed to be of New York origin, yet when an appropriate opening emerged for me to ask her what part of New York

she was from specifically she prevaricated, saying she was quote-unquote from all over, but then saying The Bronx. She was from The Bronx? She didn't strike me as someone from The Bronx, and for someone whose identity seemed to be so tied with being from New York, a New Yorker, which is the case with so many people from New York, it's actually kind of sad to me, this violent melding that seems to occur with people who identify themselves with New York City, yet this female, who for the record I found pleasant, oddly enough refused to explicitly claim a borough, until she reluctantly said The Bronx, which I think struck everyone as totally misguided.

She wasn't from The Bronx, that much was clear. She could be from anywhere in the world except The Bronx. This idea that this female's origin story began in The Bronx was completely absurd.

Which borough she was from, assuming she was from a particular borough, now that was still ambiguous, but it was clear she wasn't from the Bronx. Queens, that I could give some credence to I suppose. It might be a reasonable speculation to suggest she was from Queens. Perhaps from an opulent family in Upper Manhattan, now that was even more likely-because she certainly struck me as someone who came from money, there was no trace of a New York accent in her speech, or of any accent in her speech,

and the geography of Upper Manhattan is close enough to The Bronx that she could, in her mind at least, perhaps justify claiming The Bronx as a borough, even though I find that

to be a bit ridiculous, to conflate Upper Manhattan with The Bronx, to think any thinking person would buy the idea that Upper Manhattan is in any way synonymous with The Bronx.

Staten Island and Brooklyn strike me as more remote possibilities of her origin, and then we could also speculate on outer-areas as well, because while Yonkers strikes me as a stretch,

I think Westchester County or Long Island are both certainly in play.” “Do you think it possible that she could have been from, say, Westchester County, which would explain her moneyed demeanor,

yet moved to The Bronx for work later in life, and now, and I agree that this is misguided, feels as though that working experience justifies her claim that The Bronx is a place she's actually from?”

“Giorgios, that actually strikes me as perhaps the most sensible explanation of all. I also noticed, and I think it's worth noting, that when she sat her posterior was a tad more ample

than I'd imagined, that this posterior along with the ambiguity of her origin began to strike me as almost ominously out of place, as if another plane of existence was forming.”

“That happens at times—posteriors and their relative amplitude can vary widely from expectations, the posterior is almost impossible to estimate based on face alone.”

“I guess it’s reasonable to assert that we often look at a person’s face and almost algorithmically create a simulation of their body from this face, that our mind works

essentially algorithmically, we should admit that, that our minds are probably just composed of algorithms, and that we perform a similar process with voice, which actually happened

to me just recently as well, where I spoke to a person on the phone and inevitably created an algorithmic simulation of her face in my mind. When I saw her face at last online I was struck

by how much this picture differed from the simulation I’d made in my mind—who was it I believed I was speaking to? I look at someone’s face and then I ruthlessly algorithmically

simulate their body without consent, whereas I hear someone’s voice and then I ruthlessly algorithmically simulate their face without consent, but in both cases my accuracy is

totally stochastic, and by stochastic I mean terrible.”

“From voice to face and from face to body, we make ill-advised, ruthless speculations regarding everyone who enters our periphery!”

“In this sense the simulation of the human begins with voice. From voice alone we algorithmically simulate both face and body, because from face we simulate body, as you said.

In any case as the conversation progressed we - myself, Katreena, and this female - began to touch on the topic of what exactly this female had been doing since leaving New York,

and in the midst of this it came up that it just so happened that her and I were actually the same age, that she'd been finding locales she liked at our age, although she noted how

difficult it was, compared to New York, where she knew the ins and outs of where to patronize and when, what establishments she enjoyed and which ones she despised.

I agreed immediately, noting that at my age, at our age, it was one of the main deterrents to moving to another city, particularly New York, which I'd strongly considered moving to more than

once, but as I said explicitly to her to have to relearn every single place that I like to go, and how to get there, to relearn which places offend my palate, at my age,

it just struck me as way too daunting of a task to take on.

It struck me as a task that would consume so much of my energy that it would essentially mute all of my philosophical energies

for at least five years. She mentioned a Lebanese bar where “you walk downstairs” that she liked a lot. I said the entire city of Providence has become essentially one extended hookah lounge, which I admitted to her, full disclosure, appeals to me deeply, which, full disclosure, seemed to genuinely surprise her, that the entire city of Providence was an extended hookah lounge. I said the city is littered with Greek and Lebanese places like that, which of course Giorgos we know isn't true in the least, that there are only a fraction of Greek locations compared to Lebanese locations, yet I stated it with so much aplomb she didn't question it at all, although she did immediately question whether Greeks smoked hookah, to which I simply said Ottoman Empire, to which she said of course, immediately connecting the dots.”“My goodness Markos, I have to say that's fairly impressive, that a fair-skinned female from New York would connect those dots that quickly. The Ottoman Empire, I mean at this point it's basically a piece of arcana. No one knows anything about the Ottoman Empire anymore.”

“Oh I completely agree! I totally feel like there are just very few people in our general age range who know anything about the Ottoman Empire, and I'd one hundred percent wager that not one

other person at Hot Club that night who knew anything about the Ottoman Empire, never mind its very specific ethnic components, who could put the pieces of Greeks ancestrally smoking hookah together by the utterance of two words: Ottoman Empire. In fact it seems to me that the Ottoman Empire is maybe the most neglected empire of the past half millennium, that it inherited its Byzantine predecessor's characteristic of being completely discarded by modern scholarship. No one knows what you speak of when you so much as mention the Ottoman Empire, people are flummoxed, except apparently this female who may or may not be from New York, but certainly isn't from The Bronx. In short I quickly found that the ambiguity of what New York City borough characteristic was inherent in this female became reflected right into the ambiguity of the ethnic blocks of the Ottoman Empire, in a post-Ottoman American diaspora, in an America that is itself multi-ethnic, and not entirely differently than the Ottomans, Ottomans who were only trumped in their importation of African slaves by America's out of control love affair with the African slave. No one imported more African slaves than the Ottoman Empire, except of course the United States of America.

The ambiguity of the traits displayed by a Greek versus a Turk versus a Lebanese versus a Kurd versus an Armenian in the seemingly limitless Providence Hookah Network

was suddenly a direct analog to the ambiguity of the New York City borough characteristics inherent in a person who perhaps dubiously claims to be from New York City.

In one instance we're unsure if we're witnessing a Greek, a Turk, a Lebanese, a Kurd, an Armenian; in the other instance we're unsure if we're witnessing a person from The Bronx,

from Manhattan, from Staten Island, from Brooklyn, from Queens; in both cases the overlapping characteristics, outside of their original context (of the Ottoman Empire and

New York City, respectively), become vague enough in their nuance that the identity of each bleeds into the other, until the individual identities are erased completely.

The New York City diaspora in Providence can reflect characteristics associated with Staten Island, with Manhattan, with The Bronx, with Brooklyn, with Queens, while the median

hookah smoker this New York City transplant may encounter in the extended Providence Hookah Network may display characteristics of the Greek, of the Turk, of the Lebanese,

of the Kurd, of the Armenian. In both cases what's
Staten Island, what's Queens, what's Kurd, what's
Greek, what's Brooklyn, what's Manhattan, what's
Lebanese, what's Turk,
what's The Bronx, what's Armenian all bleed into one
another until they're essentially indistinguishable
from each other, until they're essentially
extinguished,
until we reach a fundamental oneness of an Ottoman
New York City, a legitimate plane of existence that
came into being only at the Hot Club via
conversation this past Friday night.”
“This is a physical plane of existence now, the Ottoman
New York City of Oneness.” “It can no longer be
denied, an Ottoman New York City where all
identity has been extinguished into
a monadic Oneness came into existence on a Friday
night at the Hot Club.” “Yet that girl - could she
have actually been from The Bronx?”
“With one hundred percent certainty I will assure you
Giorgos, that the girl I spoke with Friday night was
absolutely not from The Bronx.”

A Modest Parallel Universe
(.708)

“Initially a thin hipster with a full red beard was in the bathroom at Nick-A-Nee’s, peeing at the tall urinal, but when I went in, after he walked out, I made a point to pee at the kiddie urinal, a trademark of mine, for whatever reason I find myself more at ease at the kiddie urinals, as I’m long-torsoed in addition to being of only average height; yes, the kiddie urinals are essentially made for me, and peeing at the kiddie urinal I took note of what looked like a piece of asscrack lint connected inextricably to a long piece of ass hair. This is what it struck me as at least. I thought back to parking on the street fifty feet from Nick-A-Nee’s, to my consternation with the driver wearing a snowcap in his maroon pickup truck cursing me through his windshield as I slowly scoped the one open spot on the street. At that time, with his perturbed expression and prehistoric facial features, he struck me as the worst person in the world and frankly still does. I wished nothing but the worst things on this person as I pulled over to let him pass, haranguing him through my windshield as he simultaneously screamed at me through his windshield, then calmly hit reverse to move back into the middle of the street, to parallel park in the only open spot,

just momentarily lodging the right rear wheel ever so slightly onto the attenuated curb. In my mind this man in the pickup truck was a grotesque stain on the face of our planet.

His face, in both its structure and expression, sticking with me at the bar in Nick-A-Nee's, more or less revolted me in the most extreme of ways. The man to my left ordered

an impressively grotesque smelling soup from the bar-it was all I could smell at the time, and the stench was such that it struck me as frankly a little unbelievable it wafted from a bowl

a man was actually eating from, yet if anything this made me enjoy Nick-A-Nee's even more. The band playing the bar employed a white saxophone player, and each

respective instrumentalist was drinking a separate, distinct variety of alcohol-one whiskey, one craft beer, one some type of mixed drink, one nothing at all, all four frankly looking

little like typical musicians, and I found it notable how easily the saxophone, I presumed tenor, sat in the mix with just a microphone next to it, given the accompaniment of

electric guitar, electric bass, and acoustic drums that were played in a thoroughly rock, as opposed to jazz, style. I guess I never knew that about tenor saxophone.

Rock drums have increasingly distressed me of late.

When I think of a style of drumming that offends my taste, rock drumming immediately vaults to the top of the list-in my opinion

Stratos most rock music would be immeasurably improved with the simple removal of percussion, or at least with a more muted substitute of percussion. Maybe a tongue drum?

Amplified tongue drum? Distorted tambourine? But honestly that's just me, because I fully realize most people love percussion, that percussion is viewed as the so-called backbone

of modern composition, that tons of listeners still venerate rock music. In any case I guess I should start to explain how I got here, shouldn't I?" "From your parallel universe you mean?"

"Exactly Stratos. It now seems to me that I crossed over into this universe, or I should say I became aware that it had happened, precisely at the point where the bozo in the snowcap

in his dark red pickup truck began yelling at me through his windshield, as I attempted to parallel park up the street from Nick-A-Nee's, where a man would then order

one of the most disgusting smelling soups I've ever encountered from its bar. It was obvious as the man, who I despised, looked exactly like someone from Alabama,

he was wearing a snowcap despite it being a moderately temperate day in early April, and given these facts it was obvious something had shifted significantly, but I couldn't draw any conclusions quite at that point. But these are the types of cues you have to take into account with regard to things such as these Stratos, parallel universe conundrums so to speak. How exactly it happens I'm not at liberty to detail at this time, as it's possible I'm ignorant of the mechanics of the process, or I'm aware of the process in a way I can only communicate in indirect ways." "This makes sense, Markos. There's obviously only so much we can put into words when it comes to parallel universes."

"For example it was precisely at Nick-A-Nee's that I happened to log onto the basketball-reference dot com webpage Stratos, which only confirmed my suspicions, which had been steadily rising, which only acted as another clue as I delved deeper into the statlines I'll detail right now. Specifically, as I recalled it, beyond a shadow of a doubt it sat in my memories, the Boston Celtic Jayson Tatum owned a statistical profile that exceeded that of Dallas Maverick Luka Doncic, whereas Luka Doncic had a statistical summation that lagged that of Jayson Tatum. And yet on basketball-reference dot com at Nick-A-Nee's, only

moments after said bozo in snowcap in the Alabama-esque maroon pickup truck berated me through his windshield, it occurred to me that Luka Doncic had by far the more complete statistical profile compared to Jayson Tatum, despite both Luka and Tatum averaging above thirty points per game this NBA season. Specifically, on this side Stratos, it seemed that Luka differentiated himself from Tatum by getting to the free throw stripe at a much greater clip, by making plays for others at a clip that more than doubled Tatum's rate. Where Jayson Tatum assisted on just twenty percent of his possessions, while turning the ball over on ten percent, Luka Doncic assisted on forty three percent of his possessions while turning the ball over on only twelve percent, while both rebounded just about thirteen percent of their possible possessions and shot an aggregate percentage of sixty (true shooting percentage) on their thirty points per game. Yet I explicitly recalled Jayson Tatum being the far superior playmaker, by more than double, when compared to Luka Doncic, in those exact terms of assist percentage and free throw rate, yet when I logged onto basketball-reference at Nick-A-Nee's, to my great surprise, Luka Doncic

separated himself from Jayson Tatum by his higher propensity of getting to the free throw stripe and by his stark contrast in setting his teammates up for made shots (especially when compared to his propensity to turn the ball over). It's only in the most minute of ways that we can detect these transitions Stratos, if that makes sense, that we can conclude we've traversed across potential dimensions, if that makes sense?" "Oh, absolutely!"

"And to add to the confusion it was only a night later, in a vivid dream, that I found myself in a desolate house covered with orange wallpaper, curiously preoccupied with bathing myself, apparently getting ready for something I couldn't quite put my finger on-it was in this home with the orange interior that I felt again this psychic energy with near strangers,

near strangers who seem to pop into my mental space unannounced, that has increasingly struck me as an actual physical phenomenon. That I can actually think back toward these near strangers in a physical fashion. Yet this was before a particular shadow from my past appeared to me yet again in dream, in the most vivid of manners, and I began to run from something, something I couldn't identify, while simultaneously reconnecting with this shadow without either of us saying a word to each other,

until I stumbled upon what looked like a locker room in an open field. I entered the building, a so-called locker room in an open field, and realized all of its memorabilia was from

nineteen ninety eight-and I realized I'd traveled back to nineteen ninety eight, that everything I touched was totally nineteen ninety eight, that my own so-called identity was

just a clumsy block across something that could be traversed if approached properly, and then suddenly the thought occurred to me: Time starts in the middle and winds around,

always in the middle, I thought, that this notion of time beginning at the beginning is entirely false, perhaps even nonsensical. When awake I frantically wrote a note that simply said:

Time starts in the middle and winds around. And as I encountered this idea streams of green for lack of a better word time shot out, like Nickelodeon Gack or something,

various streams of time overlapping each other in joyous bursts of green, like the word Go, and it was a sort of joyous event even in its ambiguity. I was a little disappointed to wake up.”

“Did you do shrooms at all?” “No sadly Stratos I was completely free from hallucinogens when I went to sleep, when I went to Nick-A-Nee’s, when the red-bearded hipster peed

at the adult urinal, when the man next to me ordered the disgusting soup, when the bozo with the snowcap screamed at me, when the saxophone was surprisingly high in the mix.

No we don't necessarily need to travel in the traditional sense in order to travel great distances, that much we can be sure of." "That makes complete sense to me, Markos!"

Diagrams

\$14.28 is More Attractive Than \$14.00

Diagrams

(echoes):(syllables) .(approximate self-similarity)

Inscrutable Myths

--01 539:721 .748

Well Mr [K][a]zantz[a][k][i][s], [i]f I'm [b][e]ing hone[s]t
with [y]ou, [c]omp[1][e]te[1][y] hone[s]t with [y]ou, if I'm
h[o]lding [b]a[c]k [n]ext to [n][o] hone[s]ty what[s][o]ever,
I should [n][o]te that, ye[s], [i]t'[s] [i]nd[u]b[ita]b[ly] tr[ue]
that of [l]ate [l]ve [f]ound m[y][s]el[f] [g][u]ttou[s][l]ly
ch[ew]ing [f]our to [s]even [s][l]i[c]es of [g]u[m] in
[s][i]multaneit[y], [f]or a va[r]iet[y] of [r]e[asons]--[i]n
[f][a]ct, [i]t was ju[s]t ye[s]terday [a]f[ter]noon, [p]rior to
[e]aving ou[r] a[p]a[r]tment to [g]o [g]rab a [c]o[ff]e[e]
that I [i]nd[i]s[c]r[i]m[i]nately shoved a[n] e[n]t[ire]
[p]a[ck] of [g]um i[n]t[o] [m]y [m]outh and
ex[u]b[erant]ly ch[ew]ed this [l]arge [b]all of [g]um,
[w]ondered [i]f che[w]ing [g]um [w]as actually [g]ood
[f]or your teeth, when [th]e [th]ought o[cc]urred to [m]e:
Is [e]m[ph] the [h]ighe[s]t [f]orm of [c]la[ss]i[c]al [m]usi[c]
A[m]e[r][i]c[a] [i]s [h]i[s]to[r]i[c]ally [r]e[s]p[on]sible [f]or?
When di[s]c[us]sing A[m]e[r]i[c]an [m]usi[c], I thought
[w]hile che[w]ing a[n] e[n]t[ire] [p]a[ck] [o]f g[u]m, a litany
of [g]en[er]es, f[r]om [p]ost-bo[p] [j]azz, to ex[p]eri[m]ental
ro[ck], to [a]v[ant]-[m]etal to the [s][o]-[c]a[l]led
[c]l[as]s[i]c[al]ly trained [c]om[p]o[s]ers of [A]m[er]i[c]an
[d]e[s]cent, are [d]i[s]c[us]sed as 'the tru[ly] [c]l[as]s[i]c[al]
[m]usi[c] of A[m]e[r]i[c]a.' 'B[ut] wh[at] if e[m]o is the

t[r]u[ly] [c][l]a[ss]i[c]al A[m]e[r]i[c]an [m]usi[c]? I thought
 to [m]y[s]elf, che[w]ing a[n] e[n]tire [p]a[ck] [o]f g[u]m,
 [p]re[p]a[r]ing my[s]el[f] to [p]ay [f]ull-[p]ri[c]e [f]or a
 [c]o[ff]ee out [s]ome[w]here, des[p]ite the [f][a][c]t [I]
 h[a]d a[n] e[n]tire [p]lot of [c]o[ff]ee at [m]y a[p]art[m]ent,
 waiting to [b]e im[b]ibed [f]or [f]r[e]. The [p]ri[m]ar[y]
 [c]o[n]c[ei]t of [e][m]o [m]usi[c] [i]s that [i]ts [c]re[ators] are
 young a[n]d white a[n]d [m]a[le], and [th]at [th]ey
 or[i]g[i]n[al]e [f]rom [n]ei[gh]borhoods that are sa[f]e i[f]
 n[ot] [o]pule[n]t a[n]d utter[ly] h[a]te their [l]ives.
 [N]othing, it should be [n]oted, is [e]ver [p]ro[c]e[ed]ing
 w[ell] for the [e]mo band, as the [s]lighte[s]t [d]e[v]iation
 from the [e]mo [b]and's [b]e[s]t [c]a[s]e [s]cenario is
 [a]lways [a]p[ro]c[al]y[pt]i[c], des[p]ite the f[a]c[t]
 th[at], [s]o[c]io[p]o[li]ti[c]a[l]l[y] at [l]ea[s]t, [th]ey have
 [e]very[th]ing going for [th]em. The [e]mo
 [p]ar[t]i[c]i[p]ant [e]x[i]sts at the a[p]ex of the
 A[m]e[r]i[c]an [t]o[te]m [p]o[le], and des[p]ite thi[s] fa[c]t
 [e]verything re[m]ains [e]ssentially o[b]je[c]tiona[b]le to
 them. Noth[ing] [i]s going well! The emo [s]ong [i]s, [i]n
 pract[i]c[e], [th]e [a]nti[th]e[s]i[s] of the virtue [s]ignal.
 [A]nd it o[cc]urred to [m]e, as I le[f]t [m]y a[p]art[m]ent to
 [p]ay [f]ou[r] dollars [f]o[r] a [c]o[ff]ee that would
 i[n]evita[b]ly [b]e [c]o-o[p]ted [b]y a[n] art [s]c[h]ool
 [p]ro[f]e[ss]or, with n[o] regard to [s]o[c]ia[l]ly
 a[cc]e[p]ta[b]le d[e]c[i]b[e]l [l]evels. [p]ont[i]f[i]c[ati]ng
 [a]b[ou]t [p]eo[p]le as [b]r[ands] to [a] [f]o[r]eign
 exch[a]nge [s]tudent, [th]at [th]i[s] t[y]p[e] of
 w[i]d[e]-e[y]e[d] [n]ar[c]i[s]s[m], [th]at [th]i[s] un[i]ron[i]c

[i]g[n]oran[c]le of [s]ocio[p]ol[i]t[i]c[al] t[em]p[or]al
thi[s] ob[s]e[ss]ion w[i]th di[r]e[c]t, l[i]ved
[e]x[p]l[e]r[i]en[c]e at the [e]x[p]en[s]e of [e]verything
[c]on[c]e[pt]ual---is [p]erha[p]s the a[p]ex of what should
[c]om[p]rise A[m]er[i]c[an] [c]la[s]s[i]c[al] [m]usi[c]? [A]nd
I [n]o[dd]ed my [h]ead [a]t this [n]otion [a]s we en[t]ered
the [H]on[d]a [a]s[s]king [K][a]t i[f] sh[e]’d b[e] w[i]l[l]ing to
[p]l[ay] ‘[O]ne-[E]ighty by [S]ummer’ on our w[ay] to
the [c]off[er] sho[p].

---02 413:542 .762

I [s]u[pp]ose you [c]ould [s]ay it was [f]ortuitou[s], i[f] not
a [d]ire[c]t [p]ro[d]u[c]t of [f]ate it[s]e[lf], that with [th]ese
[th]oughts in m[i]nd, wh[i]le browsing my Sho[p]ping
L[i]st on A[m]az[o]n d[ot] [c]o[m], while [c]on[s]i[de]ring
the [m]erits of the [s]o-[c]alled univer[s]it[y] [p]ro[f]e[ss]or
a[ft]er my en[c]ounter w[i]th th[i]s [p]lea-brained art
[p]ro[f]e[ss]or [f]rom Yo[re]n[i]’s, I [n]o[t]ic[ed] [th]at [th]e
[C]on[s]tantine E[ven] [m]o[n]o[graph] b[y] [m]y old
[c]ollege [p]ro[f]e[ss]or, [M]ari[o]s [P]h[i]l[i]ppides, was
[n]ow on [s]ale---re[d]u[c]ed from the
[b]or[d]erl[i]ne-[i]n[s]ulting [p]ri[c]e of [n]i[n]ety [d]ollars
for the hard[c]over, to the [i]n[c]rea[s]ingl[y] [p]a[ta]b[le]
[p]ri[c]e of [n]i[n]e [d]ollars for the [K]in[d]le e[d]ition.
I’d had [n]o [c]o[m]muni[c]ation w[i]th [P]h[i]l[i]ppides
[s]in[c]e [m]y t[i]me at [M]a[s]achu[s]etts, wh[i]ch [i]s
un[s]ur[p]rising, as I doubt [s]trongl[y]
[P]h[i]l[i]ppid[e]s re[c]alls [m]e in the [l]ea[st], as
a[l]l [m]o[s]t the entirety of my [l]ate a[d]o[le]s[cen]c[e] was

[m]ar[k]ed b[y] [m]y [d]e[d]i[c][a]tio[n] to [m]y
 [d]i[ss]i[p][a]tio[n]-[p]ro[c]e[ss], which I'd [e]xte[n][d]e[d]
 i[n]to a[n] [e][r]a [s]ome m[a]y [ch]oose to [ch]a[r]a[c]terize
 as a [p]o[s]t-youth [e][r]a, [s][o] the two of us had [n][o]
 [n]ee[d], [n][o] r[e]ason to [c]o[m]muni[c]ate [w]ith [o]ne
 a[n]other, [p]ri[m]ari[l]y [b]e[c]ause Ph[i][l][i][pp]i[d]es had
 [n]o [i][d]ea who [I] was. Ju[s]t [b]e[c]ause [t]wo per[s]ons
 o[s][t]en[s]i[b]ly share a [m]odi[c]um of [s]o-[c]alled
 'Gree[k] [b]lood' in no way [m]eans they [sh]ould
 [c]o[m]mu[n]i[c]ate [w]ith [o]ne a[n]other. [F]or
 [Ph][i][l][i][pp]i[d]es's [p]art, [h]e [h]as no [i][d]ea who [I]
 am, and [f]or [m]y [p]art, [m]y on[l]y [i]n[t]eraction with
 [Ph][i][l][i][pp]i[d]es [t]ook [p]l[a]c[e] i[n] the [m][i]d[s]t of
 [m]y [d]i[ss]i[p][a]tio[n]-[p]ro[c]e[ss], of [w]hich I [w]as
 [d]e[d]i[c][a]ted to---yet [b]eing that I'd [b]een [l]oo[k]ing
 [f]or a mono[g]r[aph] on the [s]o-[c]alled 'l[a]st
 em[p]eror of the [G]r[ee]k[s]', and [b]eing that
 [Ph][i][l][i][pp]i[d]es was the [o]n[l]y [a]uthor with [a]
 r[e]c[ent] monogra[ph] [p]u[b]l[i]shed on the [f]inal
 [s]o-[c]alled [C]on[s]tantine of [H]e[l]en, it ju[s]t [s]o
 [h]a[pp]ened that our [p]a[ths] [w]ould [o]n[c]e again
 [c]ro[ss], thi[s] t[i]me on the [K]indle [a]pp of m[y]
 i]Phone. [P]erh[a]p[s] it was [f]ate, just [a]s it was [f]ate
 th[at] I'd [s]it through an e[b]u[l]ient [b]l[ov]i[ati]on
 [s]ession [f]rom a [p]lea-[b]r[ai]ned art [s]chool
 [p]ro[f]e[ss]or on one [d]ay, [th]en on [th]e n[e]xt [d]ay
 [f]ind [m]y [ow]n [o]ld [p]r[of]e[ss]or's [m]onog[r]a[ph]
 [f]ortuitou[s]ly on [s]ale, [r]e[d]u[c]ed t[o] a [p]r[i]c[e]

[m]ore a[pp][r][o][p]r[i]ate [f]or the [p][r][o]le[t]a[r]iat as [s]uch.

--03 602:811 .742

A[f]ter [c]on[f]ir[m]ing the [p][r]ice [r]e[d]u[c]tion [m]ulti[p]le [d]ays in a [r]ow I [f]inally [p]ulled the t[r]igger and [b]ought the [b]ook, [o]nly [d]own[1][o]a[d]ing said [b]ook [d]u[r]ing a [s]o[1]ita[r]y [c]ir[c]u[1]ar [s]o[j]ourn a[r]ound [F]oxwoods, I[k]e busy a[t]temp[t]ing [t]o [c]on[t]inue his [l]u[ck] [o]n the s[1]o[t] machines--[h]aving wo[n] two [h]u[n][d]red [d]o[1]lars on o[n]e [r]oll [p][r][i]or to our [h]igh [c]l[a]s[s] Chin[e]se [d]i[n]ner, wh[i]ch he [m][a]gn[a]ni[m]ou[s]ly [c]om[p]ed--[a]nd [K]at [p][a]ssed out in the [c]ar, [t]ired a[n]d hungover [a]fter a[n] ill-[a][d][v][i]sed [d]e[c]ision to [d]ay[d]r[in]k [p][r][i]or to our [v]entu[r]ing to the [c]a[s]i[n]o for the [n]ight. At fir[s]t, in [p]re[p]a[r]ation of my [r]ea[d]ing, I [s]at in l[i]ne at [D]un[k]in [D]onuts, [s]urp[ri]sing[1]y the on[1]y [c]o[ff]ee sho[p] o[p]en at the ex[p]a[n]sive [c]a[s]ino, [a]nd bought a [m][e]d[i]um i[c]ed [c]o[ff]ee [f]or [m]y[s]el[f] with al[m]ond [m]ilk. Three [m]en [s]t[ood] in [f]r[on]t of [m]e and [s]t[r]u[ck] [m]e as a[b]u[tt]ing old [m]en un[t]il I [b]egan [t]o [c]on[s]ider they very well [c]ould [b]e the [s]a[m]e [a]ge as I, [c]l[i]ng[i]ng, [i]t [s]t[r]u[ck] me, to [p]erha[p]s [s]ome fa[d]ing [b]ea[c]on of youth, one of them a[d]orned in [d]eluxe [M]i[ch]ael Jor[d]an [s]n[e]akers, the other [m]a[k]ing a long [s]p[ee]ch to the [D]un[k]in [D]onuts bar[i]s[ta] about [h]ow [m]uch [h]e li[k]es his [C]ara[m]el

[c]off[ee] yet [c]uriou[s][y] [p]un[c]tu[a]ting the [n]ote by [r]e[p]eatedl[y] [s]a[y]ing he's [n]ot that [p]i[ck]y. In the [r]ain[f]ore[s]t [c]a[s]i[n]o, [s]i[pp]ing my i[c]ed [c]o[ff]ee, [w]ith [w]ater [au][d]i[b]l[y] [f]a[ll]ing [a]ll [a]round m[e], I got my [f]ive [d]ollar [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er g[a]me out of the w[ay], rea[l]izing [s]l[ow]l[y] [th]at [th]e [f]i[r]s[t] two machines [d]i[d]n't wo[r]k, then [s]l[ow]l[y] rea[l]i[z]ing [I] [c]om[p]l[e]t[e]l[y] [f]orgot how to [p]l[ay] double [p]o[k]er, [d]e[s]p[ite] [b]eing [s]o exu[b]erant at [th]e [th]ought of [f]i[n]ally [f]i[n]d[ing] a [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er machine to [p]l[ay]. I [g]oo[g]led 'How to [p]l[ay] [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er' [b]ut [c]oul[d]n't [s]eem to f[i]nd a [c]on[c]i[s]e ex[p]lan[a]tion, an ex[p]lan[a]tion that would a[ll]ow me to [p]l[ay] [d]ou[b]le [p]o[k]er imm[e]d[i]atel[y], [w]hich [w]as the [e]xtent of [e]verything [I] [w]an[t]ed at the [t]i[m]e. [L]eaving the [d]ouble [p]o[k]er [m]ach[i]nes a[f]ter i[m]m[e]d[i]atel[y] [l]osing [f]ive [d]o[ll]ars, I [d]e[c]i[d]ed to [s]p[en]d the [l]a[s]t of my [c]a[s]h o[n] a[n] i[c]e [c]ream [c]one, then begin [r]ea[d]ing [Ph]i[l]i[pp]i[d]e[s]' monog[r]a[ph]. The i[c]e [c]r[ea]m ba[r]i[s]ta in[f]ormed me there were n[o] [c]o[n]es le[f]t, [w]hich [w]as di[s]a[p]pointing in the extr[e]m[e]. [F]eig[n]ing [n]o [d]i[s]a[p]pointment, I or[d]ered t[wo] [s]c[oo]p[s] of the [c]a[pp]uccin[o] ge[l]at[o] and was [s]ub[s]e[qu]entl[y] given a [s]p[oon] hal[f] the [s]ize of my own [p]i[n]k[y] [f]i[n]ger, wh[i]ch [i]sn't a [p]arti[cu]larl[y] [l]arge [p]i[n]k[y] [f]i[n]ger, I[v]e nev[er] had my [p]i[n]k[y] [f]inger de[s]c[ri]bed [a]s [a]b[n]orma[l]l[y] [l]arge [b]y anyone, to the [b]e[s]t of my

k[n]owledge, to [s][c]oo[p] out [b]oth [s][c]oo[p]s of i[c]e [c]ream from the [s]ur[p]risingl[y] [d]e[e]p [c]u[p]. I [d]i[d]n't obj[e]ct, in[s]t[e]ad fee[l]ing [c]uriousl[y] [l]u[ck]l[y] to [p]lay [s]even [d]o[l]lars for thi[s] i[c]e [c]ream [c]u[p], then wal[k]ing around to [f]i[nd] m[y][s]el[f] [q]uite [e]njoying [s]aid i[c]e [c]ream, the [e]nd-game of [s]aid i[c]e [c]ream of [c]our[s]e [b]eing that I ate the [l]a[s]t [h]a[lf] [s]c[oop] e[ss]entiall[y] [w]ith my [b]are [h]a[nds], [w]al[k]ing around [b]y m[y][s]elf, enjoying nothing more than [ea]ting thi[s] i[c]e [c]r[ea]m with [b]oth [a]n [a]b[s]urdl[y] tin[y] [s]p[oon] and al[s]o with my [b]a[re] h[ands]. [F]ina[l]l[y], [a]f[ter] washing the c[a]p[puccin]o ge[l]at[o] off my h[ands] in the [F]oxwoods [r]e[s]t a[r]ea, I [s]at on a [p]ar[k] bench and o[p]ened u[p] my [K]in[d]le a[pp] to o[p]en u[p] [Ph]ili[pp][i][d]e[s]' mo[n]o[gl]o[ph] on the [f]i[n]al [s]o-c[al]led em[p]er[or] of the [G]r[ee]k[s].

Contemporary Shootings

1296:1746 .742

--01 128:167 .766

W[el]l, I [g]u[e]ss [i]t's been [g]i[ve] or ta[k]e [s]even years [s]in[c]e I [f]ir[s]t ex[p]erien[c]ed the [s]ubl[i]me del[i]ght of [s]mo[k]ing the hoo[k]a[h] at [P]a[sh]a on [A]llens [A]v[enue], [a]nd n[ea]rl[y] thr[e]e and hal[f] [s]in[c]e [I] was in[t]rodu[c]ed [t]o the [v]e[n]e[r]ated i[c]e hose, [s]o I [s]u[pp]o[se] I'm now at the [p]oint in m[y] [l]i[f]e where

an [e]qu[i]d[i]stant amount of t[i]me h[a]s [e]ll[ia]p[s]led
[s]in[c]e I [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]ed the [r]egu[l]ar [h]ose [a]s well
[a]s the [i]c[e] [h]ose, b[o]th h[o]ses that I'd of [c]ourse
[r]e[c]ommend, alth[ough] our [c]ountry's [r]a[p]id [r]a[te]
of [i]nfl[ati]on h[a]s [i]m[p]a[c]ted the [p]ri[c]e of [ea]ch
[s]ub[s]tantiall[y], while the [r]a[p]id [s]p[r]ead of the
[C]O[V]ID-Ninet[e]n [v]irus has [t]urned [s]mo[k]ing
hoo[k]ah i[n]t[o] a[n] i[n]c[rea]singl[y] frowned u[p]on
[p]ra[c]tic[e].

--02 110:152 .724

[I]t was [a]n [e]r[a] of l[i]nge[r]ing [s]oci[o]e[c]ono[m]i[c]
[c]o[m]m[ot]ion when my [f]r[i]end [C]urti[s] and I
ex[p]e[r]ien[c]ed [s]omewhat of a [d]ual [r]ou[gh] [p]atch
[r]o[m]anti[c]ally--[C]urti[s] [r]e[ck]l[e]ssl[y] [d]ivor[c]ed,
[a]fter [a]n [ei]ght year [r]e[l]a[ti]on[sh]ip a[n]d [n]ine
[m]onth [m]a[r]riage, wh[i]le [I] [r]e[m]ained i[n] l[e]ss
than i[n]f[r]e[qu]ent [c]o[m]muni[c]ation with a per[s]on
[I]'d i[n]ad[v]isab[ly] [b]e[c]ome i[n]volved [w]ith i[n] a
[v]ariety of [w]ays, wh[i]le at the [s]ame [t]ime [I]'d
inad[v]isab[ly] [e]n[te]red a [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent
re[l]a[ti]on[sh]i[p] with a [p]er[s]on I'd, [p]erha[p]s
un[s]urp[r]is[ingl[y], [e]ventua[lly] have a d[r]amat[ic]
falling out with.

--03 122:155 .787

[M]ore [o]ften [th]an n[ot] it [s]eems our [l]i[ves] are
[l]i[t]tle [m]ore [th]an a [s]eries of [i]ll-adv[i]sed
re[l]a[ti]on[sh]i[p]s, that [w]hen[e]ver [w]e [e]s[c]a[p]e

[f]rom [o]ne [i]ll-adv[i]sed [r]e[l]l[a]tion [w]e [f]ind a [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent [i]ll-adv[i]sed re[l]l[a]ti[on] [w]a[i]ting [f]or us [p]l[a]t[i]entl[y]---for my [p]art [I]’d [a]c[qu]i[red] [a] [c]u[s]tom of cha[s]ing the [i]ll-advise[d] [i]n [a]n al[m]ost [m]e[c]h[a]n[i]c[al] [m]a[n]ner, as [i]f the [i]ll-advise[d] had [s]ome [s]ort of di[r]e[c]t l[i]ne into m[y] ver[y] b[e]ing, a[n]d [i]n [r]et[r]o[s]p[e]c[t] it [f]eels as [i]f [c]ir[c]um[s]tan[c]e in the [c]a[s]e of m[y] [l]i[f]e has [p]l[ay]ed an out[s]ized role, that my a[pp]roach to m[y] [l]i[f]e has been a [s]i[m]p[le] [s]c[ul]p[t]ing of [i]ne[s]c[a]p[ab]le [c]ir[c]um[s]tan[c]es.

---04 78:107 .729

I [s]till h[o]ld b[o]th [o]wners---J[a]ck [a]nd [S]al---in the high[e]s[t] [e]s[te]em, and, [i]n [f]a[ct] it was ju[s]t thi[s] [p]a[st] [C]h[r]i[s]tma[s] that I [s]to[pp]ed in [P]ash[a] with Tin[a] and said [a] [j]o[vial] [h]ell[o] to [J]a[ck], [i]n[dul]ging [i]n my fir[s]t [i]c[e] [h]oo[k]ah in what [s]eem[ed] l[i]k[e] [e]o[ns], T[i]n[a] and I [s]itting at the counter, h[a]ving ex[a]c[t]ly one [b]e[r]e p[ie]c[e], already [s]ome[w]hat in[e]b[ri]a[te]d, [w]atching a Ma[v]eri[ck][s] g[a]me that was [c]uriou[s]l[y] [v]oid of [L]u[k]a Don[c]ic.

---05 108:156 .692

It’[s] [n]e[v]er [n]e[ce]s[s]arily a[d]v[is]able to a[d]mit that an exoti[c] [d]an[c]er [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote] ‘[f]ell in [l]ove with [y]ou’---[y]et in my parti[c]u[lar] [c]a[s]e [i]t was an [i]rref[uta]b[le] [b]urden I was [f]or[c]ed to [b]ear. [A]lthough at the [t]ime I [a]tt[em]p[t]ed, with [s]ome

[d]egree of [s]u[cc]e[ss], to [d]en[y] that m[y] [c]haris[m][a]ti[c] [c]h[a]ra[c]ter was [c]a[p]able of [m]a[k]ing [s][ai]d [s][e]t of [e][v]ents [p]o[ss]i[b]le, [i]f not [i]ne[v]ita[b]le, yet it was a[pp]ro[p]riatel[y] [c]ata[s]tro[ph]i[c] [f]or [m]y [m]en[t]al well-[b]e[ing], as I [t]oo[k] [f]ull [r]e[s][p]onsi[b]i[li]t[y] for [b]oth [m]y [c]h[a]ris[m]a as well as [m]y ina[b]i[li]t[y] to [r]ese[m]b[le] a [f]athe[r]-[f]igu[r]e.

---06 85:119 .714

These [p]re[c]i[s]e [c]ir[c]um[s]tan[c]es led both [m]y[s]el[f] and [m]y [f][r]iend [C]urti[s] into the [r]eady-[m]ade arms of the [P]asha [h]oo[k]ah [h]ose at [l][ea][s]t [o]n[c]e a [w][ee][k] for years on end---as there exi[s]t t[i]mes in [s][o]me[o]ne's [l][i]f[e] whe[r]e the[r]e's no choi[c]e [b]ut to [d]i[s]a[ss]e[m]b[le] them[s]elves in the [m][o]st reckle[ss] of [f]ashions, [s][m]o[k]ing and [d]rin[k]ing [e]x[c]e[ss]ively a[n]d [e][n]gaging [i]n [i]ll-advised [l]ong-term re[l]a[t]ion[sh]ips [e]x[c]e[ss]ive[l]y; the [q]ua[l]ity of the [h]oo[k]ah at P[ash]a was of [a] [h]eight that was [h]ard to f[a]thom [a]t the time.

---07 118:157 .752

We un[r]ave[l] ourse[l]ves, a[tt]emp[t]ing [t]o [r]each a [c]ore that's [a]lways un[a]pp[r]o[cha]b[le], [b]eing t[o]ld [b]y [B]yzan[t]ine [m]on[k]s that our [c][e]n[t]er [r]e[m]ains as i[n]e[ff]a[b]le as God's [E][ss][e][n][c]e---[s]e[n]ding ill-advised m[e]ss[ages] to [l]ove i[n]te[r]e[s]ts that no [l]onger have a[n]y i[n]te[r]e[s]t i[n] u[s]. A[n] i[n]no[c]ent

e[x]otic [d]an[c]er [f]alls in l[o]ve [w]ith [u]s, and [w]e
 ch[oo]se to [u]se the [f]ull e[x]tent of our [c]r[i]t[i]c[al]
 [f]a[c]ulties to [d]i[s]a[ss]emble thi[s] [p]er[s]on [o]ver a[n]d
 [o]ver agai[n]. [C]on[t]inua[l]l[y] [d]rawn [t]o [t]h[i]s
 [p]er[s]on, we [r]u[th]l[e]ssl[y] [d]e[s]t[r]oy them
 [c]r[i]t[i]c[a]lly unt[i]l the [s]i[tu]a[t]ion [i]t[s]elf
 be[c]omes [i]ntoxi[c]a[te]d in the [w]or[s]t of [w]ays.

--08 113:148 .764

[A]nd [a]fter [a]ll [o]f th[i]s [i]s [o]v[er] we g[o] to P[a]sh[a]
 on [A]llens [A]v[enue], a[n]d we e[n]joy the [h]igh[est]
 [q]ual[ity] [h]oo[k]ahs at [l]ea[s]t eve[r]y We[d]nes[day],
 un[r]aveling [b]e[c]omes j[us]t an[ot]her ho[bb]y [o]f
 [o]ur's, and we d[r]in[k] [v]od[k]a [w]ith j[u]st [a] [s]plash
 of [w]ater, and the [b]ar[t]en[der] [l]i[b]era[l]ly in[d]ulges
 [u]s with [a] [t]a[l]l gla[ss] of thi[s] [v]od[k]a, a[n]d the[n]
 we drive up the [s]tr[e]et, and w[e] [l]augh
 hy[s]teri[c]a[l]ly [w]ith [C]ur[ti]s as [w]e mindl[e]ssl[y]
 to[ss] [c]u[r]ren[c]y at a [d]ar[k] [s]tage [c]omp[r]ised of
 nu[d]it[y], then we [d]r[ive] [d]o[w]n[t]o[w]n [t]o or[d]er a
 [m]ea[t]l[e]ss [b]urr[i]to at a highl[y] [r]egar[d]ed T[e]x
 [M]e[x]e[s]ta[b]lish[m]ent.

--09 108:143 .755

One [c]o[m]m[on] [m]i[s]ta[k]e to e[s]chew [b]oth at
 P[a]sh[a] and other e[s]ta[b]lish[m]ents o[ff]ering
 [s]o-[c]alled hoo[k]ah is the [c]on[f]l[ati]on of ‘[m]ore’ [w]ith
 ‘[b]ette[r]’ [w]ith regard to [f]l[avo]r[s]. [W]ait[s]ta[ff]
 [w]ill [i]nvariab[ly] h[i]ghl[y] [t]he [f]a[c]t [t]h[at] a

[p]atron [c]an order a [l]ita[n]y of [f][l]avors at [n]o ext[r]a
 [c]o[s]t, im[p][l]ying that [r]e[c]eiving more [f][l]avors
 [f]or the [s][a]me [p]ri[c]e is a 'good [d]eal', that
 or[d]e[r]ing a
 [b]lue[b]e[r]ry-[p]ea-ch-mint-[c]r[ea]m[s]i[c]le flavor
 hoo[k]ah will [b]e enjoya[b]le whe[n] a [s]e[n][s]i[b]le
 hoo[k]ah should [b]e [r]e[s]tri[c]ted [t][o] at [m]o[s]t [t]w[o]
 f[l]avors---I per[s]ona[l]ly [r]e[c]o[m]m[en]d [b]lue[b]erry
 [m]int.

---10 115:159 .723

[S][i]tt[i]ng at the bar at [P][a][sh][a] [s]mo[k]ing [a]
 [s][c]rum[p][t]i[ou]s hoo[k]ah with my [f]riend [C]urti[s],
 watching an ex[c]liting [C]el[t]ic[s] [c]on[t]e[s]t, I had the
 [m]i[s]f[or]tune [o]f [a][ss]i[d]uou[s]ly [s]tu[d]ying [m]y
 [s]u[r]roun[d]ings w[i]th the [i]ntent of [r]e[c]or[d]ing
 them, [s]o to [s]pea[k]. In short, I [b]e[l]ieved e[v]ents
 [c]ould [b]e [r]e[c]or[d]ed [v]ia [r]e[c]o[l]le[c]tion and
 [r]e[c]r[e]a[te]d through [c]r[e]a[tive [f]a[c]ulties, [w]hen
 it's [n]ow [c]lear that [n]othing [w]as [f]urther [f]rom the
 truth---at P[a]sh[a] smo[k]ing hoo[k]ah [I] [b]elieved [I]
 [c]ould [c]reate [a] non[f]i[c]tional [a]cc[ou]nt, an
 [a]u[t]o[b]iog[r]a[ph]i[c]al e[l]e[m]ent, when
 [a]u[t]o[b]iog[r]a[ph]i[c]al and hi[s]to[r]y are [o]n[l]y the
 [m]o[s]t e[l]evated [f]orms of [f]i[c]tion!

---11 98:135 .726

Our [m]e[m]ories are [b]y [f]ar the [m]o[s]t [s]p[eciou]s
 things a[b]out u[s]---[h]ave you ever [w]ondered [w]hy our

off[ic]ial [h]i[stories] are al[m]o[s]t i[m]m[ed]i[ate]ly
che[ck]ered, [b]ia[s]ed [b]ef[ore] the [f]ir[s]t dra[ft]s are
[c]omp[l]e[te]d, why human [b]e[ings] are [b]e[l]i[ev]ed [t]o
have exi[s]t[ed] for [t]ens of thousands of [y]ears, [y]et if
w[e] [e]ven g[l]an[c]e a [p]al[t]ry mi[l]lennium in[t]o our
[p]a[s]t [w]e [w]it[n]e[ss] [n]o[thing] [b]ut [f]oggy
[n]otions and [b]i[tt]er[ly] [c]onf[li]c[t]ing op[i]n[i]ons?
At t[i]m[es] it seems [I]'[m] [m]ade [u]p [o]f [n]o[thing]
[b]ut [m]e[m]o[r]ies, yet all of th[e]se [m]e[m]o[r]i[es]
s[ee]m to have [m]inds of their own!

--12 113:148 .764

Ul[t]imate[ly], while the [r]e[l]a[t]ive [r]i[s]k of [l]oitering
at [P][a]sh[a] on [A][ll]e[n]s [A]venue is [a]t thi[s] [p]oint
[w]ell-[e]st[ab]lished, and [w]h[i]le the [p]r[i]c[es] of the
[m]e[d]i[an] [h]oo[k]ah [h]ave infl[a]ted [e]x[p]onentially,
I'd [s]till [b]e [h]ard-[p]re[ss]ed to [s]it [h]ere and
[r]e[c]o[m]mend a [b]etter [p]l[a]c[e] to [s][m]o[k]e [h]oo[k]ah
in the G[r][ea]ter [B][o]s[ton] [m]etro[p]o[l]itan [r]egion.
Fran[k]l[y], I've always [c]on[s]i[d]ered [i]t [a] [b]i[t] of [a]
[b]our[ge]ois [c]o[w]ar[d]i[c]e to [a]void [p]l[a]c[es] [s]ole[ly]
[b]e[c]ause of a [l]ow [p]ro[b]a[b]i[li]t[y] chan[c]e you'll
get shot--[e]ven as w[e] [a]ge it [c]an [s]till [b]e
[b]e[n]eficial to [e]m[b]r[a]c[e] the [i]ll-adv[i]sed on[c]e [i]n
a wh[i]le.

An Aborted Anime Opera

(#)	(s)	(e)	(w)	(q)
1	189	148	112	0.7831
2	141	115	89	0.8156
3	130	90	85	0.6923
4	137	116	91	0.8467
5	107	95	74	0.8879
6	204	145	112	0.7108
7	174	123	108	0.7069
8	178	134	105	0.7528
9	236	164	137	0.6949
10	147	124	84	0.8435
11	183	139	113	0.7596
12	168	148	119	0.8810
13	340	235	203	0.6912
14	149	114	91	0.7651
15	104	77	63	0.7404
16	157	131	104	0.8344
17	125	95	74	0.7600
18	188	133	96	0.7074
19	153	123	103	0.8039
20	221	164	122	0.7421
21	116	78	67	0.6724
22	324	230	213	0.7099
23	182	128	116	0.7033
Total	4053	3049	2481	0.7523

[f][l]i[p]ping my[s]el[f] [a][s]s u[p] [a]t the
 [c][o][l]ono[s][c]o[p]y bef[ore] it was [a]p[pr]o[p]o,
 there's [n][o] [l]onger a [n][o]tion of [s][a]n[c]t[i]ty [i]n
 [a]b[s]tra[c]t [e][x]pr[ess]ionism, [q]uantum
 me[c]h[a]ni[c]s [a]nd non[l]o[c]al [r]el[ati]ons or
 [s]omething, john [b]ell was [c]o[r]re[c]t a[b]out the
 ph[y]s[i]c[al] un[i]ver[s]e, w[r]iting “[m]utte[r]ing [m]y
 [c]on[s]tant [c]u[r]io[s]ity got in the way of [m]y
 [s]ui[c]i[de] to [m]y[s]elf in a [s]omewhat [i]r[ro]n[ic] tone”
 b[ut] [m][u]tte[r]in[g] [n]othin[g] at all, the older
 [w]o[m]an had no [i]nte[r]e[s]t [i]n ge[r]ia[t]ri[c] foot[w]ear
 yet [w]ouldn't [s][t]o[p] [s][p]e[a]k[ing] to [m]e of [m]y
 de[s]tin[y] [a]fter [ei]ght o'[c]lo[c]k [a]t [th]e wren[th]am
 outlets, [a]ged [th]irty [s]ix portuguese [d]an[c]ers
 i[n]form [y]o[u] i[n] [m]in[u]te [d]etail of [y]our own
 a[c]t[te] [m]isery then [w]al[k] a[w]ay u[n][c]o[n]c[ern]ed,
 th[i]s [i]s [w]hy [c]h[r]i[s]t [h]ad [h]is feet [r]ubbed-

02

[d]i[p] [d]own li[k]e a [q]u[i]c[k] bath in[t]o the
 [d]m[t]-li[k]e [e][s]sen[c]e of what [s][e]ems po[e]ti[c],
 br[e]a[k][f]a[s]t and [c]o[f]fee [s]pots [c]lo[s]e [s]o
 [q]u[i]c[k]ly, [y]et [i] [f]i[n]d [m]y[s]el[f] [y]earning [f]or
 [a]n a[m]eri[c]ano [a]nd ome[l]et a [l]ittle [a]f[te]r [f]our,
 the [c]louds [o]ver one [f]orty [s]ix [s]outh
 [c]on[s]i[s]tentl[y] [l]oo[k] [l]i[k]e [o]il [p]laint, [p]rior [t]o
 the m[e]n[t]al h[e]alth r[e]vo[l]ution ado[le]s[c]ents were
 for[c]ed [t]o in[t]erna[l]ize [t]rau[m]a, [m]any of them
 [b]e[c]o[m]ing [c]o[m]p[lete] a[s]sholes in the [p]ro[c]e[s]s,

i've [s]oured on the [b][e]ach, [s][k]in [c]are, i [s]u[p]pose,
has [b]e[c]ome a [b]it of [a] [p][r][i]o[r]ity, [s]and [i]s
[s]omewhat of a[n] [a][n]noyan[c]e-

03

two m[i]dg[e]ts [e]at[i]ng d[e][l][i]c[i]ou[s] [l]oo[k]ing ri[c]e
bowls at xa[c][o] ta[c][o], [r]ep[e]at[i]ng the ph[r]ases there
[i]s n[o] [i][m]age there is n[o] [m]e[m]or[y], there's no
i[m]age and there's no [m]e[m]ory, s[a]ns i[m]age [a]nd
[m]e[m]ory we c[a]n s[t]art [t]o a[p]proach the
funda[m]ental [n]ature of the u[n]iver[s]e as [s]uch,
tri[p]le egg [o]me[l]et with the [k]al[a][m][a]t[a] [o][l]ives, a
ch[e][s]t [c]r[e]vi[c]e [s]tained in a per[m]ane[n]t i[n][k] of
[s]orts, [c]udd[y] [b][e]a[v]ers [e]at [v]ege[t]a[b]les from the
[h]ands of well i[n][t]e[n]tioned [h]u[m]an [b]eings, the
[s][m]all [b]ottles of [s][o]ju were [o]nly eight [b]ucks a
pie[c]e

04

the [s]a[k]i at [s][o]m[o] was [p]o[s]si[b]l[y] the wor[s]t
al[c]oho[l]i[c] [b]e[v]erage i'[v]e e[v]er [s]i[p]ped, the [c]an
[l]oo[k]ed [l]i[k]e [a]n [a]nime jui[c]e[b]ox, it a[p]p[e]aled
[t]o m[e], it [s][t]ru[c]k me [t]iny [b]ar had a [p]re[t]ense
a[b]out it that j[u][s]t [s]tr[u][c]k m[e] as
[c]om[p][l]i[te]l[y] out of [l]ine, [p]e[o]p]le from
var[i]ou[s] [b][a]c]kgrounds ma[k]ing [f]a[s]t [f]riends
[a]s i ate [b]rea[k][f]a[s]t [o]ut [o]n the patio at
[d]omeni[c]'s, [c]on[s]i[d]ering [g]oing to chilan[g][o]'s,
on[c]e a[g]ain [d]e[c]i[d]ing a[g]ain[s]t it, the [c][o]n[d]o

[c][o]mp[l]ex [l]oo[k]ed [l][i][k]e [t]otal shit, real e[s][t][a]te
as a[n] i[n]ve[s]tment has alw[a]ys [s]t[r]uck me [a]s le[s]s
th[a]n a [n]o b[r]ai[n]er-

o5

[B][l]ue [l][i]ght e[y]eg[l]asses [w]ith the [b][l]ac[k] [w]ire
rims [I] [l]ook [l][i][k]e a [c]om[p]l[et]e [d]ouche[b]ag,
there's a [d]o[c]ument t[i]tled [p]a[s]s[w]ord is
[p][a]s[s]wo[r]d with the [d]ollar [s]i[gn]s [a]f[ter] the A,
[P]rou[s]t was a re[n]owned [f]an of [m]ale
[p]ro[s]t[i]tutes-[t]hey [th]in[k] [N]ietzsche d[i]ed of
[s]y[ph]i[l]is, in [m]y [m]i[n]d [I]m the [l]a[s]t of a
[l]ong [l][i][n]e, [m]ade A[m]eri[c]an Engl[i]sh [i]nto
[A]ncient Gr[ee][k]-[c]on[s]ider m[e] the twelfth
[C]on[s]t[ant]i[n]e, [g]eno[c]ides are [j]u[s]t a [m]atter of
[t]a[s]te, Ana[t]ol[i] [j]u[s]t [m][e]ans [E]a[s]-

o6

[g][r]e[g]o[r]y of [n]a[zi]a[n]zus [i]mpl[i]c[i]tly
under[s]tood the [n]ature of [q]uantum ph[y]s[i]c[s], of
[n]on[l]o[c]al re[l]ations, it's p[o]s[s]ible the [o]c[c]ident has
[c]l[ung] to a[n] i[n]i[t]ial [l]i[n]gu[i]s[tic] [r]e[v]ersal, a
[r]e[v]er[s]al [c]reating a[n] i[l]lusio[n] of [p]er[s]p[e]c[tive,
it's] p[o]s[s]ible the [p]er[s]p[e]c[tiv[i]sm d[i]s]covered
[b]y [p]e[o]p]le li[k]e [N]i[e]tzsche was, [i]n fa[ct], a
[s]i[m]p]le [b]y[p]roduct of this [i]n[i]tial rever[s]al [o]f
the [O]c[c]ident, thi[s] i[d]ea of a [p]er[s]p[e]c[tive, it
[s]e]ems [t]ota[l]l[y] i[l]logi[c]al to m[e], no [p]un
in[t]ended, i[c]e hoo[k]ah with the [t]atz[i]k[i] [i] wasn't

[q]u[i]te in [m][y] r[i]ght [m][i]nd at the t[i]me, [s]amura[i]
[s]word in washing[t]on pa[r][k], the [c]a[r] [s]eat [s]aw
[t]oo much, videogra[ph]y is ar[c]ha[i]c [i]n
[r]et[r]o[s]p[e]c[t], the [s]cien[c]e of [p]honet[i]c[s] [i]s [s]t[i]ll
amb[i]guou[s], the [c]onver[s]a[t]ion [f]a[dd]ed of its own
a[c]cord

07

[s]i[b]eria is [b][ea]utiful thi[s] time of [y]ear, [a]ll [a]rt is
[n]ot [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]ily ip[s][o] [f]act[o] [f]or e[v]e[r]yone,
the [f]lesh of the hu[m]an [b][e]ing wasn't u[n]i[v]ersall[y]
a[p]p[e]aling, [b]eli[e]ve it or [n]ot, e[m]otional [b]aggage
lo[s]t [i]n tr[a]ns[i]t [a]f[te]r i [a]woke [f]r[om] [a]
[s]t[r]ange d[r]e[am], my [y]ia[y]ia in[f]o[r]ming m[e] she's
out of [s]o[r]ts with [s]mudged l[i]p[s]t[i]c[k] as [i] [c]lutch
a ne[ph]ew that isn't m[i]ne, the[r]e a[r]e man[y] r[e]gional
differen[c]es [t]o [t]a[k]e in[t]o a[c]count, we
[c]on[s]t[r]u[ct] l[i]near [s]tates [i]n [r]etro[s]p[e]c[t] then
[s]l[ip]it on a [s]treet [i]n [i]zmir, the [r]olled [d]own
[w]in[d]ow [w]as li[k]e a [p]i[c]ture [f]rame, [m]e[m]ory
was juvenile delin[q]uents [s]l[ap]p[er]aying g[r]a[ff]iti, the
[p]r[oviden]c[e] [c]o[p] [w]as [s]at[i]sfi[ed] [w]ith the
an[s]we[r] [w]e're ju[s]t [c]onve[r]s[ing]

08

the un[s]p[e]c[i]f[i]ed [b]ug [t]r[a]p[pe]d in the [s]l[ap]i[de]r
we[b] on the [r]ailing of the [e]m[p]loyer's [e]n[t]r[an]c[e]
[m]ade [m]e [c]on[s]ider [m]etapho[r]s o[r] [s]omething,
the [c]ashier at j[o]b l[o]t of am[b]i[gu]ous eth[n]i[c]i[ty]

[n]eeds to [e]m[p]loy [s]ocial m[e]d[i][a] to [a][s]si[s]t her [p]ur[s]uit of [e][s]ta[b]l[i]shing her[s]el[f] as a [p]hotog[r]a[ph]er, her [f]avo[r]ite [f]ood is [p]izza, the [c]ollono[s][c]o[p]y] was un[s]u[c]ce[s]s[f]u[l]ly re[s]c[h]ed[u]led on t[wo] o[c]casions, it [s]t[r]u[c]k [m]e that [r][u]ss[i]an whore [i]s one of the [f]ew [m]i[s]og[y]n[i][s]t [p]hrases [s]t[i]ll a[c]c[e]p[t]able to [s]ay aloud in [s]o-[c]alled [m]i[x]ed [c]om[p]a[n]y, sure it was [n]i[c]e e[n]ou[gh] to have the a[s]si[s]tan[c]e of [g]iov[a]n[n]i [g]u[i][s]t[i]n[i]a[n]i but [n]ot if h[e] in[s]i[s]ted on re[t]reating the [f]ir[s]t time his che[s]t caved in-

09

i [f]ound [m]a[r]i[o]s [p]hili[p]p[i]d[e]s mon[o]graph on the la[s]t [c]on[s]tant[i]ne to [b][e] [s]o [p]r[o]-latin to [b][e] n[e]arly unr[e]ada[b]le, [w]hich [w]as un[s]ur[p]rising [b]ecause it [s]eems as [th][o]ugh [th]e[r]e a[r]e alm[o]st n[o] [t]rue g[r]eek in[t]ell[e]ctuals in the w[el]s[t], [o]nly f[au]x-g[r]eek in[t]ell[e]ctuals that shame[l]e[s]sly [s]ell out their own hi[s]t[or]y, who [r]ubber [s]t[amp] [a]nglo a[s]sertions [th]at [th]e h[el]l[e]nic [e]ra [e]nded [a]f[ter] [s]o[c]rat[es] [f]o[nd]led a[c]hibiad[e]s, i [o]f[ten] have an urge to [s]pit on th[e]se [s]o-[c]alled inte[l]lectuals, th[e]se [s]c[h]ola[s]tic im[b]e[c]iles, th[e]se [l]evant[i]ne [b]enedict arnolds, these [c]owa[r]ds of the [s]p[i]rit, wh[i]le [i] [p]lain[s]t[ak]ingly transform ameri[c]an engl[i]sh [i]nto [k]oin[e] gr[e]ek i have to d[e]al with [p]e[o]ple of my

own an[ce]stry obfu[s]cating [i]n the [s]erv[i]ce of [s]e[c]ular [p]o[p]es, when there's [n]othing be[l]ow a [s]e[c]ular [p]o[p]le, it's wh[y] at t[i]mes [i] feel l[i]ke re[t]ring [t]o a mo[n]a[s]tery or [s]o[m]ething, [s]o[m]etimes you h[a]ve to [a]s[k] your[s]elf what's the point-

10

A [b]it [d]e[p]re[s]sed w[i]thout [p]al[p]a[b]le [c]ause, [s]l[o]wly n[ot]ic[ing] a variet[y] of [p]o[k]a [d]ots on a [p]ri[s]t[i]ne [t]wo thousand [s]ix[t]en hon[da] [c]iv[i]c [c]l[e]ar[ly] [d]ue to the [d]o[uchebag] i[n]c[es]santly m[ov]ing his white [p]i[ku]p in the [p]ark[ing] lot, i[n]e[br]iated a[n]d [p]le[ing] on e[n]zo's door handle in [t]wo thousand and four[t]een, [t]w[o] y[e]ars [p]rior [t]o the [c]iv[i]c b[e]ing [i]ssued, the [s]c[al]lops at mar[i]a [c]u[c]in[a] were [s]u[c]cu[l]ent yet [r]idic[u]lousl[y] over[p]r[i]c[ed], [c]urt a[l]leged the [p]ork was [k]i[n]d of [d]r[y], [s]l[o]wly n[ot]ic[ing] mi[l]agr[o] is a half-way [d]e[c]ent t[e]qu[i]la at [v]i[n]o [v]eritas-

11

[B]la[ck] eye[b]rows plu[c]ked with a [m]uted [s]e[n]s[e] of [g]l[e], the [c]e[n]t[er] of [g]ravit[y] is ul[t]i[m]ate[ly] e[l]u[s]ive, there's a [p]r[os]o[p]o that [b]e[c]omes an ou[s]i[a] [b]ut not [q]u[i]te [v]i[c]le [v]er[s]a, we [b]eg[i]n w[i]th the [i]n[d]iv[i]dual and [th]i[nk [th]i[s] [i]s free[d]om, there is no [i]n[d]iv[i]dual, the [i]n[d]iv[i]dual

[i]s [n]o o[r]ga[n]ism, [th]e o[r]ga[n]i[s]m [i]s [th]e [f]ir[s]t
[f]alla[c]y, i'v[e] ne[v]er [b]een a [b]ig [f]an of [s]en[s]e
[p]er[c]e[p]tion, [p]rose is [s]ome [f]orm of [t]ele[p]ath[y],
th[i][s] [i]s [p]eri[l]ou[s], i've on[l]y in[t]ermittent[l]y
[b]e[l]i[e]ved th[i]s [i]s good, my [b]e[l]i[e]fs are [p]ure[l]y
[th]eatrical, [th]ere's no [b]etter o[p]era house than
[b]eli[e]f, sh[e] [a][s][k]ed m[e] a[n] [a][s]inine [q]uestion
a[n]d l[a]ughed, i chu[c]kled [n]ervou[s]l[y], it mar[k]ed
the begi[n]ning of a ho[r]rendou[s] e[r]a for each of u[s]-

12

lea[v]ing the [a]partment [f]or the [f]irst t[i]me [a]ll
[f]r[i]d[ay] the [f]resh air was [a] r[e]v[e]l[ation],
l[i]b[er]ian with the m[a]s[k] on [a]t the g[r]eek
[p]izza [s]p[ot], [r][u][b] and t[ug] with the o[p]en [s]ign
a[c]ro[s]s the [s]t[r]eet, [m]i[ght] get [m]y [v]ic[r]
[r]e[p]aired at cho's [e]l[e]c[tr]onics, [s]p[eedway] [s]t[u]ck
[u]p [b]y the [b]l[a]ck [d]u[de] with [b]a[l]l[oo]ns
t[u]cked [u]n[d]er [h]is shirt, [h]e [p]i[c]ked [m]y [k]e[y]
u[p] for [m]e on a r[a]n[d]om [s]un[d]a[y] [a]f[ter]n[oon],
i alw[a]ys [f]ound him a [n][i]c[e] g[uy] [p]er[s]o[n]a[l]l[y],
[t]a[k]e a right on[t]o [a]l[e]x[a]nder [a]nd [p]a[s]s the
[b]a[s]k[e]t[b]all [c]ourts, [t]wo thousand eigh[t]een
fl[a]sh[b]l[a]c[k]s, [t]a[k]en a[b]l[a]c[k] [b]y m[y] note [b]ut
[a]s much of an [a]s[sh]ole [a]s you [c]an [b]e it's
e[s]s[e]ntial to [r]e[m]ain a [m]an of your [w]ord,
o[th]er[w]ise [th]ere's no [r]e[d]e[m]ption arc

13

It be[c][a]me [g]r[a]dually app[a]rent [a]s I m[a]de
 [i]nc[i]dental eye [c]onta[c]t [w]ith [a] [g]irl [w]ith [a]
 [g]ar[g]antuan [f]a[k]e a[s]s that I'd [s]l[ow]ly [l]ost the
 abi[l]ity [t]o [t]y[p]e words [c]oherent[ly] in[t]o m[y]
 [i][Ph]one-[m]e[m]ory is [p]erh[a]ps [a]s a [c]on[c]ept
 [s]l[i]ghtly ill-adv[i]sed, [I] [c]on[s]i[de]red while eati[n]g
 a[n] e[n]tire [r]o[t][i][s]serie ch[i][c]ken at a l[a]ter d[a]te,
 ye[s], [i]t was [i]nad[v]isable [i]n [r]e[t]ro[s]p[e]ct to gi[v]e
 an o[v]er[r]acing histo[r]i[c]al [r]e[c]a[p] of the late
 Otto[m]an Em[p]ire [t][o] [t]w[o] [s]e[v]enty [s]omethings
 I'd ne[v]er [m]et, [s]en[s]es get [m]uted with [a]ge-I
 [f]a[il]ed to noti[c]e the e[f]ferve[s]cent [b]a[l]k[s]ide
 [a]m[b]ling [a]cros[s] Ind[i]a Point un[t]il [K]a[t]r[ena]
 [a]c[c]used me of loo[k]ing at it, or i[f] i[c]es are
 u[l]timate[ly] [n]eg[l]igible [ph]e[n]o[m]e[n]a, J[esu]s
 didn't give [m]uch [c]r[e]d[en]c[e] to ban[k] a[c]counts, I
 [c]on[s]i[de]red, [e]ati[n]g a[n] e[n][t]ire ro[t][i][s]serie
 ch[i][c]ken at a l[a]ter [d]a[te]-chanting the wo[r]ds "tu[r]n
 my b[i]tch u[p]" in a [s]oft wh[i][s]p[er] as I
 [s]tr[e]nuou[s]ly [e]dit the H[T]ML of a [b]oot[l]eg
 [T]um[b]l[r] [p]age I f[e]el at [p]e[a]c[e] [w]ith the [w]orld,
 [t]en [c]alendars on [f]e[m]ales with [t]wo [k]ids I [f]e]el
 at p[e]a[c]e with [m]y[s]el[f], [t]he[n] [m]e[z]c[als] [e]n[ter]
 a[n] [e]leventh di[m]ension I [f]e]el at p[e]a[c]e [w]ith the
 [w]orld, [w]ith the charlatan [n]ature of [m]athe[m]ati[c]s,
 [m]y [m]other [d]i[t]ched [m]e at [N][i]c[k]a[n]e's, but
 [t]r[u]thfully, I [d]i[dn]t [w]ant to rev[e]al my [n]ew
 Au[d]r[e]y Horne [t]att[oo] any[w]ay-

14

on [m]ineral spring getting [m][y] e[y]e[b]rows
th[r][e]aded [b]y Ch[e][r]yl a [s][e][l]f-[i]denti[f]y[ing]
[s][p]anish [l]ad[y] with a [c]uriou[s][l]y [a]rabi[c] [a][c]cent
a[t]tem[p]ts [t]o [s]ell of[f] a [p]air of air [p]ods to [h]el[p]
[s]up[p]o[r]t [h]er alleged [f]ou[r] chil[d]ren and I was a
[l]ittle [d]ubious to [s]ay the [l]ea[s]t, [d][e][f]e[c]ating at
the g[e]ntleme[n]'s ve[n]ue, of[f]-brand [d]ude wi[p]es
[f]rom the chri[s]tma[s] t[r]ee sho[p], w[r]iting e[s]says is
[r]ep[re]hen[s]i[b]le, having [s]in[c]ere o[p]i[n]io[n]s is
[b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly wor[s]e than [c]l[i]m[ate] ch[a]nge in
[m][y] [m]i[n]d, [b]oy[c]otting [s]emi[c]olons, the [i]ro[n]y
of m[y] [n]ew yor[k] k[n]i[c]ks [f]a[nd]om h[a]s [s]l[ow]ly
[f]a[l]len b[y] the w[a]y[s]i[de] [w]ith [a]ge

15

[p]u[l]ling my [p]leni[s] out with a ch[i]ld-[l]i[k]e [s]en[s]e
of jubi[l]ation, [i] re[q]u[ir]e more [p]od[c]asts is the
[o]n[ly] [c]on[c]l]usion i've [c]ome to of [l]ate, [i]t's the
[o]n[ly] [l]og[i]c[al] [c]on[c]l]usion, there's [s]im[p]l[y] a
[s]evere [l]a[c]k of [p]od[c]a[sts] in the [c]u[r]rent e[r]a,
we've [r]uth[l]e[s]sly de[p]rived [o]ur[s]elves of [o]thers'
[o]p[in]ions, [r]eading a [r]o[b]ert ash[ley] [l]i[b]r[ett]o
while [s]t[r]o[k]ing my [b]eard in a f[a]shion th[at]
evin[c]es a [s]ol[e]mn [c]ont[e]m[p]lation-

16

Hon[d]u[r]an [m][e][d]i]um [r]oa[s]t [i]n the [M][i]s[ter]
Coff[e]-[b]rown [b]a[s]m[at]i with [t]wo [t]ea[s]p[oo]ns

[f]rom the [z][a][t]aar [b]ag, [o]n[l]y extra virg[i]n o[l]l[i]ve
 [o]il [f]rom the c[o]ld [p]re[s]s, at thi[s] [p]oint I thin[k]
 w[e] n[e]ed to ad[m]it w[e]’ve [m]ade [s]ome [m]i[s]ta[k]es
 i[n] a[n] adult [a]nd [c][a][c]ulating [m][a][n]ner of
 [s][p][e]a[k]ing, I’m [e]ven-tem[p]ered by [n]ature, o[f]fi[c]e
 [s][p][a]c[e] two [f][e]t by [f]our [f][e]t with the
 [s]t[a]p[le]d [c]ar[p]et m[a]de from [r]e[c]y[c]led
 [s]ty[r]o[f]foam or [s]omething-[r]ea[d]ing i[m]p[ass]ioned
 [r]e[d]dit [p]o[s]ts a[b]out the hetero[s]exuality of [m][a]lle
 [m]a[s]tur[b]a[t]ion [d]il[d]o[s], [t]o[s]s t[wo] c[u]bes in the
 i[c]e h[ou]se and [t]ry [t]o [s]le[ep] [d]ead [p]le[o]p[le], one of
 the most [p]ro[f]ound [f]riends I’[v]e e[v]er had was a
 [f]loor [f]an

17

Tyra[n]n[y] of the [f]our-[f]our, m[e]a[n]ing is
 [n]eg[o]tiable, the do[p]pelganger a[p]peared [o]n[l]y
 i[n]ter[m]itte[n]t[l]y to [m][e] on a [m]ild [S]un[d]ay
 a[f]ternoon, [r]e[m]in[d]ed [m][e] of a [m]i[s]sed [c]all I
 [r]e[c]eived [f]ive or [s]o years a[g]o, [b]ut I
 di[s]c[ar]d[ed] the [m]e[m]or[y] to the po[s]si[b]ilit[y] of
 [e]ating a [s]e[lf]-[s]alted [f]r[en]ch [f]ry-the d[u]de wh[o]
 [s]t[u]ff[ed] the yo[u]ng [c]or[p]s[e] i[n]t[o] his [t]run[k]
 l[i]ved i[n] an [u]p[er]s[c]ale [a]p[ar]tment [c]om[p]lex and
 [d]idn’t resemble your [t]y[p]i[c]al pe[r]ve[r]t
 mu[r]d[er]e[r], eye [c]ontact is [q]uantum
 [c]om[p]uting-

18

[f]our walls e[n][c]a[p][s]ulate ho[r]re[n][d]ou[s]ly
[r]e[p]etitive [ph]e[n]o[m]en[a] [r]ight [a][r]ound [d]e[c]ade
[a]n[n]iversaries, [a]t the it[a]lian-a[m]eri[c]an [c]lub I
e[n]g[a]ged i[n] a[n] e[m]o [c]onver[s][a]tion [r]e[g]ar[d]ing
geo[g][r]a[ph]i[c]al [t]e[n][d]e[n]cies [f]or no [p]ar[t]i[c]ular
[r]eason, [t]ur[qu]oise [c][r]y[s][t]al [c]overs the [s][t]a[b]
[w]ound [b]et[w]een the [c]ollar[b][o]nes, [p]arts and
wh[o]les are [n]e[c]e[s]sary, didn't [n]eed to [i]n[f]orm
my[s]el[f] [i]t was [s][l]i[gh]tly ill-adv[i]sed, gazing
mind[l]e[s]sly at your own hi[s]tor[y] a [l]i[t]tle a[l]oof,
[s]u[c]cumbing to ne[f]arious [l]i[te]ra[l]i[s]m w[i]th
[f]r[i]ends, to be [f]rank I [c]ouldn't [c]om[p]rehend how
any[o]ne [w]ould [c]ome to thin[k] [p]ol[i]t[i]c[al]
o[p]i[n]ions a[r]e anything [b]ut a[r]t, it never o[c]curred
to m[e] th[at] my [p]a[s]sion [c]ould [b]e
mi[s]c[on]strued as [s]in[c]erity-

19

The de[c]e[as]ed ra[c]c[oo]n [l]oo[k]ed [s]er[e]ne [l]i[k]e it
was [s][l]eeping on the [s]i[de] of one forty [s]ix, [I]
[s]aw [C]urti[s] [t]e[x]t[ed] there w[a]sn't a [c][u]nt hair of
a ch[a]n[c]e the I[t]a[li]a[n] [a]s[s] was authe[n]t[i]c a[n]d
[I] [a]g[reed], [I] [th]ought [a]b[ou]t [th]e ra[c]coon
[c]orp[s]e [a]g[ain], [a]b[ou]t the [n]on[s]e[n]s[i]c[al] [n]ature
of [b]i[ol]ogy, [a]b[ou]t the [b]ig [b]o[t]tle of [S]oju I'd
[b]ought at the [s]o-[c]alled di[s]c[ou]nt l[i]q[u]or [s]tore
wh[i]ch [s]eemed to [p]r[i]c[e] [i]tems h[i]gher than
M[S]R[P], thoughts may b[e] [ph]y[s]i[c]al
[ph]e[n]o[m]ena that h[au]nt u[s] [n]o d[i]fferent than

[p]oltergei[s]t, [I] [c]an't hone[s]tly [s]ay I alw[ays]
[s]ell[e]ct my [ph]r[asing] in the [m]o[s]t [c]are[f]ul of
[m]a[n]ners, [s]ome [n]a[m]es you shouldn't [s]ay-

20

[d]i[s][c]u[s]sing [e][s][p]re[s]sos bla[c]kout [d]run[k] w[i]th
[e][m][i]li[o] at a[m]ede[o], half [p]ound of the [p]ulled
[p]or[k] [b]ut [o]nly [i]f [i]t's [c]ompl[e]tel[y]
un[s]easoned, [s]uculent ([p]ause), [b]eing the onl[y]
[c]ar on [m]e[m]orial [b]rought [o]n a [s]omewhat
n[on]se[n]s[ic]al [s]e[n]se of [f]ore[b]oding, i [f]elt a[n]
i[n]te[n]s[e] [f]ore[b]oding, [c]ould it have [b]een the
[c]a[s]amig[o]s [b]lan[c]o, this [c]ontinual
di[s]r[e]s[p]e[ct] [o]f the [a]g[a]v[e], [a]n [a]d [c]laims to
un[r]a[v]el the meaning of [a]g[a]p[e], the [b]ig [f]at
[g]reek wedding [f]ranchise does [n]othing [b]ut
[p]erpetuate a ge[n]eric [s]e[n]se of eth[n]ic[ity] th[at's
[a]s inane [a]s [i]t [i]s [c]ounter[p]roductive, [s]omething
e[s]p[ecial]l[y] i[r]oni[c] [c]oming from the [s]o-[c]alled
gr[e]k [e]a[s]t, the [r]el[ati]onal [e][s]sen[ce] par
[e]x[c]el[le]n[ce], [n]ia varda[1]o[s], it should be [n]oted, is
[s]imply [n]o [C]a[p]ad[oc]ian, this [c]on[c]e[p]tion of
[e][s]sen[ce] is [e]m[b]arra[s]singly faux H[e]lleni[c],
[b]a[c]k to [M]a[n]uel at [M]a[n]zi[k]ert

21

hal[f] Gree[k] va[c]uum [c]leaner in a [m]id-Augus[t]
[m]alaise, [f]ortune read un[s]ol[i]c[i]ted at [t]wo pm on
a [S]unday [s]moking a [t]en [d]ollar [c]igar [d][r]in[k]ing a

[v][o]d[k]a [o]n the [r]o[c]ks, hal[f] [b]ar[b]arian e[l]e[v]enth
 [C]ons[t]an[t]ines, e[l]e[v]en [C]on[s][t]an[t]ines is
 [s]u[f]ficient, hal[f] Ni[k]o[l]a Jo[k]ic, [t]y[ping] the word
 [k][i]nd[l]y in e[m]ails, I was [f][l]u[m]moxed at the
 a[m]ount of [r]ed[s]kin on the [r]ed[s]kin [p]eanuts,
 [m]iddle aged [p]od[c]a[s]t ho[s]t [r]e[p][e]ated[l]y using
 the [ph]rase [s][ph]in[c]ter [c][l]enching

22

Ing[e][s]t the [s][p][e]c[ia]l [s]ta[r] [sh][a]p[es] there's [a]
 [c][u]b [a]b[ove] an a[r][c]a[de], there's a [s]even [a]m
 sh[o]wing of a[n] uneve[n] [N]etflix a[n]ime, two
 h[om][o]s[ex]uals da[n]c[e] [s]a[n]s irony a[n]d there's a[n]
 [a]b[um] th[at] will [p]refera[b]ly [b]e [d]i[s]avo[w]ed at a
 l[ate]r [d]a[te], a [m]an [m]y [a]ge is no[w] [d]y[ing] a
 [s]low [d]eath, i[n]co[h]erent e[p]i[d]er[m]i[s], I [u]sed t[o]
 [h]it the [b]ottle [h]ard too-i[n]d[e]ed, I [p]ainted [s]ix
 hours at a t[i]me with the [S]o[b]ie[s][k]i [b]y m[y]
 [s]i[de], [s]c[rew]ed and cho[p]ped [B]jork, a [s]e[n]s[e] of
 adole[s]cen[c]e exi[s]ted, Mar[k]o[s] [V]am[v]a[k]a[r]i[s]
 w[r]ote [a]b[out] the w[a]ter [p]i[p]es and [c]all gi[r]ls of
 tu[r]n of the [c]entu[r]y [P]iraeus, shi[r]t un[b]uttoned all
 the [w]ay [d]o[w]n [w]ith [p]ro[f]o[un]d hi[c]cu[p]s to
 [d]ro[w]n out [D]An[d]rea's [d]ead [b]o[d]y, [b]ut [c]an we
 [c]onf[i]r[m] the [P]uerto Ri[c]an gi[r]l [b]ehind the [b]ar is
 a[w]are, [d]oes the [b]utt [w]i[p]e at the [b]ar [b]ath[r]oom
 [r]eal[i]ze [R]y[an]'s [d]i[ed], [I] [d]on't [d]i[s]c[ri]m[i]nate
 [b]e[t]w[ee]n [o]rga[n]ic en[t]i[t]ies and [o]ther[w]ise,
 a[n]other [m]an our age is [d]y[ing], [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins

we n[e]ver [s]ee [d]rop [d]ead in Flori[d]a yet [d]ude [w]as
al[w]ays [a]n [a]sshole [a]ny[w]ay, ing[e][s]t the [s]p[e]cial
[s]ta[r] sh[a]pes there's [a] cl[u][b] [a][b]ove an a[r][c][a]de,
I used to [p]aint [s]ix hours at a t[i]me with the
[S]o[b]lie[s][k]i b[y] m[y] [s][i]de, [I] found it enjoya[b]le
fo[r] the e[r]a-[c]igar [b]ar with Lams, I'm [w]ell a[w]are
[m]y [c]ha[r]is[m]a is unorthodox in [c]ha[r]a[c]ter-

23

i [c]an n[o] [l]onger [c]on[s]ume [s]pagh[e]tt[i] ali[o] y[e]t
i've [g]raduall[y] [c]ome [t]o [t]erms w[i]th th[is] [t]rying
[s][t]ate of exi[s][t]en[c]e, [s]u[r]gi[c]all[y] i[n]s[e]rting
[s]u[b][s]tan[c]es i[n]to the ver[y] e[s]sen[c]e of [o]ne's
[b][u]tto[c]ks is a [p]ure roll of the d[i]e in [m]y hum[b]le
o[p]i[n]i[on], yet a [f][e][m]ale's [s]exual hi[s]tor[y] is
[f]rankl[y] [n]one of our [b]usi[n]es[s], we [t]end [t][o]
[v]ie[w] the [v]agina as [a] [t]issue or [a] [k]leene[x] whe[n]
it'[s] e[s]se[n]tia[l]ly [r]ef[l]e[x]ive in [c]hara[c]ter, [l]i[k]e a
uni[que] [ph]r[ase] or [l]a[c]oni[c] [c]o[l]le[c]tion of
[l]e[x]i[c]on, that's more or [l]e[s]s how i [v]iew the
[c]on[t]emporary [v]ag[i]na at [l]ea[s]t, [i] was [a] [l]ittle
[t]a[k]en [a]b[a][c]k [a]t the [f][a][c]t the wing sp[ot] only
[o]f[fer]ed [c]urly [f][r]ies, that [r]egular [f]ries were
nowhere to be [f]ound on the menu

Postmodern Novelists

2801:3634 .771

--01 113:144 .785

[A][pp][r]oaching the [a]uto[m]atic ent[r]an[c]e of [F][r][e]sh [Sh]ore's on [M]i[n]e[r]al [S][p][r]ing Ave[n]ue, [h]o[p]ing with all of my [h]ea[r]t [th]at [th]eir [p]re[p]ared [f]oods were in the ball[p]a[r][k] of what [m]y [m]om gene[r]all[y] [d]i[s][c]overs at [D]ave's [S]u[p]er[m]ar[k]et, I gl[a]n[c]ed a[c]ro[ss] the [s]t[r]eet [a]nd [s]aw the old buil[d]ing of [K]en Wo[k] Chin[e][s]e [C]ui[s][i]ne hal[f]way [t]orn [d]ow[n], and I [t]ook out my [ph]o[n]e and [m]ade a [b]rief [n]o[t]e o[n] the [i]nde[f]atiga[b]le [i]m[p]er[m]a[n]e[n]ce that re[m][ai]ns [s]o [p]erv[a]sive [a]ll [a]round u[s], as [I] [d]o each t[i]me a buil[d]ing [I] felt [s]ome [s]ort of [n]on[s]en[s]i[c]al [c]o[n]c[er]n w[i]th on Mi[n]e[r]al [S]p[r]ing Ave[n]ue gets k[n]o[ck]ed [d]own.

--02 194:236 .822

[I][n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, it was [A]ugu[s]t [f]ir[s]t of thi[s] year that [I] [f]elt as though [I] was [r]a[p]id[ly] [a][pp][r]oaching the end of my [s]o-[c]alled [r][o][p]e i[n] a[n] [o]ver [d]e[c]ade-[l]ong [p]l[u]s [d]i[ss]i[p]ation [p]ro[c]e[ss], the f[a]c[t] of the [m]a[t]ter was my [d]i[s]s[i]pation had exten[d]ed [i]ts [p]rime in a [w]ay that [w]as at on[c]e [m]il[d]l[y] im[p]re[ss]ive, yet [s]i[m]ultaneou[s]l[y] [s]evere[l]y [d]e[p]re[ss]ing. [P]erh[a]p[s] with th[at] b[e]ing the [c]a[s]e, it was on the [n]ight of Augu[s]t [f]ir[s]t, the [s]e[c]ond to la[s]t [n]i[gh]t of m[y] thirty-[f]i[f]th year, that I ex[p]e[r]i[en]ced a [d]r[e]am [s]e[que]n[c]e [w]here I [w]as [s]u[s]p[en]d[ed]

in air [a]bove [a] [d]e[s]o[l]ate [p]l[ain] where a
[s][k][y][s][c][r]a[p]er-l[i]k[e] tall [b]uilding [c]om[p][r]i[sed]
[s]ole[l]y of mirrors [s]at in the [b][r][i]gh[t] [s]un[l]i[gh]t,
where a [p]ortion of [s]aid to[p] [c]orner [r]e[f]le[c]ted
[s]aid [s]un[l]ight in a vio[l]e[n]t [f]ashio[n], and I [f]ound
my[s]el[f] [l]i[f]ted to [s][ai]d [s][e]ction where a voice [I]
[i]denti[f]i[ed] with [G][r]e[g]o[r]y of Na[z]ian[z]us [s]poke
to [m]e [m]e[l]i[f]l[uou[s]]y of the [f]ut[i]l[i]t[y] of
e[ph]e[m]eral things.

---03 126:148 .851

[B][u]t [p]erha[p]s we should [p]ose a [s][u]b[s]e[qu]e[n]t
[q]ue[s]tion: while there are a l[i]ta[n]y of [i]n[s]tan[c]es
of [n]ove[l]i[s]ts a[tt]em[p]t[ing] to a[p]le the
[s]tyl[i]s[t]i[c] [i]d[i]o[s]yn[c]ra[s]i[e]s of Homer's
O[d]y[ss]e[y], while there's [s]eemingl[y] a[n] e[n]d[l]e[ss]
l[i]ne of E[n]g[li]sh-[s]p[ea]k[er]s a[n]d Eur[o]-adja[c]ent
f[o]l[k]s who've sh[a]me[l]e[ss]l[y] a[p]ped the [A]thenian
[b]a[b]oons [o]f the Anti[q]ue er[a] without [p]ause!--are
[th]ere any [th]at we [c][a]n [th]in[k] of [th]a[t] h[a]ve
[m]i[m]i[ck]ed the [m]a[n]ne[r]i[s]t [q]uir[k]s of The
Divine E[r]os? Be[c]ause it [r]e[c]entl[y] [s]t[r]u[ck] m[e] in
[r]e-[r]ea[ding] [S]y[m]e[on]'s [c]ent[r]al [w]or[k] that in
[m]a[n]y [w]ays it [r]e[ads] li[k]e an e[pi]c [p]oem [c]um
[p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [n]o[vel]?

---04 168:208 .808

After all, it was [n]o[n]e [o]t[her] [th]an [th]e [n]o[t]able
p[o]s[t]m[od]ern [n]o[ve]l[i]st J[o]hn H[a]w[k]es who

[s]aid [s]o [s]tern[ly], ‘I began to w[ri]te fi[c][ti]o[n] on the a[ss]um[p][ti]o[n] [th]at [th]e t[r]ue e[n]em[ie]s of the [n]ovel were plot, [c]hara[c]ter, [s]etting, and th[e]me.’ And [i]n th[i]s way the [s][p]r[aw]ling, [p]o[li]t[i]c[a]l[y]-[m]e[te]red, [s][p]i[r]a[l]ed [v]er[s]es of [S]y[m]e[on] t[r]a[ck] the [c]o[n]c[e]p[t]ual Haw[k]ian [n]o[v]el to the [N]th deg[r]ee, or [p]erha[p]s [v]i[c]e [v]er[s]a! Should w[e] [p]erha[p]s [e]v[er] [p]ose the [q]ue[s]tion: [H]ow a[c]quainted was [H]aw[k]e[s]’ w[i]th the [B]y[za]ntine mon[k] in the [e]ra of [s][ai]d [q]uote? We should [p]erha[p]s [n]ote [H]aw[k]e[s] was [t]o a[n] ex[t]e[n]t a di[s]ci[p]le of [N]a[b]o[k]ov, who, [i]n a[dd]i[t]i[on] to [p]e[n]ning a [f]ew [n]ovels [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ernly [p]ro[dd]ing int[o] the [d]o’s and [d]o[n]’ts of [s]e[d]u[cing] un[d]e[r]a[ge] [f]e[m]a[les], was [r]a[is]ed [i]n a [R]uss[i]an [m]i[l]ieu [s]t[i]ll p[re]-[S]oviet, [s]o to [s]ay a[n] e[ss]e[n]tia[l]y Orthodox [m]i[l]ieu.

--05 234:281 .833

The [m]o[d]ern n[ov]el, wh[i]ch [i]n ou[r] [e]ra is e[ss]e[n]tia[l]y the po[s]t[m]o[d]ern n[ov]el, be[c]ause it [s]e[em]s [s]e[r]i[ous] [m]o[d]ern [n]o[v]els [n]o l[on]ger exi[s]t, [o]nly [s]p[ur]i[ous] [c]o[m]me[r]cia[l] [n]ovels th[at] [p]erha[p]s a[p]e [o]ld [m]o[d]ern [n]o[v]els ([p]oorly); [n]o, [t]o[d]ay, [t]o [th]e [e]x[t]e[n]t [th]e [s]e[r]i[ous] [n]o[v]el [s]t[i]ll [e]x[i]s[ts] out[s]ide of, [s]ay, the[s]i[s] ad[v]iso[r]y [b]oards, all [s]e[r]i[ous] [n]o[v]els are [n]ow e[ss]e[n]tia[l]y [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [n]o[v]els, and with

that [b][e]ing the [r][e]a[1]it[y] [I] [s]u[pp]ose [I]'ll [r]efer to the [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [n]o[vel] as ju[s]t the [m]o[d]ern [n]o[vel]---as there are [n]o [m]o[d]ern [n]o[vels] any[m]ore, ju[s]t [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern, [s]o the [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern, [f]or [m]y[s]el[f] and [m]y [p]eers, [i]s [i][p][s][o] [f]act[o] the [m]o[d]ern. The [m]o[d]ern [n]o[vel], to Haw[k]es' [c]re[dit], [n]o longer re[qu]ires any[th]ing of [n]a[rr]ative, of [ch][a]r[ac]ter, of [s]etting, of [th]eme; [i]n [f]a[ct], eve[n] [i]n[dulging] [i]n [s]uch [a]n[t]i[qu]ated [a][tt]ri[b]utes is [t]y[p]i[c]ally a [s]ign of [p]oor [t]a[s]te! [F]or my[s]el[f], whe[n] a[n]d [i][f], wh[i]ch [i]s hardly ever, I [b]egin a no[v]el with a [f]e[r][v]ent u[r]ge [t]o [t]ell me a [s]tory [I]'ll p[ro]m[is]e the [i]tem [b]a[ck] [d]own imm[e]d[i]ate[1]y], at [1][ea]s[t] [s]omewhat [d]i[s]gu[s]ted [a]t [i]ts [b]r[an]zen [n]a[rr]at[i]ve [i]n[c]l[i]nations.

---06 143:194 .737

[S]yme[on]'s E[r]o[s], [o]n the [o]ther hand, while [i]n[dulgi]ng [i]n [b]om[b]a[s]tic [d]ia[log]ues, while tea[r]ing [i]t[s]elf [a]p[art] in [a] [p]er[p]etua[l]ly [a]pp[ro]p[ri]ate [f]a[shion]---[p]erh[a]ps the [s]o-c[al]led [r]e[fr]ain of [S]y[m]eon's wor[k] is this v[e]r[y] t[e]a[r]ing [a]p[art]---is [e]ssentially a [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [e]p[ic] [p]oem, wh[i]ch [i]f we [c]o[n]s[i]d[er] the [m]any a[tt]em[pt]s [t]o [t]urn the [e]p[ic] [p]oems of H[o]m[er] into the [m]o[d]ern n[ov]els of, [s]ay, [G]o[gg]ol or Joy[c]e, then it al[m]o[s]t g[oes] without [s]a[y]ing that [S]y[m]e[on]'s e[pi]c [p]oem is

alrea[d]y a [p]lo[s]t[m]o[d]ern [n]ovel in [m]a[n]y
 w[ay]s, as the a[dd]i[c]tion to [p]ure [p]r[ose] of the
 [n]ovel, the a[dd]i[c]tion [t]o the [n]o[n]-[m][e][t][r][ic]al
 [m]e[h]ods of [p]la[c]ing words in [c]o[n]c[e]p[tual or]der,
 is [p]erha[p]s a[n]o[th]er lu[r]id [q]ui[r]k of the [n]ovel that
 would [b]e [b]etter off [s]et to the [s]ide!

---07 162:213 .761

Of [c]ourse the [b]eauty of the [D]ivine Er[os], of the
 [s]o-[c]alled [k]onta[k]ion [f]orm (of which [b]o[th]
 [S]yme[on] and Na[z]ian[z]us are e[ss]ential[ly]
 [b]oo[k]-e[n]ds [t]o, i[f] not e[n]t[ire]ly i[n]d[ul]gent i[n])
 [i]s that [i]t [m][i][m][i]c[s] the [m]etaph[y]s[i]c[s] of th[e]se
 [B]y[zant]i[n]es, it[s]elf of [c]ourse [b]e[ing] a poem a[n]d
 a[n] e[ss]ay and a [s]tory! The [d]i[gre]ss[ive] h[y]mns of
 the [D]i[v]i[n]e E[r]os [m]u[s]t [b]e all th[r]ee in
 [s]i[m]ul[t]aneit[y], [v]er[s]e[s] and [s]t[or]ies and
 e[ss]ays, [b]e[c]ause if they’re ju[s]t [v]er[s]e[s] or ju[s]t
 e[ss]ays or ju[s]t [s]t[or]ies---n[o], that [s]imply [w]o[n]’t
 [w]o[r]k at all! To de[s]c[r]ibe a [s]e[le]c[t] hymn as [a]
 [v]er[s]e, or as [a] [s]t[or]y, o[r] as [a]n [e]s[s]ay, i[n]stead
 of all th[r]ee [s]i[m]ultaneou[s]ly, yet not [a]s [a]n
 a[m]algam but i[n]stead as a[n] i[n]d[i]v[idual] e[ss]ay,
 a[n] i[n]d[i]v[idual] [v]er[s]e, a[n] i[n]d[i]v[idual] [s]t[or]y
 i[n] the [s]ame [b]r[ea]th, t[o] [d]o that would almo[s]t
 [b]e he[r]e[tical i[n] i[t]s[e]lf.

---08 121:164 .738

Wh[e]reas D[e][s][c]artes noted, ‘I [th]in[k] [th]ere[re]fore I am,’ [A]th[a]n[a][s]iu[s] [s]aid, ‘Has the [F]ather [e]ver [e]x[i]s[te]d w[i]thout H[i]s [S]on?’ The [m]o[s]t i[m]p[or]tant a[s]p[ec]t of the [D]ivine Ero[s], what [m]a[k]es them [e]s[s]entia[ll]y nove[l]i[st]ic in [p]erha[p]s the [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [s]en[s]e of the word, is [th]at [th]ey’re at on[c]e e[ss]ays a[n]d [v]er[s]es a[n]d [s]tories i[n]d[i]v[i]dually, but they’re [n]on-[a]l[ma]l[ga]m[ou]s! The Ero[s] is [a]ll of them at the [s]ame time, but [a]ll[s]o each [o]ne of them i[n]d[i]v[i]dua[ll]ly as [w]e[ll]; [w]h[e]reas [D][e][s][c]artes [n]oted, ‘I [th]in[k] [th]erefore I am,’ the [k]o[n]ta[k]i[o]n is [o]n[ly] [a]n [e]s[s]ay [b]e[c]ause it’s a [p]o[em], but it’s [o]n[ly] a [p]o[em] [b]e[c]ause it’s a [s]tory, and [s]o o[n] and [s]o o[n]---

---09 183:255 .718

Haw[k]es [s]aid, ‘I began to write fi[c]ti[on] on the a[s]sump[ti]o[n] [th]at [th]e true e[n]emies of the [n]ovel were plot, [c]hara[c]ter, [s]etting, and theme,’ while [A]th[a]n[a][s]iu[s] [s]aid, ‘[H]as the Father [e]ver [e]x[i]s[te]d w[i]thout [H]is [S]on?’ Is The Divine Er[o]s of [S]y[m]e[o]n the [N]ew Theo[l]o[gi]an a [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern e[p]ic [p]o[em] [a]nd [a]s [s]uch al[s]o the [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [n]ovel [p]ar ex[c]e[ll]e[n]c[e]? [P]erha[p]s we should i[n]q[ui]re [f]u[r]ther i[n]t[er]m [t]o thi[s] [t]e[r]m ‘[p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern,’ [h]owever, name[ly] as to [h]ow exa[c]t[ly] it’s [s]aid to [d]i[ff]er [f]rom the te[r]m ‘mo[d]e[r]n’? One of the [m]ore [m]o[d]ern [n]o[t]ions of

ou[r] e[r]a, [i]n th[i][s] [i]n[s]tan[c]e I'm [s]peaking of [m]o[d]ern as [n][o]n-[p]o[s]tm[o]dern, whereas [p][r][e]v[i]ou[s]l[y] ([p]erha[p]s [f]oo[l]ishl[y]) I used [m]o[d]ern as a [s][y][n]o[n]y[m] [f]or [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern, [i]s th[i][s] [c]on[c]e[p]tion of The [B]ig [B]ang, which has ach[ie]ved j[i]had-li[k]e [p]o[p]u[l]a[r]i[ti]ty [i]n ou[r] e[r]a. [P]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t [m]odern [n]otion [o]f [a]ll, if we're [a]ttem[p]ting [t]o inqu[i]re about the [m]o[d]ern-[p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern [d]iv[i]de, [i]s th[i]s [n]otion, which has [a]ch[ie]ved a j[i]had-[l]ike be[l]l[ie]f [s]y[s]tem [a]round it, of the [B]ig [B]ang.

--10 231:326 .709

[N]ow, [p]er[s]o[n]a[l]l[y], I'm [n]ot exactl[y] a [p][r]o[p]o[n]ent of this [n]o[tion], [p][r]i[m]a[r]i[l]l[y] be[c]ause it [s]tri[k]es [m][e] as id[i]oti[c], with all [d]ue [r]e[s]p[ect] [t]o the [s]cien[t]i[s]ts who [d]evelo[p]ed [i]t, [i]t [s]tr[i]kes me as an i[d]ea that's [a]ttem[p]ting [t]o im[p]r[ove] [u]p[on] a [p][r]e[v]i[ou]s notion (God), [b]ut in [p]ra[c]t[i]c[e] [i]s [t]a[k]ing the [i]d[i]o[c]y of [s]aid [p]r[e]v[i]ou[s] notion, [b]lindl[y] [b]e[l]l[ie]ving in God, and [m]a[k]ing [i]t [s]omehow [m]ore [i]d[i]oti[c]. [T]here's an i[d]ea [th]at [th]ere was no[th]i[n]g, [th]en [s]ome[th]i[n]g o[cc]urred, and now [th]ings are o[cc]u[r]ring [i]n a[n] outwa[r]d f[a]shion [a]t [i]n[c]rea[s]ing [s]peeds. [T]here's an idea [th]at our [s]en[s]or[y] [f]a[c]ult[ie]s, which are una[b]le to [a]ccu[r]atel[y] o[ff]iciate [f]ee[l]ings at a [b]ar a[ft]er th[r]ee [b]e[er]s, are somehow [c]apa[b]le of ta[k]ing

[c]lues [f][r]om [b]ill[i]ons of [y]ears ago and [s]omehow
em[p]i[r]i[c]a[l]ly [p]o[s]tu[l]ating what o[cc]urred
[b]i[l]l[i]ons of [y]ears [a]go, tr[i]ll[i]ons of miles [a]way.
[B]ut thi[s] i[d]ea of the [B]i[g] [B]ang [i]s more [i]n line
with, [s]ay, [D]e[s]cartes, than, [s]ay, [A]th[a]n[a]s[iu]s.
It's a[n] i[d]ea [th]at's [e][ss]ential[l]y a[n]t[i]th[et]ical
[t]o the i[d]ea that [a] [f]ather on[l]y [a]ch[ie]ves b[e]ing
through his [s]on, [th]at [th]e [f]ather and [s]on, while
ex[i]s[ti]ng [i]n[d]ep[en]d[en]tly of one [a]n[ot]her, on[y]
[a]ch[ie]ve [b]e[ing] [b]ecause of one a[n]other, [th]at
[w]i[th]out [o]ne a[n]other th[ey], in many w[ay]s, [c]lea[s]e
to exi[s]t.

--11 196:242 .810

It's on[l]y [b]een of [l]ate that [I]'ve [f]ound m[y][s]el[f]
[c][r][a]ving the [c][l]a[ss]i[c] [c]oo[k]ies and [c][r]eam
[f]l[a]vor, and it's [b]een i[c]e [c]ream in parti[cu]lar
th[at] h[as] [s]t[r]u[ck] my [c][r]avings a[c]ute[l]y. In ou[r]
e[r]a, [n]ow I [n]eed mo[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss] at [l]ea[s]t one
[n]ight of i[n]dulging i[n] i[c]e [c]ream per [w]ee[k]. Yet at
the [s]ame t[i]me, a[l]ong[s]i[de] thi[s] pe[cu]liar
[c][r]aving for [c]oo[k]ies and [c][r]eam, [I]'ve [f]ound
m[y][s]el[f] be[n]ding to a[n] e[qu]al[l]y a[c]ute urge to
try [s]omething new---hard[l]y [s]ati[s]f[i]ed with this
[c]oo[k]ies and [c][r]eam [c][r]aving, de[s]pite the [f]a[ct]
thi[s] [c]oo[k]ies and [c][r]eam [c][r]a[v]ing mo[r]e o[r]
[l]e[ss] ju[st] [c]ame o[v]er me, [I] o[f]ten [f]i[nd]
m[y][s]el[f] [s]aying things [l]i[ke], ‘[I] [d]on’t
kn[ow]---maybe that [ch]o[c]olate [ch]ip [c]oo[k]ie

[d][o]ugh is good?’ or, ‘What [i]f I had a m[i][k]sha[k]e? [I] feel l[i][k]e, [I] [d][o]n’t kn[ow], [m]a[y]be a [m]il[k]sh[a]ke would [r]eally hit the [s][p]ot [r]ight now?’ Of [c]our[s]e the only [r]esult [o]f [s][u]ch [p]re[v]a[r]i[c][a][t]i[on], [o]f [s][u]ch mindle[ss] [d]e[v]i[a][t]i[on]s [i]s the [i][n][d]ulgen[c]e [i][n] non-[c]oo[k]ies and [c]ream items and the [i][n]evitable [r]e[m]or[s]e of the [i][n]itial [c][r][a]v[ing] [r]e[m][ai]n[ing] un[q]uenced!

--12 109:147 .741

There’s an idea [th]at [th]ere was no[th]i[ng], [th]en some[th]i[ng] o[cc]urred, and [i]s [s]t[i]ll o[cc]urring; the po[s]t[m][o]d[er]n n[o]v[e]l, [a]s well [a]s [S]y[m]e[on]’s [D]i[v]ine Er[os], [d]o away with the [f]ir[s]t po[r]tion of thi[s] [f]o[r]m[ula], [d]i[s]a[ss]ociating them[s]elves [f]rom thi[s] i[d]ea [th]at [th]ere was no[th]ing and al[s]o from the idea [th]at [th]en [s]ome[th]ing o[cc]u[r]red, [i]n[st]ead [r]e[s]tr[i]c[ti]ng [th]em[s]elves to [th]e [i]s [s]t[i]ll o[cc]u[r]ring. For b[oth] [S]y[m]e[on] and the [p]o[s]t[m][o]d[er]n n[o]v[e]l [s]omething [i]s [s]t[i]ll o[cc]urring, however, we’re [n]ot [q]u[i]te as [c]on[c]e[r]ned [w]ith the [i]dea [th]at [th]ere [w]as at [o]ne t[i]me n[o]t[i]ng, or [w]ith th[i]s [i]dea [th]at [th]en [s]ome[th]i[ng] o[cc]u[r]red.

--13 114:146 .781

If [w]e [w]ere [b]old, and I’m f[eel]i[ng] [d]e[ce]nt[ly] [b]o[ld] at the [m][o]m[ent], having [i][n][d]ulged [i][n] a

[l]ong [d]ay, all of my [d]ays th[e]se [d]ays [s][ee]m
 ex[c][ee][d]ing[l]y [l]ong!---[b]ut [a][l][s][o] [f][e]eling as
 th[ough] [a][ll] [a]uto[b]iogra[ph]y is a[b][s]urd[i]s[t]
 [f][i]ction, [w]e [m]ight [s][ay] that [w]hile the [m][o]dern
 n[o]vel [s]ays [s]omething adj[a]c[en]t to, ‘[I] [th]ink
 [th]ere[f]ore [I] am,’ the po[s]tm[o]dern n[o]vel [s]tates
 [s]omething [a][k]in to, ‘He is the [F]ather be[c]ause [h]e
 eter[n]ally [h]as a [S]on thr[ou]gh wh[o]m [h]e [a][ff]irms
 [H]im[s]el[f] as [F]ather.’ [B]ut th[i]s [i]s [p]erha[p]s
 even too [s][p]e[c]u[l]ative for our ta[s]tes; it’s i[n] all
 [l]i[k]e[l]ihood [b]eyond the [s][c]o[p]e of th[i]s [i]n[qu]iry!

---14 141:191 .738

Yet of [c]our[s]e thi[s] [c]ould [b]e [c]o[n]s[i]d[er]ed
 [c]o[n]troversial, as the [m][e][d]i[an] po[s]t[m]o[d]erni[s]t
 o[s]ten[s]i[b]l[y] [l]o[ve]s n[o]thing [m]ore than
 [f]l[au]nting his reck[l]e[ss] atheism; what the
 po[s]t[m]o[d]erni[s]t a[d]o[r]es [m]o[r]e than anything is to
 [f]l[au]nt his a[th]eism; i[f] [th]e [p]o[s]tmo[d]erni[s]t
 [b]e[c]omes [p]lea[c]o[ck]-[l]i[k]e a[b]o[ut] any[th]ing [i]t’s
 w[i]t[h]o[ut] a [d]o[ub]t his [f]ervent [d]i[s]b[e]l[i]e[f] in
 God. Yet [i]s [i]t [p]o[ss]i[b]le that a [B]yzan[t]ine [m]onk
 [p]enned the fir[s]t [t]ruly [m]o[n]u[m]en[t]al
 [p]o[s]t[m]o[d]ern n[o]vel? [I]t’s a[n] [i]n[te]r[e]s[t]ing
 [q]ue[r]y, although I have a [f]eeling it would di[s]gu[s]t
 H[aw]k[es] i[f] [n]o[t] [N]a[b]o[k]ov, [b]ut most [l]i[k]e[l]y
 [N]a[b]o[k]ov [a]s much [a]s Haw[k]es. [N]a[b]o[k]ov, and
 I’m [b]a[s]ing thi[s] on [l]ittle to [n]othing, [s]trikes [m]e

as [s]ome[o]ne who [w]ould [b]e l[oa]th to [b]e [g]rouped
to[g]ether with [S]y[m]e[o]n the New Theol[o]gian.

--15 166:210 .790

[I]n [h][i]s [f]i[f]tieth [h][y][m]n [S]y[m]e[o]n [s]ensually
n[o]tes, ‘sh[e] [r][e]ached out to me li[k]e a [b][r]ea[s]t,
[f]or [m]e to [s]u[ck]le imperisha[b]le [m]il[k]’---we should
[i]n[q]uire [i]n to th[i]s note [f]urther, as [p]erha[p]s
[c]u[r]iou[s]l[y], our [a]uthor even [r]e[f]ers to the [F]ather
(or the [S]on) [i]n th[i]s [q]uote as [α][υ]τή the
[f]em[i]n[i]ne p[r]o[n]oun, he[n]ce the qu[o]te was
[r]e[n]dered i[n] E[n]glish as Sh[e] [r]ather than H[e], yet
a[n]other [p]ost[m]odern ele[m]ent to be [f]ound in the
[E]r[os], [r]e[f]e[r]ring to the [F]ather in the
[f]em[i]n[i]ne [c]o[n]ju[n]c[t]i[ve] [i]n the [E]I[e]v[enth]
[C]entury! ((P]erha[p]s e[ven] the [l]ate [T]enth!) [S]o
[m]an[y] of u[s] to thi[s] day [s]ti[l] b[l]indl[y] [r]e[f]er to
the [F]ather em[p]loying [p]r[i]m[ar]i[l]y the [m]ale
[c]o[n]ju[n]c[t]ive, yet I’ve n[e]ver [p]er[s]ona[l]l[y]
[s]ub[s]c[ri]b[ed] to thi[s] [c]o[n]ju[n]c[t]ive
[c]o[n]d[i]t[i]oning my[s]e[f], although I usual[l]y
[r]e[f]r[ain] [f]r[om] en[g]a[ging] in publi[c]
st[ate]m[en]ts [r]e[g]arding [c]o[n]ju[n]c[t]ive [m]atters.

--16 146:193 .756

Ulti[m]ately, [b]oth the p[ost]m[oderni]s[ts] [a]s well
[a]s Sy[m]e[o]n the [N]ew Theol[o]gian re[c]og[n]ize the
[f]or la[ck] of a [b]etter [ph]r[ase] [q]uan[tum]
[c]ha[r]a[c]ter of our [m]a[t]e[r]ial exi[sten]c[e]; while the

po[s]t[m]odern[i]s[ts], [i]n [m]a[n]y if [n]ot all [c]a[s]es, [t]end [t]o either fo[r]m or [s]uppo[r]t va[r]iou[s] [c][r]u[s]ades [d][ue] [t][o] thi[s] [c]ha[r]a[c]t[er]i[s]t[i]c, [S]y[m]eon [d]id the o[pp]os[i]te---[i]n[s]tead [r]e[s]c[i]n[d]i[ng] [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y and [m]a[k]ing no ex[p]l[i]c[i]t [p]o[l]i[t]i[c]al [s]tatement on the [c]o[n]ju[n]c[tive] [c]hara[c]ter(s) of his world. (Yet of [c]our[s]e there is the [s]p[e]c[ulation] that [S]y[m]eon hi[m]s[elf] was of a [c]o[n]ju[n]c[tive] deviation, [s]o to [s]p[e]a[k], [u]n[i]q[ue] to his mil[ie]u, [th]at of [th]e [eu]n[u]ch, alth[ough] we d[o]n't kn[ow] thi[s] for [c]ertain.) The [w]orld, its [q]u[ant]um [c]ha[r]a[c]ter, was n[o] [c]all to [r]eform to [S]yme[on]; n[o] it was a [s]ign to [r]e[s]c[ue]!

---17 141:192 .734

[F]or my [p]art, I [c]ertain[ly] [c]an't [d]e[n]y that m[y] [p]er[s]o[n]al [p]r[e]d[i]c[tions] [f]all [c]l[os]er to [r]e[s]c[ue]; [n]ot a wee[k] goes [b]y [th]at [th]e [th]ought of en[t]er[ing] [a] [m]o[n]a[s]t[er]y doesn't [b]e[co]me at [l]ea[s]t [m]o[m]en[t]ari[ly] [a]ppea[li]ng! The [m]o[n]a[s]t[er]y, [t]o [m]e, at [t]imes, [s]eems [l]i[k]e a [s]e[c]ond home, de[s]p[ite] the [f]a[c]t, to the be[s]t of [m]y k[n]owledge, I've [n]ever [s]te[pp]ed [f]oot in[t]o a [m]o[n]a[s]t[er]y of an[y] [s]ort. Yet where could I [p]o[s]s[i]b[ly] [b]e[l]ong [m]ore than [a] [m]o[n]a[s]s[tery], with [f]ew to [n]o [p]o[s]s[e]s[s]ions and [n]othing [p]r[e]s[s]i[ng] to do [b]e[s]ides [m]o[n]itor [m]y own [f]leeting thoughts---isn't the a[s]s[e]s[s]m[ent] of [o]ne's

own [w]aves of [f]leeting thought a [f]ull-time job [i]n
and of [i]t[s]el[f]? [H]ow [c]ould we [p]o[ss]ibly [h]ave
[t]ime [f]or anything e[l]s[e], if we're a[tt]em[p]t[ing] [t]o
[m][ai]n[tai]n a [m][o]di[c]um of h[o]ne[s]ty with
our[s]e[l]ves?

--18 113:144 .785

[A][pp][r]oaching the [a]uto[m]atic ent[r]an[c]e of
[F][r][e]sh [S]hore's on [M]i[n]e[r]al [S]p[r]ing Ave[n]ue,
[h]o[p]ing with all of my [h]ea[r]t [th]at [th]eir [p]re[p]ared
[f]oods were in the ball[p]a[r][k] of what [m]y [m]om
gene[r]all[y] [d]i[s]c[ov]ers at [D]ave's [S]u[p]er[m]ar[k]et, I
gl[a]n[c]ed a[c]ro[ss] the [s]t[r]eet [a]nd [s]aw the old
buil[d]ing of [K]en Wo[k] Chin[e]s[e] [C]ui[s]i[n]e
hal[f]way [t]orn [d]ow[n], and I [t]ook out my [ph]o[n]e
and [m]ade a [b]rief [n]o[n]te o[n] the [i]nde[f]atiga[b]le
[i]m[p]er[m]a[n]e[n]c[e] that re[m]ai[n[s] so [p]erv[a]sive
[a]ll [a]round u[s], as [I] [d]o each t[i]me a buil[d]ing [I]
felt [s]ome [s]ort of [n]on[s]e[n]s[i]c[al] [c]o[n]e[ct]i[on]
w[i]th on Mi[n]e[r]al [S]p[r]ing Ave[n]ue gets k[n]o[ck]ed
[d]own.

The Plane of an Ottoman NYC

Echoes: 2289

Syllables: 3358

Self-Similarity: .682

So any[w]ay [w]e [w]ere at the [H]ot Club [f]or the [f]ir[s]t [t]i[m]e in ages, a [b]ar[t]ender I [h]adn't [s][ee]n in at [l]ea[s]t [f]our to [f]ive y[ea]rs was [s]till [b]eh[i]nd the [b]ar, sh[e] re[c]log[n]i[z]ed [m]e i[m]m[e][d]i[ate]ly, with a [n]ew [p]ur[p]le [d]yed [h]air[c]ut [th]at, al[th]ough [p]ro[b]a[b]ly a [s]midgeon young for [h]er age, [s]uited [h]er ni[c]ely, I thought. [Sh]e poured [m]e [a] [h][e]althy [a]m[ou]nt of [M]e[z]c[al] into a [sh]ort gl[a]ss, [a]nd on[ly] [m]i[n]ute[s] [l]ater I'd [n]oti[c]e her [c]arrying a [b]ottle of [D]el [M]agu[ey] [V]i[d]a, [m]y f[a]v[or]ite [b]rand of [M]e[z]c[al], [b]a[ck] to the [b]ar, and [r]ight then [I] surm[i]sed that [I] was [d]rin[k]ing [m]y favorite t[y][p]e of [M]e[z]c[al]. Of [c]ourse, [h]ealthy [p]ou[r]s a[r]e [d]ouble edged [s][w]o[r]ds [w]hen you [h]ave a ten[d]en[c]y to ch[u]g [w]hatever's in [f]r[on]t of you, [w]hich, [f]or better or [w]orse, is a [t]en[d]en[c]y I've ne[v]er [e]n[t]irely managed to [d]i[s]c[ar]d, [e]special[y] [w]he[n] i[n] [s]ocial [s]ettings. [S]ocially, hi[s]tori[c]ally, I've al[w]ays [f]ound my[s]el[f] [s]prin[t]ing [t]o[w]ard l[i]q[ui]or, [w]i[th] re[ck]le[ss] [a]ban[d]on [a]lmo[s]t I per[f]orm [f]i[f]t[y] yard [d]ashes [t]o[w]ard [w]hatever [m]y [s]pirit of choi[c]e is that [m]onth, a[n]d eve[n] though on [b]a[l]an[c]e I've re[d]u[c]ed th[e]se ex[c]e[s]sive ten[d]en[c]i[es] with age, I'd [b]e [l]y[ing] to [b]oth m[y]sel[f] and you i[f] I [s]aid I'd [d]i[s]c[ar]d[ed] them [c]ompl[ete]ly. And, [t]o b[e] honest, I'm unsure [i]f I'd w[i]sh [t]o [d]i[s]c[ar]d them in [t]o[t]ality, [t]o ex[t]ingu[i]sh m[y] ch[i]d-l[i]k[e] i[d]io[c]y on[c]e and [f]or all, be[c]ause, su[r]e, [f]rom a [c]e[r]tain v[an]tage [p]oint I [s]u[pp]ose I re[m]ain a [m]a[n]-child of

[s]orts, but on [th]e o[th]er h[an]d m[an]-children are
[n]e[c]e[ss]ary, [n]o? It's [m]an-children who [m]a[ke] the
gr[ea]test [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]ical [s]tr[i]des. [T]o thin[k] li[k]e
an adult is [t]o [t]a[k]e on the gu[is]e [o]f [u]tter
[r]ationalism, wh[i]ch hard[ly] e[v]er [i]f [n]ot [n]e[v]er
i[n]no[v]ates, wh[i]ch [r]e[f]uses to be[c]ome [i]di[o]t[i]c
e[n]ou[gh] [t]o [a]ll[ter] f[un]damental [a]xioms, [a]s
[a]xioms are inevita[b]ly [c]reated [b]y the ch[i]ld-l[i]k[e]
thin[k]ers, [b]y [i]di[ots] of the [s]pir[it]. Even God
Him[s]e[l]f all[e]g[e]dly [s]a[id], [L]e[t] there be [l]ight,
wh[i]ch [i]s a [m]an-ch[i]ld l[i]ke [s]tate[m]ent i[n] [m]y
o[p]i[n]io[n]. [P]er[s]onally, I [s]till refuse to [s]l[ee]p in
the dark. The dar[k] is [c]ontemptible in [m]y [m]i[n]d.
[Th]ere's [s]ome[th]ing [i]nherent [i]n being [i]t[s]elf that's
[s]y[n]o[n]y[m]ou[s] with light i[n] [m]y opi[n]io[n]. But
[h]ow was [H]ot Club? [I]t was [i]n[t]e[r]e[s]ting,
[i]n[t]r[ig]uing, [b]etter tha[n] I a[n]t[i]c[i]pated, gi[ve]n
the la[s]t [c]lou[p]le [t]i[m]es [I]'d [b]een I [f]elt the
atmos[ph]ere to [b]e a [b]it too [c]lu[bb]y [f]or my
[t]a[s]tes, a [t]a[d] [t]oo a[d]ole[s]cent for even [m]y
[m]an-child [p]a[l]ette. I [s]aw the doo[r][m]an from [Th]e
[P]ar[l]ou[r] [th]ere, be[c]ause a[pp]arently [h]e [w]orks
[s]e[c]urity at [H]ot [C]lub as [w]ell? I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, as
the [p]arty i[n]c[r]ea[s]ed i[n] [s]i[ze] [K]a[t]r[ee]na a[n]d
[I] e[n]ded u[p] e[n]g[a]ged i[n] a[n] exte[n]ded
[c]onver[s]a[tio]n with a [p]etite, [f]air-[s]kinned
[f]e[m]a[le] who ada[m]antl[y] [c]l[ai]med to b[e] of New
Yo[r]k o[r]igin, y[e]t wh[e]n a[n] a[pp]ro[p]riate
[o]p[e]n[ing] e[m]erged for [m]e to a[s]k her [w]hat [p]art

of [N]ew York she [w]as [f]rom [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c]all[y] sh[e] [p]revari[c]a[te]d, [s][a]ying she was [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [f]rom all [o]ver, [b]ut [th]en [s]aying [Th]e [B]ronx. She was from The [B]ronx? She didn't [s]trike me as [s][o]me[o]ne [f]r[o]m The [B]ronx, and [f]or [s][o]me[o]ne whose [i]dentit[y] [s][ee]med to [b][e] [s]o t[i]ed with [b][e]ing from [N]ew [Y]ork, a [N]ew [Y]or[k]er, wh[i]ch [i]s the [c]a[s]e with [s]o many [p]eo[p]le from New York, it'[s] [a][c]tually [k]ind of [s]ad to me, thi[s] viol[e]nt m[e]lding that [s]eems to o[cc]ur with [p]eo[p]le who [i]denti[f]y them[s]elves with New York [C]ity, yet thi[s] [f]emale, who [f]or the [r]e[c]ord I [f]ound [p][l]easant, oddly enough [r]e[f]used to ex[p][l]i[c]itly [c]laim a [b]orough, un[t]il she [r]e[l]u[c]tantly [s]aid The [B]ronx, [w]h[i]ch I th[i]nk [s][t]ru[ck] every[o]ne as [t]otally [m]isguided. She [w]asn't from The [B]ronx, that [m]uch [w]as [c]lear. She [c]ould [b]e from any[w]he[r]e in the [w]o[r]ld ex[c]ept [Th]e [B]ronx. [Th]i[s] idea [th]at [th]i[s] female's o[r]igi[n] [s]to[r]y [b]egan i[n] The [B][r]onx [w]as [c]om[p]l[e]tel[y] a[b]surd. [W]hich [b]orough she was [f]rom, a[ss]uming she was [f]rom a [p]art[i]c[ular] [b]orough, now that was [s]till am[b]i[gu]ous, [b]ut [i]t was [c]lear she w[as]n't fr[o]m the [B]ronx. [Q]ue[ee]ns, that I [c]ould give [s]ome [c]r[ed]en[c]e to I [s]u[pp]ose. It might [b]e a r[e]asona[b]le [s]p[e]c[ulation] to [s]ugge[s]t she was from Qu[ee]ns. [P]erha[p]s [f]rom a[n] o[p]ule[n]t [f]a[m]ily i[n] U[pp]er [M]anh[at]tan, now th[at] was even [m]ore [l]i[k]el[y]-be[c]ause she [c]ertainly [s]tru[ck] [m]e as [s][o]me[o]ne who [c]ame fr[o]m [m]oney, there was

[n]o tra[c]e of a [N]ew York [a][cc]e[n]t i[n] her [s]peech, or of a[n]y [a][cc]e[n]t i[n] her [s][p]eech, and the geogra[ph]y [o]f [U][pp]ler [M][a]nh[a]ttan is [c]lo[s]e enou[gh] to The Bronx that she [c]ould, in her [m]ind at [l]ea[s]t, perhaps jus[t]i[f]y [c]l[ai]ming The [B]ronx as a [b]o[r]ou[gh], even th[ou]gh [I] f[i]nd that to [b]e a [b]it ridi[c]u[li]ou[s], to [c]onf[li]ct U[pp]ler M[a]nh[a]ttan with The [B]ronx, to [th]i[n]k a[n]y [th]i[n]king [p]erson would [b]uy the [i]dea that U[pp]ler [M][a]nh[a]ttan [i]s [i]n a[n]y [w]ay [s]y[n]o[n]y[m]ou[s] [w]ith The [B]ronx. [S]taten Island and [B]rooklyn [s]trik[e] me as [m]ore r[e]m[ote] [p]o[ss]i[b]i[li]ties of her o[r]igin, and then we [c]ould al[s]o [s]p[e]c[u]late on outer-[a]reas [a]s [w]ell, be[c]ause [w]hile Yonkers [s]trikes me as a [s]tr[ic]t, I thin[k] [W]e[s]tch[e]ster [C]ounty or [L]ong [I]sland are both [c]ertainly in p[la]y. Do you th[i]n[k] [i]t po[ss]i[b]le that she [c]ould have [b]een from, [s]ay, [W]e[s]tch[e]ster [C]ounty, [w]hich [w]ould expl[ai]n her [m]on[ey]ed de[m]eanor, yet [m]oved to The Bronx for work [l]a[te]r in [l]ife, and now, and [I] a[gr]ee [th]at [th]is [i]s m[i]s[gu]id[e]d, [f]eels as [th]ough [th]at working ex[p]erien[c]e ju[s]tifies her [c]l[ai]m [th]at [Th]e Bronx is a [p]l[ac]e sh[e]’s a[c]tua[lly] [f]rom? Giorgio[s], that a[ct]ually [s]trikes [m]e [a]s [p]erh[ap]s the [m]o[s]t [s]en[s]ible ex[p]l[an]ation of [a]ll. [I] [a]ll[s]o [n]o[t]ic[e]d, and [I] th[i]nk [i]t’s [w]orth [n]o[t]ing, that [w]hen she [s]at her [p]o[s]t[er]io[r] was a [t]a[d] [m]ore [a]m[p]le th[a]n I’d i[m]a[g]ined, [th]at [th]is po[s]terior along with the am[b]i[g]u[ity] [o]f her

[o]r[i]g[i]n [b]e[g]an to [s]trike [m]e as al[m]o[s]t
 [o]m[inou[s]]ly [o]ut of [p]l[a]c[e], as if another [p]l[ane]
 of exi[s]ten[c]e was [f]orming. Th[at] h[a]l[pp]ens [a]t
 [t]imes-[p]osteriors [a]nd their [r]ela[t]ive [a]m[p]li[t]ude
 [c]an va[r]y widely from ex[p]e[c]t[at]ions, the [p]o[s]terior
 is [a]l[m]o[s]t im[p]o[s]si[b]le to e[s]ti[m]ate [b]a[s]ed on
 f[a]c[e] [a]lone. I gue[ss] it's reason[a]ble to [a]sser[t]
 that we o[f]ten look at [a] pe[r]s[on]'s [f]a[c]e [a]nd
 [a]lmo[s]t [a]lgo[r]ithmi[c]a[l]ly [c]r[ea]te [a]
 [s]i[m]u[l]a[t]ion of their body [f]rom thi[s] [f]a[c]e, that
 our [m]ind wor[k]s e[ss]entia[l]ly algorith[m]i[c]a[l]ly,
 we should ad[m]it [th]at, [th]at ou[r] [m]inds a[r]e
 [p]ro[b]a[b]ly ju[s]t com[p]osed of [a]lgori[th]ms, [a]nd
 [th]at we [p]erform a [s]imilar [p]ro[c]e[ss] [w]ith voi[c]e,
 [w]hich [a]ctually h[a]ppened to m[e] ju[s]t ref[er]ent[ly] as
 [w]ell, [w]here I [s]p[ok]e to a [p]er[s]on on the [ph]one
 a[n]d i[n]evitably [c]r[ea]ted [a]n [a]lgorithmi[c]
 [s]imul[a]tion of her [f]a[c]e in [m]y [m]i[n]d. When [I]
 [s]aw her [f]a[c]e [a]t l[a]st onl[i]ne [I] was [s]tr[uc]k by
 how m[u]ch th[i]s p[i]c[t]ure d[i]ff[er]ed [f]rom the
 [s]i[m]ulation I'd [m]ade in [m]y [m]i[n]d—who was it [I]
 be[l]ie[ve]d [I] was [s]p[ea]k[ing] to? I [l]ook at
 [s]o[m]e[o]ne's fa[c]e and [th]en I [r]uthl[e]ssl[y]
 algo[r]ithmi[c]a[l]ly [s]imu[l]ate their body [w]ithout
 [c]on[s]ent, [w]hereas I hear [s]o[m]e[o]ne's voi[c]e [a]nd
 th[en] I [r]uthl[e]ssl[y] algo[r]ithmi[c]a[l]ly
 [s]imu[l]a[t]e their f[a]c[e] without [c]on[s]ent, [b]ut in
 [b]oth [c]a[s]es my a[cc]ura[c]y is [t]otally
 [s]to[ch]a[s]t[i]c, and [b]y [s]to[ch]a[s]t[i]c I mean

[t]erri[b]le. [F]rom voi[c]e to [f]a[c]e and [f]rom [f][a][c]e to body, we m[a][k]e ill-advised, [r]uthl[e]ss [s][p]e[c]u[l]a[tions] [r]egarding [e]ve[r]yone who [e]nte[r]s ou[r] [p]eri[ph]ery! [I]n th[i][s] [s]e[n]s[e] the [s]im[ulation] of the h[uman] [b]eg[i]ns w[i]th [v]oi[c]e. From [v]oi[c]e a[l]one we algorith[m]i[c]ally [s]im[ulate] [b]oth [f]a[c]e and [b]ody, [b]e[c]ause [f]rom [f]a[c]e we [s]imulate [b]ody, as you [s]aid. [I]n a[n]y [c]a[s]e, as the [c]onver[s]ation [p]rogr[ess]ed w[e]-[m]y[s][e]l[f], [K]atr[ee]na, and thi[s] [f][e]m[ale]-began [t]o [t]ouch on the [t]o[p]i[c] of what ex[a]c[tly] this [f][e]male h[a]d been doi[ng] [s]in[c]le [ea]vin[g] New York, and [i]n the m[i]d[s]t of th[i][s] [i]t [c]ame up th[at] it ju[st] [s]o [h][a]ppened th[at] [h]er and I were [a]c[tually] the [s]ame [a]ge, that she'd been [f]inding [l]o[c]ales she [l]i[k]ed at our age, although she noted how d[i]ff[i]cult [i]t was, [c]ompared to [N]ew Yor[k], where she k[n]ew the i[n]s a[n]d [o]uts [o]f [w]here to [p]atron[i]ze and [w]hen, [w]hat [e]s[ta]bli[sh]ments [sh]e [e]njoyed and [w]hich [o]nes she d[e]s[p]i[s]ed. I agr[ee]d i[m]m[e]diat[e]ly, noting th[at] [a]t [m]y [a]ge, at our [a]ge, it [w]as [o]ne of the [m]ain de[t]errents [t]o [m]o[v]ing t[o] a[n]other [c]ity, parti[c]ularly [N]ew Yor[k], which I'd [s]trongly [c]on[s]idered [m]o[v]ing t[o] [m]ore than on[c]e, but, as I [s]aid ex[p]l[i]c[it]ly to [h]er, to [h]ave to re[l]earn every [s]ingle [p]l[a]c[e] that [I] [l]i[k]e to [g]o, and how to [g]et there, to re[l]earn which [p]l[aces] offend my [p]a[ss]i[on]s, [a]t my age, it ju[st] [s]tru[ck] me [a]s w[a]y [t]oo daunting of a [t]a[s]k [t]o [t]a[k]e on. It [s]tru[ck] me [a]s a t[as]k th[at] would

[c]on[s]ume [s]o [m]uch of [m]y e[n]erg[y] that it would
 e[ss]e[n]tia[lly] [m]ute all of [m]y [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ical
 energ[ie]s [f]or at [l]ea[s]t [f]ive years. She m[e]ntioned a
 [L]e[b]anese [b]ar [w]here “you [w]alk [d]own[s]tairs”
 that she [l]i[k]ed a [l]ot. I [s]aid the [e]ntire [c]ity of
 Provi[d]en[c]e has be[c]ome e[ss]e[n]tia[lly] one
 e[x]te[n]d[ed] hoo[k]ah [l]ounge, which, I admitted to
 he[r], [f]ull [d]i[s]c[lo]su[r]e, a[pp]ea[s] to m[e]
 [d]ee[p]ly, which, [f]ull [d]i[s]c[lo]su[r]e, [s]eem[ed] to
 genuinel[y] [s]urp[r]ise her, [th]at [th]e [e]n[tire] [c]ity
 of [P]rovi[d]en[c]e was a[n] e[x]te[n]d[ed] hoo[k]ah
 [l]ounge. I [s]aid the [c]i[ti]ty is [l]i[t]t[er]ed w[i]th Gr[ee][k]
 and [L]eban[e]se [p]l[a]c[es] [l]i[k]e that, which, of [c]our[s]e
 Giorgo[s], we kn[o]w is[n]’t true i[n] the [l]ea[s]t, [th]at
 [th]ere are [o]nly a fra[c]tion of Gr[ee][k] [l]o[c]ations
 [c]om[p]ared to [L]eban[e]se [l]o[c]a[tions], yet I [s]t[ate]d
 [i]t w[i]th [s]o much a[p]p[ro]p[ri]ate she [d]i[d]n’t [q]uestion it
 at [a]ll, [a]ltho[ugh] she [d]id imm[e]d[i]atel[y]
 [q]uestio[n] wh[et]her Gr[ee][k]s s[m]o[k]ed hoo[k]ah, to
 which I [s]imply [s]aid Otto[m]an [E]m[p]ire, to which
 she [s]aid of [c]our[s]e, imm[e]d[i]atel[y] [c]onne[ct]ing
 the [d]ots. [M]y goodne[ss], [M]ar[k]o[s], I have to [s]ay
 that’s [f]ai[r]ly impre[ss]ive, that a [f]ai[r]-s[k]inned
 [f]e[m]ale [f]rom [N]ew York would [c]o[n]n[ect] [th]ose
 dots [th]at [q]ui[ck]ly. The Otto[m]an Em[p]ire, I [m]ean,
 at thi[s] [p]oint it’s ba[s]icall[y] a [p]ie[c]e of
 [a]r[c]ana. [N]o one kn[o]ws a[n]ything a[bout] the
 [O]tto[m]an Em[p]ire a[n]y[m]ore. Oh, I
 [c]om[p]l[e]tely agr[ee]! I tota[lly] [f]eel [l]i[k]e the[r]e

a[r]le just ve[r]ly [f]ew [p][eo][p]le in our [g]e[n]eral [a][g]le
r[a]n[g]e who k[n]ow a[n]ything [a]bout the [O]ttoman
Em[p]ire, and [I]’d [o][n]e hu[n]dred [p]e[r][c]ent [w]ager
that [n]ot [o]ne other [p]e[r][s]on at Hot Clu[b] that
[n]ight who k[n]ew a[n]ything [a][b]out the [O]tto[m]an
Em[p]ire, [n]ever [m]ind its very [s][p]e[c]if[i][c] eth[n]i[c]
[c]om[p]o[n]ents, who [c]ould [p]ut the [p]ie[c]es of
[G]r[ee][k]s an[c]e[s]trally [s]mo[k]ing hoo[k]ah
[t]o[g]ether by the utteran[c]e of [t]w[o] words: Ottoman
Em[p]ire. In fact, it s[ee]ms to [m][e] [th]at [th]e
Otto[m]an Em[p]ire is [m]aybe the [m]o[s]t neg[l]e[c]t[e]d
[e]m[p]ire of the [p][a]st h[a]lf [m]i[ll]ennium, that [i]t
[i]nher[i]ted [i]ts [B]yzant[i]ne [p]rede[c]e[s]sor’s
[c]hara[c]ter[i]s[t]i[c] of [b]e[ing] [c]om[p]l[e]t[e]l[y]
[d]i[s]c[a]r[d]ed [b]y mo[d]ern [s][c]ho[l]arsh[ip]. [N]o one
k[n]ows what you [s]p[e]a[k] of when you [s]o [m]uch as
[m]e[n]tion the Otto[m]a[n] Em[p]ire, [p]eo[p]le are
[f]lu[m]moxed, ex[c]e[pt] a[pp]arentl[y] this [f]e[m]ale who
[m]ay or [m]ay not [b]e [f]rom New York, [b]ut
[c]ertainl[y] isn’t [f]rom The [B]ronx. In short, I quickly
[f]ound [th]at [th]e am[b]iguity of what New York [C][i]ty
[b]orough [c]hara[c]ter[i]s[t]i[c] was i[n]here[n]t i[n] this
[f]emale [b]e[c]ame [r]e[f]le[c]ted [r]ight into the
am[b]iguity of the ethni[c] [b]lo[ck]s [o]f the [O]tto[m]an
Em[p]ire, in a [p]o[s]t-Otto[m]an A[m]eri[c]an
[d]ia[s]p[ora], i[n] a[n] A[m]eri[c]a that [i]s [i]t[s]elf
[m]ul[t]i-eth[n]i[c], a[n]d [n]ot e[n]tirel[y] [d]ifferentl[y]
[th]an [th]e Otto[m]ans, Otto[m]ans who were only
[t]rum[p]ed [i]n their [i]m[p]or[t]ation of [A][f]ri[c]an

[s]laves by Ameri[c]a's [o]ut [o]f [c]ontrol [l]ove [a]ffair
with the [A][f]ri[c]an [s]lave. No one im[p]o[r]ted [m]o[r]e
[A][f]rican [s]laves [th]an [th]e Otto[m]an [E]m[p]ire,
[e]x[c]e[p]t of [c]our[s]e the United [S]tates of A[m]eri[c]a.
The am[b]iguity of the tr[ai]ts di[s]pl[ay]ed [b]y a
Gr[ee][k] [v]e[r][s]us a Tu[r]k [v]e[r][s]us a Le[b]an[e]se
[v]e[r][s]us a [K]u[r]d [v]e[r][s]us an Ar[m]e[n]ian in the
[s]eemingly [l]i[m]it[le]ss Provi[d]en[c]e Hoo[k]ah
Net[w]o[r]k [w]as [s]u[dd]enly a [d]ire[c]t [a]nalog to the
am[b]iguity of the New York [C]ity [b]o[r]ough
[c]hara[c]ter[i]s[t]ic[s] i[n]herent i[n] a [p]er[s]on who
[p]erha[p]s du[b]i[ou]sly [c]laims to [b]e from New
York [C]ity. I[n] one i[n]s[tan]c[e] [w]e're unsu[r]e if
[w]e're [w]itne[ss]ing a Gr[ee][k], a Tu[r]k, a Leban[e]se,
a [K]u[r]d, an Armenia[n]; i[n] the other i[n]s[tan]c[e],
we're unsu[r]e if [w]e're [w]itne[ss]ing a pe[r]s[on] from
The [B]ronx, from M[a]nh[at]tan, from [S]tat[en] Island,
from [B]roo[k]lyn, from [Q]ueens; in [b]oth [c]as[es] the
overl[ap]ping [c]har[a]c[t]er[i]s[t]ic[s], out[s]ide [o]f
their [o]r[i]g[i]nal [c]ontext ([o]f the [O]ttoman Em[p]ire
and [N]ew York [C]ity, re[s]p[e]c[tive[ly]), [b]e[c]ome
vague e[n]ough in their [n]uan[c]e [th]at [th]e i[d]entity of
ea[ch] [b]l[ee]ds i[n]t[o] [th]e [o]th[er], un[t]il the
i[n]d[i]v[i]dual i[d]entit[ie]s a[r]e e[r]a[s]ed compl[et]e[ly].
The New York [C]ity [d]ia[s]p[or]a in [P]rovi[d]en[c]e [c]an
refle[c]t [c]hara[c]ter[i]s[t]ic[s] a[s]so[c]iated with [S]tat[en]
Island, with M[a]nh[at]tan, with The [B]ronx, with
[B]roo[k]lyn, with [Q]ueens, while the [m]e[d]ian
hoo[k]ah [s]mo[k]er thi[s] New York [C]ity transplant

[m]ay [e]n[c]ounter i[n] the [e]xte[n]d[ed] [P]rovi[d]en[c]e
 Hoo[k]ah Network [m]ay [d]i[s]p[lay]
 [c]hara[c]ter[i][s]t[i]c[s] of the Gr[ee][k], of the Tur[k], of
 the Leban[e]se, of the [K]u[r]d, of the Armenia[n]. I[n]
 both [c]a[s]es what's [S]taten Island, what's [Q]u[ee]ns,
 what's [K]urd, what's Gr[ee][k], what's [B]roo[k]lyn,
 what's M[a]nh[at]tan, what's Le[b]an[e]se, what's Tu[r]k,
 what's The [B]ronx, what's Arm[e][n]ia[n] all [b]l[ee]d
 i[n]to one a[n]other until they're esse[n]tially
 [i][n]di[s]tingu[i]sha[b]le from [ea]ch other, until they're
 [e][ss]e[n]tiall[y] [e]xti[n]guished, until we r[ea]ch a
 funda[m]ental one[n]ess of a[n] Otto[m]a[n] [N]ew York
 [C]ity, a [l]egiti[m]ate [p]l[ane] of exi[s]t[en]c[e] that
 [c]ame in[t]o [b]e[ing] onl[y] at the Hot [C]lub [v]ia
 [c]on[v]er[s]a[tion thi[s] [p]a[s]t Frid[ay] night. Thi[s] [i][s]
 a ph[y]s[i]cal plane of ex[i]s[ten]c[e] [n]ow, the Ottoman
 [N]ew York [C]i[ty] of One[n]e[ss]. It can [n]o longer [b]e
 [d]e[n]ied, a[n] Otto[m]a[n] [N]ew York Cit[y] where all
 i[d]entit[y] has [b]een [e]x[t]i[n]guished [i]n[t]o a
 [m]o[n]a[d]i[c] One[n]e[ss] [c]ame in[t]o [e]xi[s]t[en]c[e] on a
 Fri[d]ay [n]ight at the Hot [C]lub. Yet that girl-[c]ould she
 h[ave] [a]c[tually [b]een f[r]om The [B]r[on]x? [W]ith
 [o]n[e] hu[n]dred [p]e[r]c[ent] [c]e[r]tainty I [w]ill assu[r]e
 you, Gior[g]o[s], [th]at [th]e [g]irl I [s]p[oke] with
 [F]ri[day] [n]ight was ab[s]o[lu]tely [n]ot [f]r[om] The
 Bronx.

A Modest Parallel Universe

Echoes: 1716

Syllables: 2423

Self-Similarity: .708

[I]n[i]tially a th[i]n h[i][p]ster with a full [r]ed [b]eard was in the [b][a]th[r]oom [a]t [N]ick-A-[N][ee]'s, [p][ee]ing at the t[a]ll u[r]i[n]al, [b]ut [w]he[n] I [w]e[n]t i[n], after he [w][a]l[k]ed out, I [m]ade a [p]oint to [p][ee] at the [k]idd[ie] u[r]inal, a t[r]ade[m]ar[k] of [m]ine, for whatever [r][ea]son [I] [f][i]nd [m]y[se]lf [m]ore [a]t [ea]se [a]t the kidd[ie] u[r]inals, [a]s I'm long-tors[o]ed i[n] a [a][dd][i]tion to being of [o]nly [a]verage height; ye[s], the ki[dd]ie urinals are e[ss]entiall[y] [m]ade for [m]e, and [p][ee]ing at the [k]idd[ie] urinal I too[k] [n]ote of what [l]oo[k]ed [l]i[k]e a [p][ie][c]e of [a][ss][c]r[a][ck] [l]i[n]t [c]o[nn][e]c[t]ed i[n]e[x]tri[c]ab[ly] to a [l]ong [p][ie][c]e of a[ss] hair. Th[i]s [i]s what it [s]tru[ck] me [a]s [a]t l[ea]s[t]. I thought ba[ck] to par[k]ing on the [s]tr[ee]t [f]i[f]ty [f]ee[t] [f]rom [N]i[ck]-A-[N][ee]'s, to [m]y [c]o[n]s[te]rnation [w]ith the driver [w]earing a [s]now[c]a[p] in his [m]aroon [p]i[ck][u]p tr[u]ck [c]ur[s]ing me through h[is] w[i]ndshield as I [s]l[ow]ly [s]c[o]p[ed] the one [o]p[en] [s]p[ot] on the [s]treet. [A]t th[at] time, with his [p]e[r]tu[r]bed ex[p]r[ess]ion and [p]r[eh]i[s]toric [f]acial [f]eatures, he [s]tru[ck] me as the [w]o[r]s[t] [p]e[r]s[on] in the [w]o[r]ld and fran[k]ly [s]till does. I [w]ished nothing but the [w]o[r]s[t] [th]i[n]gs on [th]i[s] [p]e[r]s[on] as I [p]ulled over to let him [p]a[ss],

[h]arangu[ing] [h][i]m through my [w][i]ndshiel[d] as he
 [s]i[m]ultaneou[s]l[y] [s][c]r[e]amed at [m]e through h[is]
 [w][i]ndsh[ie]ld, then [c]almly hit rever[s]e to [m]ove
 ba[ck] into the [m]iddle of the [s]treet, to [p]ara[ll]el
 [p]ar[k] in the [o]nly [o]pen [s]pot, ju[s]t
 [m]o[m]entari[ly] l[od]ging the [r]ight [r][ea]r wh[ee]l ever
 [s]o [s]l[ight]ly on[t]o the a[tt]enuated curb. In [m][y]
 [m]i[n]d thi[s] [m]an [i]n the p[ic]k[u]p tr[u]ck was a
 grote[s][q]ue [s]t[ai]n on the f[a]c[e] of our [p]lanet. His
 f[a]c[e], in both its [s]t[r]u[c]ture and exp[r]ession,
 [s]t[i]ck[ing] with m[e] at the bar in [N]i[c]k-A-[N]ee's,
 [m]o[r]e or le[ss] [r]evolted [m]e in the [m]o[s]t extreme of
 ways. The [m]an to [m]y l[e]ft ordered an
 imp[r]e[ss]ively g[r]ot[es]que [s]melling [s]oup from the
 bar-it was all I could [s]m[ell] at the time, and the
 [s]t[em]ch was [s]u[ch] that it [s]tr[u]ck me as [f]rankly a
 l[i]ttle un[b]el[ie]va[b]le [i]t w[a]f[te]d [f]rom a [b]owl a
 m[a]n was [a]ctua[l]ly eating [f]rom, y[e]t i[f] any[th]i[n]g
 [th]i[s] [m]ade [m]e [e]njoy [N]i[c]k-A-[N]ee's [e]ven
 [m]ore. The [b]and [p]l[ay]ing the [b]ar em[p]l[oy]ed a
 white [s]axophone [p]l[ayer], and each [r]e[s]p[re]c[t]ive
 i[n]s[t]rumentali[s]t was [d]r[i]nk[ing] a [s]e[p]arate,
 [d]i[s]tin[c]t variety of al[c]ohol-[o]ne [w]hi[s]k[ey], [o]ne
 [c]raft beer, one [s]ome type of m[i]xed dr[i]nk, one
 nothing at [a]ll, [a]ll [f]our [f]ran[k]ly l[oo]k[ing] l[i]ttle
 l[i]k[e] t[y]p[i]c[al] mus[i]cians, and I [f]ound it n[o]table
 how ea[s]ily the [s][axo]ph[o]ne, I pre[s]umed tenor,
 [s]at in the [m]i[x] with ju[s]t a [m]i[c]ro[ph]one ne[x]t to
 it, [g]i[ven] the [a]cc[om]panim[en]t of [e]l[e]c[tri]c

[g]u[i]tar, ele[c]tri[c] ba[ss], and [a][c]ou[s]ti[c] drums [th]at were [p][l]ayed in a [th]o[r]ough[l]y [r]ock, as o[pp]osed to jazz, [s]tyle. [I] gu[e][ss] [I] [n][e]ver k[n]ew that about tenor [s]axophone. [R]o[ck] [d]rums have in[c][r]ea[s]ing[l]y di[s]tre[ss]ed me of [l]ate. When I think of a style of drumming that offends my taste rock dru[m]ming i[m]m[e]d[i]atel[y] vaults [t]o the [t]o[p] of the list-i[n] [m]y o[p]i[n]ion, [S]trat[o]s, [m]o[s]t ro[ck] [m]usi[c] would [b][e] i[m]m[e]asura[b]l[y] i[m]p[ro]ved w[i]th the s[i]m[p]le re[m]oval [o]f [p]erc[us]sion, or at lea[s]t with a [m]ore [m]uted [s]ub[s]tit[ute] of [p]ercussion. [M]ay[b]e a [t]o[n]gue dr[um]? Amplified [t]o[n]gue [d]r[um]? [D]is[t]orted [t]am[b]ou[r]ine? [B]ut hone[s]tly that's ju[s]t m[e], [b]e[c]a[us]e I fu[l]ly rea[l]ize mo[s]t [p]eop[le] l[ove] [p]erc[us]sion, that [p]erc[us]sion [i]s viewed as the [s]o-c[al]led [b]a[ck]b[one] of m[od]ern [c]o[m]pos[ition], that tons of l[i]s[t]eners [s]till vene[r]a[te] [r]o[ck] musi[c]. [I]n a[n]y [c]a[se], [I] [g]ue[ss] [I] should [s]tart to ex[p]l[ai]n [h]ow I [g]ot [h]ere, shouldn't I? From [y]our [p]arallel universe [y]ou mean? Ex[a]c[t]ly, [S]tr[ato]s. It now [s]eems to m[e] that I [c]ro[ss]ed o[v]er [i]nto th[is] uni[v]er[s]e, or I should [s]ay I be[c]ame a[w]a[r]e th[at] it [h]ad [h]a[pp]ened, [p]reci[s]ely [a]t the [p]oint [w]he[r]e [th]e b[oz]o in [th]e sn[o]w[c]a[p] in his dar[k] [r]ed [p]i[ck]u[p] t[r]u[ck] beg[an] yelling [a]t me through h[is] w[i]ndshie[d], as I a[tt]em[p]t[ed] to [p]arallel [p]ar[k] u[p] the [s]tr[ee]t from [N]i[ck]-A-[N]ee's, [w]here a man [w]ould then or[d]er [o]ne of the mo[s]t [d]i[s]gu[s]tin[g]

[s]mellin[g] [s]ou[p]s I'v[e] [e][v]er [e]ncountered from its
[b]ar. It was o[b]viou[s] [a]s the m[a]n, who [I]
[d]e[s][p]i[s]ed, [l]oo[k]ed ex[a]c[t]ly [l]i[k]e [s]ome[o]ne
fr[o]m [A][l][a][b]am[a]-he [w]as [w]earing a [s]nowca[p]
[d]e[s][p]ite it b[e]ing a mo[d]e[r]atel[y] tem[p]e[r]ate [d]ay
in earl[y] A[p]ril, and given th[e]se [f]a[c]ts it was
obv[i]ou[s] [s]omething had sh[i]f[t]ed
[s]i[gn]i[f]i[c]antly, but I [c]oul[d][n]'t [d]raw a[n]y
[c]oncl[usions] [q]uite [a]t th[at] [p]oint. But these are the
[ty]p[es] of [c]ues y[ou] have [t]o [t]ake in[t]o a[cc]ount
with regard to [th]ings [s]uch as [th]e[se], [S]trato[s],
[p]arallel un[iver]s[e] [c]o[n]u[n]dr[u]ms, [s]o to
[s]p[ea]k. [H]ow ex[a]c[t]ly it [h]a[pp]ens I'm not [a]t
li[b]erty [t]o de[t]ail [a]t this [t]ime, [a]s it's [p]o[ss]i[b]le
I'm ig[n]orant of the me[c]ha[n]i[c]s of the [p]ro[c]e[ss], or
I'm a[w]are of the [p]ro[c]e[ss] in a [w]a[y] I [c]an only
[c]ommun[i]c[ate] [i]n [i]ndi[r]e[c]t [w]a[y]s. Thi[s]
[m]a[k]e[s] [s]ense, [M]ar[k]o[s]. There's obviou[s][l]y
[o]n[e] [s]o [m]uch we [c]an [p]ut into [w]ords [w]hen it
[c]omes to [p]arallel univ[er]s[es]. For exam[p]le, it was
[p]re[c]i[s]e[l]y at [N]ick-A-[N]ee's that I h[a]p[pen]ed to
[l]og onto the [b]a[s]k[e]t[b]all-[r]e[f]e[r]en[c]e dot [c]om
[w]e[b]p[age], [S]trato[s], [w]hich only [c]onfirmed my
[s]u[s]p[i]c[i]ons, [w]h[i]ch had been stea[d]i[l]y rising,
which on[e] [a]c[t]ed [a]s a[n]other [c]lue [a]s I [d]elved
[d]eeper in[t]o the s[ta]t[i]s[t]ic[s] I'll [d]e[t]ail right [n]ow.
[S]p[e]c[i]f[i]cally, as I re[c]alled it, [b]eyond a sh[a]d[ow] of
a [d]oubt [i]t [s]a[t] [i]n [m]y [m]e[m]ories, the [B]o[s]ton
[C]el[ti]c J[a]ys[o]n [T]a[tum] [o]wned a [s]ta[t]i[s]t[i]c[a]l

pr[o]file that ex[c]c[e]d[ed] th[a]t of [D][a]llas [M][a]veri[ck] Lu[k]a [D]onci[c], whereas [L]u[k]a [D]onci[c] h[ad] a [s]ta[t][i][s]t[i]c[al] [s]u[mm]a[tion] th[a]t l[a]gged th[a]t of J[a]y[s]on T[a]tum. And yet on [b][a][s]i[s]k[et]b[all]-re[f]eren[c]e dot [c]om at [N]i[ck]-A-[N][ee]'s, onl[y] [m]o[m]ents a[f]ter][s]aid [b][o]zo in [s]n[o]w[c]a[p] in the [A]la[b][a][m]a-e[s]que [m]aroon [p]i[ck][u]p t[r][u]c[k] b[e]r[ate]d [m]e through h[is] w[ind]shie[d], it o[cc]urr[ed] to [m]e that Lu[k]a Donci[c] had by [f]ar the [m]ore [c]om[p]lete [s]ta[t][i][s]t[i]c[al] [p]ro[f]ile [c]om[p]are[d] to J[a]y[s]on T[a]tum, de[s]p[ite] b[oth] Lu[k]a [a]nd Tatum [a]veraging a[b]ove thirty [p]oints [p]er g[a]me thi[s] NB[A] [s]eason. [S]p[e]c[i]f[i]c[ally], on thi[s] [s]ide, [S]tratos, it [s]eem[ed] that Lu[k]a di[f]f[er]enti[ate]d himsel[f] [f]r[om] T[a]tum by [g]etting to the [f]ree th[r]ow [s]t[r]i[p]e at a [m]uch [g]r[ea]ter [c]li[p], by [m]aking [p]lays [f]or [o]thers at a [c]li[p] [th]a[t] more [th]a[n] d[ou]bled T[a]tum's r[ate]. Where J[a]yson T[a]tum a[ss][i]s[t]e[d] on ju[s]t twe[n]ty [p]er[c]e[n]t of his [p]ossessions, while [t]urning the ball over on [t]en [p]er[c]e[n]t, Luka Donci[c] a[ss][i]s[t]e[d] on forty three [p]er[c]e[n]t of his [p]ossessions [w]hile [t]urning the [b]all [o]ver on [o]nly [t]welve [p]er[c]e[n]t, [w]hile [b]oth re[b]ounde[d] ju[s]t a[b]out [th]irteen [p]er[c]e[n]t of [th]eir [p]ro[ss]i[b]le [p]o[s]se[ss]io[n]s and [sh]ot a[n] a[gg]re[g]ate [p]er[c]e[n]t[age] of [s]ixty ([t]rue sh[oot]ing [p]er[c]e[n]t[age] on [th]eir [th]irty [p]oints [p]er game. Yet I ex[p]l[i]c[i]tly r[e]c[al]led J[a]y[s]on T[a]tum b[e]i[n]g the far [s]u[p]e[r]ior [p]l[a]ym[a]n, by

more than [d]ouble, when [c]om[p]ared t[o] L[u]ka [D]onci[c], in those exa[c]t [t]erms of a[ss]i[s]t [p]er[c]en[t]age and [f]ree throw rate, y[e]t wh[e]n I l[og]ged [o]nto [b]a[s]ket[b]all-[r]e[f]e[r]en[c]e at [N]i[ck]-A-[N]ee's, to my great [s]ur[p]r[is]e, Lu[k]a Donci[c] [s]e[p]a[r]a[te]d him[s]e[l]f [f]rom J[a]y[s]on T[a]tum b[y] [h]is [h]igher [p]ro[p]e[n]sity of g[e]tting to the [f]r[e]e throw [s]t[r]i[p]e and [b]y his [s]tar[k] [c]ont[r]a[s]t in [s]etting his team[m]a[te]s up for [m]a[de] shots (e[s]p[ec]iall[y] wh[e]n [c]om[p]ared to his [p]ro[p]e[n]sity) [t]o the [t]urn the ball [o]ver). It's [o]nly in the [m]ost [m]inute of ways that we [c]an de[t]e[c]t these [t]ra[n]s[i]t[i]ons, [S]trato[s], if that ma[k]e[s] [s]en[s]e, that we [c]an [c]on[c]lude we've tra[v]er[s]ed a[c]ro[ss] pote[n]tial di[m]e[n]sions, if that [m]a[k]e[s] [s]e[n]s[e]? Oh, abso[lu]te[ly]! [A]nd to [a]dd t[o] the con[f]u[s]ion it was onl[y] a night [l]ater, in a [v]i[v]id [d]ream, that [I] [f]ound m[y]s[e]l[f] in a [d]e[s]o[late] house [c]o[v]e[r]e[d] [w]ith o[r]ange [w]all[p]a[p]er, [c]u[r]iou[s]l[y] [p]ro[c]e[u]pied [w]ith b[a]thing my[s]elf, a[pp]a[r]entl[y] g[e]tting [r]ea[d]y [f]or [s]omething I [c]ouldn't [q]uite [p]ut my [f]inger on-[i]t was [i]n th[i]s home w[i]th the o[r]a[n]ge i[n]te[r]ior that I felt agai[n] thi[s] p[s]y[c]hi[c] e[n]ergy with [n]ear [s]tr[a]ngers, [n]ear [s]tr[a]ngers who [s]eem to [p]op in[t]o [m]y [m]e[n]tal [s]p[a]c[e] unannoun[c]ed, th[at] h[as] in[c]rea[s]ingl[y] [s]tru[c]k me [a]s an [a]c[tual [p]h[y]s[i]c[al] [p]he[n]ome[n]on. That I [c]a[n] [a]c[tually [th]in[k] b[a]c[k] toward [th]e[n]e[n]r strangers in a [p]h[y]s[i]c[al] [f]a[sh]i[on]. Yet this was bef[ore] a

[p]arti[c]ular [sh][a][d]ow [f]rom my [p][a][s]t a[pp]ea[re]d
 to [m][e] yet agai[n] [i]n [d]r[ea]m, [i]n the [m]o[s]t [v]i[v]id
 of [m][a]nners, [a]nd I beg[a]n to r[un] [f]r[om]
 [s]ome[th]ing, [s]ome[th]ing [I] [c]oul[d]n't [i]denti[f]y,
 wh[i]le [s]imulta[n]eou[s]ly re[c]o[n]n[e]c[t]ing w[i]th th[i]s
 shad[ow] w[ith]out [ei]ther [o]f u[s] [s]aying a [w]ord to
 [ea]ch [o]ther, un[t]il I [s][t]umbled u[p]o[n] [w]hat
 [l]oo[k]ed [l]i[k]e a [l]o[ck]er room i[n] a[n] o[p]en field. I
 entered the [b]ui[l]ding, a s[o]-[c]alled [l]o[ck]er [r]oom i[n]
 a[n] [o]pe[n] field, a[n]d [r]ea[l]ized all of its
 [m]e[m]o[r]a[b]i[l]ia w[a]s fr[om] [n][i]net[ee]n [n][i]net[y]
 eight-and [I] real[i]zed [I]'d tr[a][v]eled b[ac]k to
 [n][i]net[ee]n [n][i]net[y] eight, that e[v]erything I
 [t]ouched was [t]otal[y] [n][i]net[ee]n [n][i]net[y] eight,
 that my [o]wn [s][o]-[c]alled identit[y] was ju[st] a
 [c]lums[y] [b]l[oc]k [a][c]ro[ss] [s]omething that [c]ould
 [b]e tr[a]ver[s]ed if [a][pp]r[oa]ched [p][r]o[pe]rly, a[n]d
 the[n] [s]uddenl[y] [th]e [th]ought occurred to m[e]:
 T[i]me [s]tarts [i]n the m[i]ddle and w[i]nds [a]round,
 [a]lways [i]n the m[i]ddle, I [th]ought, [th]at [th]is notion
 of [t]i[m]e [b]eg[i]nn[ing] at the [b]eg[i]nn[ing] [i]s
 en[t]irely fal[s]e, perhap[s] even non[s]en[s]ical. [W]hen
 a[w]a[k]e I franti[c]all[y] wr[ote] a n[ote] that [s]impl[y]
 [s]aid: T[i]me [s]tarts [i]n the m[i]ddle and w[i]nds
 around. [A]nd, [a]s [I] en[c]ountered thi[s] [i]dea,
 [s]tr[ea]ms of gr[ee]n, for [l]a[ck] of a better word,
 time sh[ot] [o]ut, [l]i[k]e Ni[ck]e[l]odeon G[a]ck or
 [s]omething, variou[s] [s]treams of time [o]verlapp[ing]
 each other in j[oy]o[u]s [b]u[r]sts of [g]reen, like the

wo[r]d [G][o], and it was a [s]ort of j[o]you[s] e[v]e[n]t
e[v]e[n] [i][n] [i]ts am[b]i[gu]ity. I was a l[i]ttle
d[i]sa[pp]oin[t]ed [t]o wake u[p]. [D]id y[ou] [d][o]
shr[oo]ms at all? N[o], [s][a]dly, [S]tr[a]t[os], I was
compl[e]tel[y] [f][r][ee] [f][r]om hallu[c]inoge[n]s [w]he[n] I
[w]e[n]t to sl[ee]p, [w]he[n] I [w]e[n]t to [N]ick-A-[N][ee]’s,
when the red-bear[d]ed hi[p][s]ter [p]eed at the a[d]ult
urinal, when the [m]an next to [m]e or[d]ered the
[d]i[s]gu[s]ting [s]ou[p], [w]hen the b[o]z[o] [w]ith the
[s]n[o]w[c]a[p] [s][c]r[ea]med at m[e], when the
[s]axophone was [s]ur[p]r[i]singly h[i]gh [i]n the m[i]x.
N[o], we [d][o]n’t [n]e[c]e[ss]arily [n]eed [t]o [t][r]avel in
the [t][r]a[d]i[t]i[on]al [s]en[s]e [i]n or[d]er [t]o [t][r]avel
g[r]eat [d]i[s]tan[c]es, that much we can be sure of. That
[m]akes [c]omplete sense to [m]e, [M]ar[k]os!

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