



2,650 Syllables of Authentic Reflection

Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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**Mode: >.75**

2226:2647 .841

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—A: The Best Pizza in the State of Rhode Island  
863:1043 .827

The blunt reality of my life at the time  
was that the pizza at Bettola  
was more appropriate to eat  
with a literal soup spoon  
as opposed to your opposable thumbs,  
that each slice was steeped  
in an ill-advised amount of oil and cheese,  
that the bread, for that matter,  
was already floppy,  
that even a robust crust could never  
withstand the weight of the toppings  
as currently constituted,  
which caused the entire pizza  
to avalanche down to the tips of your fingers  
whenever you attempted  
to pick it up,  
thereby forced to consume the slice  
in essentially one rushed bite,  
with all the ingredients  
concatenating onto each other,  
leaving you with a piece  
of wet bread in your palm  
that constituted the quote-unquote  
"rest of the slice".

It was technically Curt's idea to go,  
when we were  
still at the cigar bar so-called dinner,

where the copious smoke  
was seeping into our skins  
by the minute,  
where the pasta was mush  
and the garlic was burnt,  
where Curt attempted to  
bum a single cigarette  
off the forty or so people  
in attendance,  
all to no avail,  
neither one of us  
smoking a cigar or cigarette,  
the new bartender  
made almost entirely of plastic,  
with a Picasso like  
vibe to her work—  
she actually gave me a great deal  
on the maybe eight  
Michelob Ultras I chugged!

But Bettola was alleged  
to sport the best pizza  
in the state—  
it was something  
apparently a group  
of consumers cast votes on  
at some time, somewhere,  
and subsequently the award was  
advertised  
right in front of their stoop,  
so I saw no real risk

in stopping by,  
as I was still up  
for a bite, finding  
the pasta at the bar  
a bit subpar,  
plus it was a straight shot  
up Pontiac  
in any case.

Yet while I'm  
typically of the mind  
to silently disparage  
a restaurant's offering  
then just never return  
again, Curt, by contrast,  
tended to vocalize  
his discontent  
to wait staffs,  
and with a complaint  
I quietly addressed  
to him now buttressing  
his own disgust  
he called the bartender,  
Reign,  
over to voice his concerns  
with the notion both pizzas  
we ordered weren't "great",  
yet Reign, for her part,  
found Curt's complaint  
just as contemptible  
as we found the place's

pizza—she was frankly a little shocked  
that a person could dislike  
this luscious pie.

This food in front of us was,  
to Reign, great pizza,  
yet she now stood faced with  
two patrons  
who seemed to disagree,  
judging not just the particular pies  
they got to be subpar,  
but the actual construction  
of the pizza itself—  
the underlying architecture  
of the restaurant's recipe—  
to be deeply flawed.

Oh no,  
it's fine, I said,  
entirely insincerely,  
telling Reign  
the food was okay,  
there was really no need  
for us to complain—  
maybe just get me  
one more Michelob  
if you have a chance?

So I believe Curt and I  
were both surprised  
when Reign came

over some time later,  
after to-go boxes  
had been packed  
and night caps'd  
been sipped,  
with a fresh pie,  
saying Try this one on for size—  
yet, while I of course,  
had no inclination to complain,  
I didn't even object  
to the meat on the pizza,  
I'd rather have, at that point,  
breached my own veganism  
before I levied a complaint  
to Reign,  
yet Curt wasn't of the same mind  
as I.

Yeah, see, he said,  
this pizza has the same  
problem—proceeding to show  
Reign and now another  
waitress  
the essential incongruence  
between the thickness  
of the bread  
and the payload  
of the multiple toppings,  
how it made the pizza  
really hard to eat.

What Reign still failed  
to comprehend was it wasn't  
the components of Bettola's  
pizza that were objectionable,  
it was instead the  
core geometry of the pie  
that was basically unacceptable—  
in an entirely ill-fated attempt  
to save face  
Curt asked Reign  
to make us  
an espresso martini  
but with tequila,  
her idiosyncratic take  
on the cocktail.

Personally I found the  
tequila-based espresso martini  
as geometrically off kilter  
as the pizza,  
all I could taste  
was the damn agave,  
yet I kept my mouth closed,  
my to-go box ready  
to take home  
to my loving wife,  
filled to the brim with shitty pizza  
as a little Christmas gift—

—B: Mineral Spring Avenue is for Lovers  
743:900 .826

Sitting at The Social  
by myself,  
my first time back on Mineral Spring  
since I'd moved from the street  
after residing beside Taco Bell  
for a decade plus—  
the spot I drank at located  
a door over from my former apartment,  
a dilapidated building with  
about five businesses  
on the bottom floor—  
and I knew for a fact this pasty bartender  
was upselling me egregiously on  
her shitty little mezcal glasses,  
the Casamigos brand to boot,  
my least favorite  
by a large margin.

The whore charged me seventeen per  
drink which in North Provolone  
was simply an atrocity,  
even fifteen bucks per  
glass was hypothetically absurd,  
it was completely out of line  
I thought as I begrudgingly gave  
her my Discover card,  
recalling just a couple months prior  
at my friend Ryan's

birthday party—when this particular  
Social worker was,  
in my mind, a little slow with  
the Corona Light service  
and overheard my critique of her speed  
to Paul, subsequently slamming down six beers  
onto a table and yelling "Here you go!" to me,  
which I actually appreciated at the time,  
as I was already ready for another  
Corona anyway.

But now, sitting at The Social  
by myself, being basically mugged  
because of my proclivity toward mezcal,  
I recognized that this comment,  
even if not initially intended for  
the server to hear,  
had come back to bite me in  
my ass, as I assumed the debt  
for these seventeen dollar mezcals.

The waitress became the bartender  
in the interim, and she's now  
exactd her revenge with alacrity.

To the best of my recollection  
I was only even on the damn street  
because I had a dinner to attend  
at Il Fornello around the corner,  
and after handing the tab  
back to my cocktail executioner,

I still had some time to kill,  
so I drove down the street to Rocco's  
for a sole additional drink  
before I hit the dinner,  
as I hadn't been  
in eons it seemed  
and now found myself in a nostalgic  
if not bitter state of mind.

I recognized the bartender  
at Rocco's from past eras,  
back when I  
grabbed cocktails with that absolute  
crumb Enzo on the regular,  
but I couldn't recall the girl's name—  
she greeted me amicably,  
yet also refrained from using  
a formal address, no doubt also  
failing to recall me  
fully either as  
I asked for a  
Johnny Black.

O, what cruel ironies  
North Providence had in wait  
for me that afternoon!—  
the Rocco's girl gave  
me a reasonable fare  
for my subsequent  
scotch on the rocks, and  
I figured at that point it was probably

about time, now half in the bag,  
to go back toward Fornello,  
looping through my old parking lot,  
to find the Russian guy's white truck  
Tree had hated  
still parked in his same  
dipshit spot and letting down  
my Civic's window  
to hawk a loogie at the passenger door  
as I drove by, ejecting the spit  
far enough to clear my car but  
unsure if I actually  
connected with a  
direct hit on the pickup,  
unconvinced if I'd, like  
the previous bartender,  
successfully enacted a minuscule  
revenge on an individual  
I didn't even technically know.

—C: On the Amtrak to Penn Station  
620:704 .881

On the Amtrak to Penn Station  
on a Friday AM  
I considered my  
professional investigation  
into the Epstein scandal,  
filled as it is with ageless enigmas  
and faux hoaxes,  
and also my related but aborted novel  
that I at the time titled Jeffrey of Nazareth,  
where I'd imagined a near future  
where the kid trafficker Jeff  
was re-interpreted as a Christ-like  
figure, where Americans  
bought for sex toys for house pets  
they saw on TikTok,  
but now witnessing  
internet celebrities,  
who still know no lows,  
wearing Free Ghislaine  
tees I contemplated  
whether or not  
my failed novel was  
in fact still satirical at all,  
even now,  
that perhaps Jeff Epstein  
would soon be seen  
as a sort of second coming of Jesus,  
that possibly everybody

had it all wrong  
all along—  
that all those silly girls  
who alleged under oath  
they'd been sexually violated  
as little kids were simply  
unprosecuted liars?

Could Jeffrey Epstein actually be Jesus,  
I considered in the coach class of Amtrak—  
or is every single American who votes  
Democrat and Republican  
basically a pedophile, I thought,  
because only a C student chimpanzee  
could possibly view our political  
system as anything but  
irreversibly corrupt?

Every election in this failed state  
is basically a faux pas  
kayfabe mock election obfuscating  
from the true extent of our state  
of corruption,  
I thought on the Amtrak,  
in a realm of even remote American  
collective intelligence  
all these politicians  
would be prosecuted and  
placed into prison cells  
for multiple decades at minimum, because  
if a so-called state can't at the very least

collectively act against  
wide scale child rape  
then the nation functionally  
ceases to exist.

We live instead in a state of static anarchy  
actually, I considered—  
any notion of a nation  
is purely illusory,  
just like Zeno's proofs on  
the fictitious nature of The Many,  
America is equally if not more  
imaginary—

People  
despise Stephen Miller  
and his muppet wife  
for incredibly good reason,  
I thought,  
as they're both basically  
treasonous idiots,  
but they're actually  
a relatively minor symptom  
of an even more serious disease,  
as when people  
like Misses Miller  
appear on television programs  
to endorse American fascism  
while interpreting any criticism  
of her own Nazi-adjacent opinions  
as a racist attack on her

so-called Jewish identity  
it's unavoidably repulsive  
to everyone,  
yet even that egregious imbecility  
is still an at best  
minor symptom in the  
larger scheme of a  
fundamentally imaginary  
America—

–Diagrams

–A: Diagrams

863:1043 .827

The [b][l]unt rea[l]ity of m[y] [l][i]fe at the t[i]me  
was [th]at [th]e [p][i]zza at [B]etto[l]a  
was more a[pp][r]o[p][r][i]ate to [ea]t  
with a [l]ite[r]al [s][ou][p] [s][p][oo]n  
as [o][pp][o]sed to your [o][pp][o]sa[b]le [th]umbs,  
[th]at [ea]ch [s]li[c]e was [s]t[ee]p[ed]  
[i]n [a]n [i]ll-[a]dvised a[m]ount of oil [a]nd ch[ee]se,  
[th]at [th]e b[r][ea]d, [f]or th[at] [m][a]tter,  
was al[r][ea]d[y] [f]l[o][pp]y,  
that [e]ven a [r]ob[u]st c[r][u]st [c]ould ne[v]er  
[w]ithstand the [w]eight of the [t]o[pp]ings  
as [c]u[r]rently [c]o[n]s[t]ituted,  
which [c]aused the en[t]ire [p]izza  
[t]o [a]val[an]che down [t]o the [t]i[ps] of your f[i]ngers  
wh[e]n[e]ver you a[tt][e]m[p]t[ed]  
to [p]i[ck] [i]t u[p],  
thereb[y] forced to [c]o[n]s[ume] the [s][l][i]c[e]  
in e[ss]entiall[y] [o]ne r[u]shed b[i]te,  
with all the ingr[e]d[i]ents  
[c]o[n]c[at]enating on[t]o [ea]ch other,  
l[e]aving you [w]ith a [p]ie[ce]  
of [w]et br[e]ad in your [p]alm  
that [c]o[n]s[tituted] the [q]u[ote]-[u]n[q]u[ote]  
"re[s]t [o]f the [s]li[c]e".

143:189 .757

It was [t]e[c]hni[c]ally [C][ur]'s idea [t]o go,  
 [w]hen [w]e [w][er]e  
 [s]t[i]ll at the [c][i]gar b[a]r [s][o]-c[a]lled d[i]nner,  
 where the [c][o][p]ious [s]m[o][k]e  
 was [s][ee][p][i]ng [i]nto our [s][k][i]ns  
 [b]y the [m][i]n[u]te,  
 where the [p][a]st[a] [w]as [m]ush  
 and the g[a]rlic [w]as [b][ur]nt,  
 where C[ur]t a[t]t[em]p[t]ed [t]o  
 [b]um a [s][i]ngle [c][i]gar[e]tte  
 off] the [f]orty or [s][o] [p]leo[p]le  
 in [a]tt[en]d[an]ce,  
 [a]ll to [n][o] [a]vail,  
 [n]either [o]ne [o]f [u]s  
 [s][m][o]king a [c]i[g]ar or [c]i[g]arette,  
 the [n]ew bartender  
 [m]ade al[m][o]st ent[i]rely of [p][l][a]s[tic],  
 [w]ith a [P][i][c]a[s]o [l][i][k]e  
 v[i]be to h[er] [w][or][k],  
 sh[e] [a][c]tua[l]ly [g][a]ve [m]e a [g]r[e]at deal  
 on the [m][ay]be [ei]ght  
 [M]i[c]helob [U]ltras I ch[u]gged!  
 122:144 .847

[B]ut [B][e]tto[1][a] was [a][ll][e]ged  
 to [s][p]ort the [b][e]st [p]izza  
 in the [s]tate,  
 it w[a]s [s][o]mething  
 [a][pp]a[r]ently [a] g[r][ou][p]  
 of [c]on[s][u]mers [c]a[s]t votes on  
 at [s][o]me time, [s][o]mewhere,

[a]nd [s][u]b[s][e][q]u[e]ntly the a[w]ard [w]as  
 [a]dvert[i]sed  
 [r][i]ght in f[r]ont of their [s]toop,  
 [s][o] I [s]aw n[o] [r]eal [r]isk  
 in [s]to[p]ping b[y],  
 as [I] was [s]till u[p]  
 [f]or a [b][i]te, [f][i]nding  
 the [p][a][s]t[a] at the [b][ar]  
 a [b]it [s]ub[p][ar],  
 [p]lus it was a [s]tr[ai]ght [s]hot  
 u[p] [P]onti[a]c  
 in [a]ny [c][a][s]e.  
 88:101 .871

Yet wh[i]le [I]'m  
 t[y][p][i]ca[lly] of the m[i]nd  
 to [s][i][l]entl[y] di[s]p[ar]age  
 a [r][e][s]tau[r]ant's [o]ffe[r]ing  
 th[e]n just n[e]ver [r][e]t[ur]n  
 ag[ai]n, [C]urt, b[y] [c]on[t]r[ast],  
 [t][e]n[d]ed to vo[c]al[i]ze  
 h[is] [d][i][s]c[on]t[en]t  
 to [w][ai]t st[a]ffs,  
 [a]nd [w]ith a [c]omp[li]ant  
 [I] [q]uietl[y] a[dd]r[es]sed  
 to him n[ow] [b][u]tt[r]e[ss]i[ng]  
 h[is] [ow]n [d][i][s]g[us]t  
 he [c]alled the [b]artender,  
 R[ei]gn,  
 o[v]er to [v]oice his [c]oncerns  
 with the n[ot]ion b[oth] [p]izzas

[w]e ord[er]ed [w][er]n't "g[r][ea]t",  
 yet [R][ei]gn, [f]or her [p]art,  
 [f]ound [C]urt's [c][o]m[p]l[ai]nt  
 just as [c][o]ntem[p]tible  
 as we [f]ound the [p]l[a]c[e]s  
 [p]izz[a]—she w[a]s [f]ran[k]l[y] a [l]ittle sho[c]ked  
 that a [p]er[s]on [c]ould [d]is[l]i[k]e  
 th[is] lusc[i]ous [p]i[e].  
 125:138 .906

Th[is] [f]ood [i]n [f]r[on]t of [u]s w[a]s,  
 to [R][ei]gn, g[r][ea]t [p]izza,  
 yet she now [s]tood [f][a]c[ed] w[i]th  
 two [p]l[at]r[on]s  
 who [s][ee]med to di[s]ag[r][ee],  
 [j][u]dging n[ot] [j][u]st the [p]articlar [p]l[i]es  
 they g[ot] to [b]e s[u]b[p]ar,  
 [b][u]t the a[c]tual [c]onstr[u]c[tion  
 of the [p]izza it[s]e[f],  
 the un[d]erlying ar[c]hit[e]c[t]ure  
 of the [r][e]s[tau]r[ant]'s [r][e]c[i]p[e]  
 to b[e] [d]e[e]p[l]i[y] [f]l[aw]ed.  
 68:79 .861

[O]h n[o],  
 it's f[i]ne, [I] said,  
 en[t]i[re]l[y] [i]n[s]i[n]c[er]e[l]y,  
 [t]e[l]l[ing] R[ei]gn  
 the food was o[k]ay],  
 there was [r][e]l[ax]i[n]g [n]o [n]e[e]d  
 for us to [c]ompl[ai]n—

[m][ay]b[e] j[u]st get [m][e]  
[o]ne [m]ore [M][i]che[l][o]b  
[i]f you h[a]ve a ch[a]nce?  
46:47 .979

So [I] [b]elieve [C][ur]t and [I]  
were [b][o]th [s][ur]p[r][i]sed  
when [R][ei]gn [c][a]me  
[o]ver [s]ome [t]ime l[a]ter,  
[a]fter [t]o-g[o] [b]oxes  
h[a]d [b]een [p]l[a]cked  
and night [c][a]p[s]d  
[b]een [s]i[p]ped,  
with a [f][r]esh [p][i]e,  
[s]aying T[r][y] this one on [f]or [s][i]ze—  
yet, wh[i]le [I] of [c]ourse,  
had [n]o [i]n[c]l[i]n[ati]on to [c]om[p]l[ai]n,  
I [d]i[d]n't even object  
to the m[ea]t on the [p][i]zza,  
I'd r[a]ther h[a]ve, [a]t th[at] [p]oint,  
[b]r[ea]ched my own [v][e]ganism  
[b]efore I [l]e[v]ie[d] a [c]om[p]l[ai]nt  
to R[ei]gn,  
yet [C]urt wasn't of the [s][a]me m[i]nd  
as [I].  
86:109 .789

Yeah, [s][ee], he [s]aid,  
this [p][i]zza has the [s]ame  
[p][r]o[b]lem—[p][r]o[c]e[ee]ding to show  
[R][ei]gn and [n]ow a[n]other

w[ai]t[r]e[ss]  
the [e][ss]e[n]tial in[c]ongru[en]ce  
[b]etween [th]e [th]i[c]kn[e]ss  
of the [b]read  
and the [p]l[ay]load  
of the [m]ul[t]i[p]le [t]o[pp]ings,  
how it [m][a]de the [p]i[zza]  
[r][ea]ll[y] hard to [ea]t.  
48:64 .75

What [R][ei]gn still f[ai]led  
to [c][o]m[p]rehend [w][a]s it [w][a]sn't  
the [c][o]m[p]o[n]e[n]ts of [B][e]ttola's  
pizza that were obj[e]c[tio]n[a]b]le,  
it was in[s]t[ea]d the  
[c]ore geometr[y] of the [p]ie  
that was [b][a][s]i[c]all[y] una[cc][e][p]ta[b]le—  
in [a]n [e]n[t]irel[y] ill-[f][a]ted a[tt]em[p]t  
to [s]a[ve] [f]a[c]e  
[C]urt asked [R][ei]gn  
to [m]a[ke] us  
an [e][s]p[r]e[ss]o [m]art[i]n[i]  
but with [t]e[q]u[i]la,  
her id[i]o[s]yn[c]ratic [t]a[k]e  
[o]n the [c][o]c[k]t[ai]l.  
78:95 .821

[P]er[s]onally I [f]ound the  
[t]e[q]uila-b[a]s[ed] [e][s]p[r]e[ss]o [m]art[i]n[i]  
as ge[o]m[et]ri[c]all[y] off [k]ilter  
as the [p]i[zza],

all I [c]ould [t][a][s]te  
was the damn agav[e],  
y[e]t I [k][e]pt [m]y [m]outh [c][l][o]sed,  
my [t]o-g[o] box ready  
[t]o [t]a[k]e h[o]me  
to my [l]oving wi[f]e,  
[f][i]lled to the b[r][i]m w[i]th sh[i]tty pizza  
as a [l][i]ttle [C]hr[i]stm[as] g[i][f]t—  
59:77 .766

—B: Diagrams  
743:900 .826

[S][i]tt[i]ng at The [S]ocial  
[b][y] [m][y][s]elf,  
[m]y [f]irst t[i]me [b]ack on [M]ine[r]al [S]p[r]ing  
[s]ince [I]'d [m]oved [f][r]om the [s]t[r]eet  
a[f]ter [r]es[i]ding [b]e[s][i]de Ta[c]o [B]ell  
[f]or a [d]e[c][a]de [p][l]u[s]—  
the [s][p]ot I [d][r][a]nk [a]t [l][o][c]c[a]ted  
[a] [d][oor] [o]ver [f]rom my [f][o]r[m]er [a][p]art[m]ent,  
[a] [d]ila[p]i[d]ated [b]u[i]l[d]i[n]g w[i]th  
[a][b]out [f]ive [b][u]sin[ess]es  
[o]n the [b][o]ttom [f]loor—  
and I knew [f]or a [f]act this [p]asty [b]artender  
was u[p]se[ll]ing [m][e] egr[e]giou[s]l[y] on  
her sh[i]tty [l][i]ttle [m]ez[c]l g[l][a]sses,  
the [C]a[s]s[a]m[i]gos [b]rand to [b]oot,  
m[y] [l][ea]st favorite  
b[y] a [l][a]rge m[ar]gin.  
114:128 .891

The whore charged m[e] [s]e[v]ent[ee]n per  
 d[r]i[n]k wh[i]ch [i]n North [P][r][o][v]o[1][o]ne  
 was [s][i]m[p]l[y] an atro[c]i[t]y,  
 [e]ven [f]i[f]t[ee]n bucks [p][er]  
 g[l][a]ss was hy[p]otheti[c]a[l]l[y] [a]b[s][ur]d,  
 it was [c]om[p]l[ie]te[l]y out of [l]i[n]e  
 [I] thought as [I] be[g]r[ud]gingly [g]ave  
 h[er] my Dis[c]ov[er] [c]ard,  
 re[c]alling j[us]t a [c][ou]p[le] [m][o]nths [p][r][i]or  
 at [m]y f[r]iend [R]y[an]'s  
 birthday [p][ar]ty—when this [p][ar]ti[c]ular  
 [S]o[c]ial [w][or]k[er] [w]as,  
 in [m]y [m]i[n]d, a [l]ittle [s]l[o]w with  
 the [C]or[ona] [L]ight [s]er[v]ice  
 and [o]ver[h]ear[d] my [c]rit[i]q[ue] of [h]er [s]p[ee]d  
 to [P]aul, [s]ub[s]e[que]nt[ly] [s]l[am]ming down [s]ix  
 [b]eers  
 on[t]o a [t]a[b]le and yelling "Here you go!" to m[e],  
 which I [a]ctuall[y] appr[e]ciat[ed] [a]t the t[i]me,  
 [a]s [I] was [a]ll[r]ea[d]y [r]ea[d]y for [a]n[other]  
 Coro[n]a a[n]yway.

137:173 .792

[B]ut [n]ow, [s]i[t]t[ing] at The [S]o[c]ial  
 [b]y m[y]s[e]lf, [b]e[ing] [b]a[s]i[c]al[ly] [m]u[g]ged  
 [b]e[c]a[us]e of [m]y p[r]o[c]l[i]v[i]t[y] toward [m]ez[c]al,  
 I [r]e[c]o[gn]ized [th]at [th]is [c]o[m]m[ent],  
 even [i]f [n]ot [i]n[i]t[i]ally [i]ntended for  
 the [s]er[v]er to [h]ear,  
 [h]ad [c]ome [b]a[c]k to [b]ite [m]e in

[m]y [a]ss, [a]s I a[ss]umed the [d]ebt  
for th[e]se [s]event[ee]n [d]ollar mez[c][a]ls.

65:79 .823

The w[ai]t[r][e]ss [b]e[c][a]me the [b]ar[t]ender  
[i]n the [i]n[t]e[r]i[m], [a]nd she's now  
[e]x[a]cted her [r][e]v[er]enge with al[a][c][r]i[ti]ty.

23:28 .821

To the b[e]st of m[y] r[e][c]o[lle]c[t]ion  
[I] was on[l]y [e]ven on the [d]amn str[ee]t  
be[c]ause I had a [d][i][nn]er [t]o [a][tt]end  
at [I]l [F]or[n]ello [a]round the [c]orner,  
[a]nd [a]f[te]r h[a]nding the [t][a]b  
b[a]l[c]k to my [c]o[c]k[t]ail exe[c]utioner,  
[I] [s]t[i]ll had [s]ome t[i]me to [k][i]ll,  
[s]o I [d][r][o]ve [d]own the [s]t[r]eet to [R]occ[o]'s  
[f]or a [s]ole a[dd]i[t]i[on]al [d][r][i]nk  
[b]e[f]ore I h[it] the [d][i]nner,  
[a]s I h[a]dn't [b]een  
[i]n [e]ons it [s]eemed  
and [n]ow [f]ound my[s]elf in a [n]o[s]talgic  
[i]f [n]ot [b]i[tter] [s]tate of m[i]nd.

90:114 .789

[I] [r]e[c]og[n]i[z]ed the [b]artender  
at [R]occ[o]'s f[r]om p[la]st e[r]as,  
[b]al[c]k when I  
g[r]abbed [c]o[c]k[tails with th[at] [a]bso[l]ute  
[c]rumb [E]nzo on the [r][e]gu[l]ar,  
[b]ut I [c]ouldn't [r]e[c]all the [g]irl's n[a]me—

sh[e] [g][r][ee]ted [m][e] a[m]i[c]a[b][y],  
yet also [r]e[f][r][ai]ned [f][r]om using  
[a] [f]ormal [a][dd][r]ess, n[o] [d]oubt als[o]  
[f]ai[l]ing to [r]e[c]all m[e]  
[f]u[l][y] [ei]ther [a]s  
I [a]sked [f]or a  
Johnny Bl[a]c[k].  
71:87 .816

[F]u[c]k a mez[c][a],  
I [th]ought,  
re[f]le[c]ting [th]at  
the g[a]s station [a]t the  
[c]or[n]er of Mi[n]e[r]al  
and [D][ou]g[la]s w[a]s  
[c]omp[l]e[t]e[l]y [r]e[d]one,  
it s[ee]med [l]i[k]e [d]e[c]ades  
[s]in[c]e I'd [b]een u[p] North  
b[ut] it w[a]s j[us]t a c[ou]p[le] [m][o]nths  
at [m]ost [s]in[c]e the [m][o]ve—  
the [f]u[c]king [K]orean [B]ar[b]e[q][ue]  
[s]p[ot] [f]inally o[p]ened t[oo],  
after [r]e[m]a[i]ning in a [s]t[ate]  
of [l]imbo for the [l]a[s]t  
[s]ix [m]onths w[e]d  
[l]i[v]ed a[c]r[oss] the [s]t[reet].  
77:92 .837

O, what [c][r]uel i[r]onies  
[N]orth P[r]ovidence h[a]d in w[ai]t  
[f]or me th[at] a[f]ter[n]oon!—

the [R]occo's [g]irl [g][a]ve  
 m[e] a [r][ea]sonable [f]are  
 [f]or my [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent  
 [s][c][o]tch [o]n the r[o][c]ks, and  
 I [f]igured [a]t th[at] [p]oint it was [p]ro[b][a][b]ly  
 [a][b]out time, now h[a][f] in the [b][a]g,  
 [t]o go [b][a]ck [t]o[w]ard [F][o]rne[ll]o,  
 [l][oo][p]ing thr[ou]gh my old [p]ar[k]ing [l]ot,  
 to f[i]nd the R[u]ssian g[u]y's wh[ite] [t][r][u]ck  
 [T][r]ee [h]ad [h]ated  
 [s]till [p]ar[k]ed [i]n h[is] [s]ame  
 [d][i][p]sh[it] [s]p[ot] and [l]etting [d]own  
 my [C][i]v[i]l's w[i]n[d]ow  
 to haw[k] a [l]oogie [a]t the [p][a][ss]enger [d]oor  
 [a]s I [d]rove by, [e]jecting the [s]p[it]  
 [f]ar [e]n[ou]gh to [c]l[ea]r my [c]ar b[ut]  
 [u]nsure if I a[c]tua[lly]  
 [c]onn[ec]ted w[i]th a  
 dir[e]ct h[it] on the [p][i]c[ku]p,  
 un[c]onv[i]nced [i]f [I]'d, l[i]k[e]  
 the [p][r][e]v[i]ous bartender,  
 [s]u[c]c[ess]fully [e]n[a]cted a m[i]n[u]s[c]ule  
 [r]e[v]enge on an [i]n[d]i[v]i[d]ual  
 I [d][i][d]n't [e]ven t[e]ch[n]i[c]all[y] k[n]ow.  
 166:199 .834

—C: Diagrams

620:704 .881

[O]n the [A]mtr[a]k to [P]enn [S]t[a]tion  
 [o]n a [F]r[id]ay [A]M

I [c]on[s]idered my  
 [p][r]o[f][e]ss[i]onal [i]nv[e]s[t]i[g]a[t]ion  
 [i]n[t]o the [E][p][s]t[e]in [s]c[and]al,  
 [f][i]lled as [i]t [i]s w[i]th [a]ge[l]ess en[i]gmas  
 [a]nd [f][au]x h[oa]xes,  
 [a]nd als[o] my [r]e[l]a[te]d [b]ut a[b]orted [n]ovel  
 th[at] [I] [a]t the [t][i]me [t][i]tled Jeff[r]ey of  
 [N][a]za[r]eth,  
 [w]here I'd im[a]gined a [n]ear [f]uture  
 [w]here the [k]id [t][r]a[ff][i][c]ker Jeff  
 [w]as [r]e-in[t]erp[r]eted as a [C]h[r]i[st]-l[i]ke  
 [f]igure, wh[er]e Am[e]r[i]cans  
 [b]ought for [s]ex [t]oys [f]or house pets  
 they [s]aw on [T]i[k][T]o[k],  
 [b]ut [n]ow wit[n]e[ss]i[ng]  
 [i]nter[n]e[t] [c]e[l]l[e]b[r]ities,  
 who [s]till k[n]o[w [n]o] [l]o[ws],  
 wea[r]ing F[r][ee] Ghis[l]a[ine  
 [t]e[e]s I con[t]e[mpl]a[te]d  
 wh[e]ther or [n]o  
 my [f]aile[d] [n]ovel was  
 in [f]a[ct] [s]till [s]a[t]i[r]i[c]al [a]t all,  
 even [n]ow,  
 that [p]erh[a]p[s] Jeff [E]p[s]t[e]in  
 would [s]oon b[e] [s]een  
 as a [s]ort of [s]econd [c]oming of J[e]sus,  
 that po[ss]i[b]l[y] eve[r]l[y] [b]od[y]  
 had it [a]ll w[r]o[n]g  
 [a]ll [a]l[on]g—  
 that [a]ll th[o]se [s]i[l]ly girls  
 who [a]ll[eg]ed under [o]ath

they'd b[ee]n [s][e]xua[l]ly v[i]o[ ]ated  
as [l][i]ttle [k][i]ds were [s][i]m[p]l[y]  
un[p]ro[s]e[c]uted [l][i]ars?  
200:239 .837

[C]ould J[e]ffr[ey] [E]p[st]e[in] a[c]tua[l]ly b[e] J[e]sus,  
I [c]on[s]i[de]red [i]n the [c]oach [c][l][a]s[s] of  
[A]mtr[a]k—  
or [i]s [e]ve[r]y [s][i]ngle A[m][e]r[i]c[an] who votes  
[D]e[m]o[c]r[at] a[ ]nd [R]e[p]u[b]l[i]c[an]  
[b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly a [p]e[d]ophi[le], [I] thought,  
[b]e[ ]ause on[l]y a [C] [s]tudent chim[p]anz[ee]  
[c]ould [p]o[ss]i[b]l[y] view our [p]o[l]i[tic]al  
[s]y[ ]stem [a]s [a]nything [b][u]t  
i[r]r[e]v[er]s[i]b[ ]l[y] [c]o[r]r[ ]u[p]t?—  
87:88 .989

[E]very [e][l]e[ ]ction [i]n th[i]s [f][ai]led [s]t[ate]  
is b[a]s[i]c[a]lly a [f]aux pas  
[k]a[y]f[a]be m[o]c[k] [e][e]c[tion] [o]b[f]u[s]c[a]ting  
[f]rom the [t]rue ex[t]ent of our [s]t[ate]  
[o]f [c]o[r]r[ ]u[p]tion,  
I th[o]ught [o]n the [A]mtr[a]k,  
in a [r]ea[l]m of even [r]e[m]ote A[m][e]r[i]c[an]  
[c]o[l]l[e]c[tive] int[e]ll[i]gence  
all th[e]se [p]o[l]i[tic]ians  
would b[e] [p]ro[s]e[c]uted and  
[p]l[ ]aced [i]n[t]o [p]r[i]s[on] [c]ells  
for [m]u[ ]t[ ]p[ ]le de[c]a[ ]des at [m]i[n]i[m]u[m],  
be[ ]au[ ]se  
if a [s]o- [c]alled [s]t[ate] [c]a[ ]n't [a]t the ver[y] [l]e[ ]st

[c]o[ll]e[c]tive[1][y] a[c]t against  
w[i]de [s][c][a]le ch[i]ld r[a]pe  
[th]en [th]e [n][a]tion functio[n]all[y]  
[c][ea]s[es] to exi[s]t.  
126:129 .978

We [l]i[ve] i[n]stead i[n] a [s]tate of [s]t[ati]c  
[a]n[ar]ch[y]  
[a]c[tua]l[ly], I [c]on[s]idered—  
a[n] [n]o[ti]on of a [n]a[ti]on  
is [p]ure[ly] i[ll]uso[r]y,  
just [l]ike Ze[n]o's [p]roofs on  
the [f]i[c]t[i]t[i]ous [n]ature of The [M]a[n],  
A[m]e[r]i[c]a is [e]q[ua]l[ly] [i]f [n]ot [m]ore  
i[m]agi[n]a[r]y—  
59:68 .868

[P]o[p]le  
[d]e[s]p[ise] [S]t[e]phen [M]iller  
and his [m]u[pp]et wi[f]e  
[f]or i[n]c[r]e[d]i[b]l[y] good [r]ea[son],  
I thought,  
as they're [b]o[th] [b]a[s]i[c]all[y]  
t[r]eas[on]ous [i]d[i]ots,  
[b]ut they're actua[ll]y  
a [r]el[ati]ve[ly] [m]i[n]or [s]ym[p]tom  
of an [e]ven [m]ore [s]er[i]ous dis[e]ase,  
as when [p]o[p]le  
[l]ike [M]i[s]s[es] [M]i[ll]er  
a[pp]ear on [t]e[le]v[i]s[i]on [p]rogr[ams]  
[t]o endorse A[m]e[r]i[c]an fa[s]c[i]sm

while in[t]er[p]r[et]ing a[n]y [c][r][i]t[i][c]i[s]m  
of her own [N][a]zi-[a]d[j][a][c][e]nt opinions  
as a [r][a][c]i[st] atta[c]k on her  
[s]o-[c]alled Jewish i[d]entit[y]  
it's [u]n[a]voi[d]abl[y] [r]epul[s]ive  
to [e][v]e[r]yone,  
yet [e][v]e[n] that [e]gr[e]g[i]ous [i]m[b]e[c][i]l[i]t[y]  
[i]s [s]t[i]ll [a]n [a]t [b]est  
minor [s]y[m]p[t]o[m] [i]n the  
[l]arger [s]c[h]eme of a  
fund[a]m[en]ta[l]l[y] i[m]a[g]in[a]r[y]  
[A]m[e]r[i]c[a]—  
148:180 .822