

“Yet Another State of Perpetual Rescinding”
Nicholas Katsafanas

“No,” Ingo said, “I just, it’s weird, because, sure, he’s my primary care physician, but, at the same time, I feel like that’s actually a drawback—like I don’t want to disclose, you know, personal shit to him, because he’s never going away? It’s not like I could be like, ‘Oh hey, it burns when I pee’—obviously not that it burns when I pee, but you know what I mean, like, ‘Oh hey, it burns when I pee,’ and then I’ll never see you again. Because I’ll fucking see the guy in six months at my annual check-in! Basically, with this guy, it’s like if I tell him that it burns when I pee—not that it does but like hypothetically if it burnt when I peed—if I tell him that, then I feel like I’m forever the *it burns when I pee guy*, like I’d have to go fucking find a completely new primary care physician who had no inclination that it had ever burnt when I peed.” “Which these days is basically impossible!” a sentient tic tac shaped UFO named Dave said.

“These days it’s literally easier to find a seasoned whore who’s never caught the clap than it is to find a decent primary care physician, you know, Dave?” Ingo replied.

“Because if it’s not one thing it’s another!—like half the time they’re not even accepting new patients, or they’re like my old dentist: telling you that your teeth will all fall out in five years unless you immediately buy some adult brand set of braces that, no doubt, is giving the dentist kickbacks for every purchase, and, of course, all of this is right after the dental technician

tells you how great your teeth are! No, fuck you. I won't be prey to your dental scams, miss! No—that's why, honestly?—I would never want to leave this guy, my current primary care physician,

but at the same time, because I'd never leave him, I also find myself quite reticent to disclose anything that's wrong with me, to give him that health history ammo, you know?

No, I need to be the completely healthy guy, not the random malady person. No, I need to keep this doctor completely in the dark about anything that's potentially wrong with me that's short

of absolutely life threatening. And, frankly, even then . . .”

“I mean,” Dave replied, “you can't even go to the doctor's anymore, if we're being honest. That's really where we're at in this country at this point, I think?”

“Going to the doctor's?” Ingo said, “Besides your annual physical, which you basically legally need to do, because otherwise you'll get boxed out—God forbid anything is actually, at some point,

really wrong with you in the future, if you don't have the medical history they'll try and fuck you up the ass. Your primary will disown you, Dave, that's what will happen.

You'll get dropped and become ineligible for the life-saving treatment you might actually need! But, beyond that, no, you're absolutely right!

Going to the doctor's is basically out of the question at this point for us. There's no greater folly than going to doctor's office for aches and pains, because, for one,

you're totally putting your business out there, the people in the office, they'll all know everything about what's going on with you, and who knows who they'll tell in private,

with so-called confidentiality. Spouses? Cousins?! That word could spread throughout various communities with a rapidity you'd never imagine.

No, you might as well just get a megaphone and start yelling out, "My pee burns!"—not that mine does, Dave, but hypothetically, just to continue with the same hypothetical,

like you accidentally had sex with some, I don't know, some Bulgarian heiress who's here on a visa for three months, just looking to hoe it out in America.

All of the sudden you're making Bulgarian love, and now you have Bulgarian pussy juice in your system, and maybe that disagrees with your urinary tract in one way or another?

But there are any number of hypotheticals you could employ as examples, Dave, you know what I mean? And then, if you actually need treatment,

let's assume you actually need treatment, well, then you need a referral, of course!" "Which is even worse," Dave added, "if you need a referral!"

"Which then gets you right back in the game of trying to find a new doctor, Dave," Ingo said, "through your current doctor who's now tasked with finding you a new specialized doctor,

which is, of course, basically impossible, because whoever you need to see, there's no way they're taking new patients either, or, sure,

maybe they can open something up for you, but it'll be in three months, which, of course—if what you're going through is actually serious—then, shit, you might be fucking dead by then!"

"Honestly, Ingo," Dave said, "you're probably better off dying!" "Anyway," Ingo went on, "I just, you know, needed to get that off my chest—but, anyway,

it was the other Friday night I guess, that I was sitting at the bar when, of course, Joe texts me. The fucking guy texts me as I'm just sitting there by myself, minding my own business,

he fucking texts me to tell me that, apparently, on a Friday night, he's going skating. Now, being that it's 20 degrees out, I assume he's going ice skating, Dave, downtown,

right in more or less my damn neighborhood, within a mile of where I was sitting at the time, and I say to myself, 'Yeah, sure, I'll meet him there, since he's rarely in town these days.'

Now I say (to myself) I'm going to meet him, but, to be clear here, he hasn't explicitly asked me if I could hang out, he just informed me he was going skating, right in my neighborhood, and, in fact, it's still possible, now that I think of it, that he had no real intention of wanting to hang out with me at all."

"Yet," Dave interjected, "then?" "Why text me at all, Dave?" Ingo finished, "What?—to tell me you're around the corner, which you rarely are, but that you don't want me to come by?"

A great question. Yet, with that said, to be fair, if I'm being honest, I wasn't really trying to hang out with him either! Not out of any malice or ill-will, Dave, no, simply because it was fucking 20 degrees out, and I walked to this bar, and I was explicitly not trying to make a night out of it, I was attempting to rescind completely,

which walking downtown, I mean, that could very easily lead to making a night of it and reintegrating myself into polite society, so to speak. So I call him up—I give Joe a call.

I give the fucking guy a quick call. He's not immediately answering. The call actually goes to voicemail, and

it's very possible at this point that it's the case that neither one of us are actually seeking to hang out with each other, despite the fact we're great friends and in a fairly close geographical area together on a Friday night, despite the fact we're texting back and forth on a Friday night within spitting distance of each other. 'Fucking prick,' I think at the bar as I continue to listen to the automated voicemail's preamble. 'Then again,' I think, 'do I really want to walk a mile in the freezing cold, to watch Joe and his little friends ice skate? Because I'm not ice skating. There's absolutely no way I'm getting on any ice on this Friday night. For one thing, I don't even know how to ice skate, and, for another thing, I'm currently in the midst of drinking my seventh beer! Am I accidentally attempting to hang out with people who I genuinely like yet don't currently want to socialize with? I guess that was the question I was asking myself at the time.' "Honestly, Ingo—this is the question we all need to ask ourselves, really," Dave replied. "I don't leave a message," Ingo said, "I finish the beer and walk home, and the guy fucking sends me a photo an hour later of him and his friends roller skating at a roller blading rink all the way in Hell's Kitchen." "Roller blading, Ingo?," Dave replied, incredulous, "Is that normal—conflating roller skating with roller blading?" "But that's rescinding essentially, Dave," Ingo continued, "these types of imbroglios are so typical of rescinding—because rescinding in the extreme will only place you face to face with the fact that you've always been rescinding,

that you've never stopped rescinding, that even when you weren't rescinding, that you only momentarily forgot the fact you've been in a perpetual state of rescinding at all times,

that no matter what it is you're doing you're essentially rescinding. You can't not rescind, Dave. In short, it's the pious mind, it's the pious mind inveterately drawn to piety that's—no,

not at any extreme of being, or extreme of goodness, but in fact it's the pious mind that exists in the middle. Whereas some rescind via their day-to-day inanity with no actual awareness

of the fact they're rescinding, others, by contrast, rescind in full awareness simply by engaging in nothing fundamentally monastic at all!—

simply because they're equipped with the authentic knowledge that they're perpetually rescinding no matter what, they're smiling as they rescind, comfortable with the fact that,

no matter what they do, they'll be rescinding, that they're faced with two fundamental choices and both are rescinding! But then there's the pious among us, engaging in their self-proclaimed piety in a way that makes them feel as though—yes, they're rescinding in the service of the reward of the next life.

They're oppositional in their rescinding, they think. Yet what I think the pious among us forgets here is the old saying: He does whatever He will. How could they—the pious -

alter what's already been laid out for them, by engaging in the extremities of conscious decision making, in thinking they can somehow determine for themselves

what's better for them in the next life? First of all, Dave, nowhere at all is it clear that the life to come, or the

next life, or whatever nomenclature we choose to give it necessarily entails a future event. If anything there are bread crumbs all around us that suggest a fundamental Oneness, an all-encompassing collapse where next doesn't necessarily entail subsequent. It's been a thousand years to me, but to you it may only feel like a brief moment. Piety is, at bottom, I think, actually drawn from an intense skepticism, a deep-seeded unsureness, perhaps even a wavering trust in a unified Oneness! Rescinding from material things, will it get you closer to a fundamental unity, Dave? "Well," Dave replied, "I don't know, Ingo. For my part, I've always believed so at least."

"But maybe we should take a moment and contemplate what rescinding from material things entail exactly?" Ingo said, "If we agree He does whatever He will, then the material things you may or may not encounter must originate from Oneness, no? And, if this is the case, then to turn entirely away from them, is that not essentially an act of skepticism? To approach said material things with moderation, of course, that's advisable in the extreme, but to rescind completely, as the monastic among us tend to do: is that not skepticism in the extreme? Yes, I think it is! Oh, absolutely I think it is, Dave! How can we stay here, with these pious hermits any longer?! Maybe, now that I think about it, I should have, in retrospect, been more willing to meet up with Joe, assuming he was ice skating and not roller blading—that perhaps this idea that solitude was somehow more

pious, that not making a night of it would be better for me,
maybe that was folly after all! I should have never walked home at all. No, I should have instead walked directly to the ice skating rink from the bar in the twenty degree cold, and,
even when I found no one I knew there, I still should have just tossed on a set of blades and made some new friends, some new ice skating friends—and made a night out of it!”