

(Σύννεφο και Πρίαπος)

# An American Epic Poem Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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actually Cloud corrected

for the record

that he'd actually been reading a few pages of Timaeus prior to all this

making a few disparate notes

finding himself puzzled at the sensory information that continued to be relayed into his brain. Cloud basically alleged he was flummoxed about the sensory information that became

in some way

relayed to what he guessed was his brain?—how any of that was corroborated

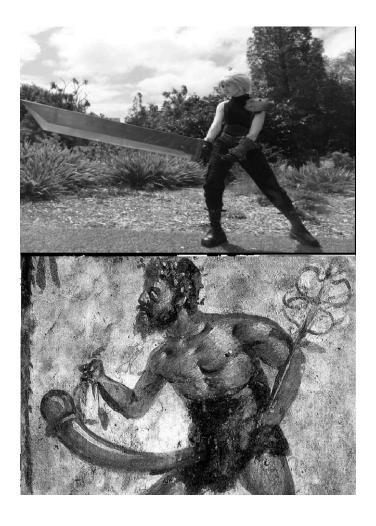
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Part I: The Madness of a Cloud

# Canto I "The Nice Man with his Wife's Last Name's Form of Annihilation" η/ω 1859:2546 -730

Cloud was sitting at Seventh Heaven drinking a Fernet on the rocks engaging in light conversation with a cocksucker he'd never even met about a Queen's Blood play-in game that he'd—this particular cocksucker—requested to be put on the TV at the bar. Well

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relayed to what he guessed was his brain?—how any of that was corroborated

but more so Cloud contemplated the static nature of said images—that's what he was specifically contemplating when a guy with a round-ass face leaned onto the bar

seeking to close his tab

obviously excited to tell the bartender that he may need to show her his ID

just because he took his wife's last name and hadn't had a chance to change his license yet? The patron with the round-ass face noted how nice the bartender was (Tifa!) but what was her name again? He could definitely display his ID if she really needed

just because

again

his last name was different now—taking his wife's name and all! Of course

Cloud noted

that it was clear that no one gave a fuck about the printed name on a credit card in that bar

and Tifa

for her part

didn't exactly seem like she was ramping up to suck this dude off just because he was a radical feminist. For Cloud's part he was still

you know

attempting to get behind the blunt sensations being smuggled relentlessly into his so-called conscious existence. Everything was an image to some extent

right Aerith? Touch itself was a fucking sensory image. It was a quaint Spring evening where Cloud felt more or less destined to philosophize

having started drinking wine in preparation for a Friday night dinner

only to have Tifa bail last minute

because she needed to pick up a bar shift—leaving him completely free to continue this wine drinking in a ritualistic way that would be conducive to philosophical ideas. Yes

Cloud continued to Aerith

it was basically only via drinking alone

but in a ritualistic fashion

that he'd achieved any sort of philosophical inquiry. You couldn't just sit at a desk and "become philosophical"

at least not for Cloud! Maybe some people could! But

no

not Cloud. He'd imagine that there were probably a litany of possible ways of becoming philosophical—like for instance

for the round-faced albino chap

perhaps telling Tifa that he'd taken his wife's last name maybe that could be seen as possibly ritualistic in a way a gateway to some sort of becoming philosophical. This was "actually science"

Cloud told her he thought at the bar

successfully avoiding making any eye contact with the round-faced man. Was it necessarily strange at all that once the Greeks went extinct philosophy went more or less completely and utterly downhill and never looked back in the least

that the last group to really reach much of any philosophical success made a sincere effort to conjoin getting fucked up with contemplating intelligible phenomena?—that these Greeks attempted to marry inebriation and rigorous dialectic? That all thought since—to paraphrase North Whitehead—had been a minor footnote to Plato or whatever? The thing was

according to Cloud

you just couldn't willy nilly "delve into metaphysics" completely sober! But that wasn't to say a person should necessarily become some degenerate alcoholic either

because a degenerate drunk would in no way make a great meta-physicist either—that was basically impossible

because

like Cloud said

the solo mode of inebriation should be done ritualistically in spurts

at certain times. You couldn't just be like hitting the bottle as soon as you woke from a slumber!—after said inebriation sessions you'd require sobriety to parse through whatever it was that came to you via said contemplation

no? In fact

the actual science was nothing beyond this parsing through of inebriation sessions of rigorous contemplation! That was it—what laid behind logic and metaphysics

in Cloud's mind at least! But inebriation could be anything really—Cloud could enter a state of inebriation in a car alone on a Tuesday AM

without consuming a damn thing. Aerith more or less agreed

adding that on the one hand a philosophical mind should be able to analyze

interpret

extrapolate

all of that scientific stuff-but

on the other

if you fail to place yourself in a position to receive anything to analyze

interpret

or extrapolate then you were basically screwed! Cloud more or less agreed but added that—sans this type of "inspiration" so to speak—they'd be stuck sitting at a table just noodling around nonsensically

vacillating back and forth between two types of nothingness

and then just probably knocking off someone else's work by accident. But none of this was new! It wasn't like Cloud was breaking news in any way. At this point Aerith asked—you know

was this albino douche bag

he was an element of this analysis? No

not really—according to Cloud—maybe the guy was trying a tad too hard?—to present himself as a specific archetype to the general public

as a guy who decided to spit in the face of his own chromosome count

which was something Cloud "personally endorsed!"

Granted Cloud probably wouldn't do it by taking his wife's last name

because Cloud personally was obviously more prone to a type of isolated and overly dramatic self-annihilation than a subservient and disingenuously muted feminist annihilation

but he wasn't ipso facto opposed to either! Aerith agreed one hundred percent! But Cloud still would go a little further

noting that in the intelligible sphere

as someone like

say

Proclus would note

that so-called forms were somehow able to participate in one another without mixing

whereas within the sensible realm they participated in things and subsequently got dirty. But Cloud thought that it was worth going one step further—since they were discussing annihilation and stuff anyway

that the perceived mixing between forms that took place in the sensible arena was itself just a projection of mixture but not actual mixture. The intelligible sphere

being purely emanated

participated within itself without mixing itself

while in the sensible sphere it didn't seem like that was possible

that by participating within sensible things they became essentially mixed with them

assuming they were categorically sensible. Essentially nature was tainted

which of course Cloud and Aerith knew all too well! Way too well! Hence their shared acquiescence toward occasional annihilation! But even this sensible filth

so to speak

Cloud thought

this perceived mixing up in the participation of sensible things

wasn't it also a projection?—an emanation

just as the participation of the intelligible sphere was also an emanation of the primary unity of all things? Which

yeah

brought Cloud back to that albino round-faced fuck at the bar

taking his wife's last name—because ultimately the albino's vantage point wasn't remarkably divergent from Cloud's or Aerith's

Cloud thought. This albino was promoting a certain type of annihilation of their cultural-sensible realm

thinking that the patriarchal lineage of their society was basically something objectionable

something essentially tainted

that should be annihilated in the service of something more pure. Okay

well

Cloud thought that made a modicum of sense! Maybe taking his wife's last name was in a sense a greater form of purity than locking a woman in a kitchen and expecting a blowjob every other evening

Cloud thought. Just as Proclus and Socrates sensed that the intelligible sphere participated with itself yet not in a way where it mixed with itself

that this was distinct from our further descended

sensible sphere where things participated with one another but got mixed up in the process—well

maybe this albino man was noting that the patriarchy was a participatory mixing that left unseemly cum stains—"for lack of a better phrase!"—on human experience. Patriarchy

in the albino man's mind

should be annihilated because of this sensible mixing up this putrid tainting of what would be better off pure. And taking your nice wife's name was a proper mode of annihilation in response. Aerith remarked that she knew Cloud would inevitably bring the discourse back to this poor chap closing his tab

but

just to be clear

what Cloud was saying was that this mixing that occurred in the sensible realm was itself just a separate projection—just a lesser mode of projecting! So while the material world may have disgusted them

perhaps moving the two toward some sort of all-encompassing conceptual annihilation

and as much as the patriarchy might have seemed putrid to the albino husband at the bar who looked to annihilate himself by taking his nice wife's last name

it could be wise to consider that these disgusting aggregates were themselves simply derivative projections

that they weren't actual mixtures

that they were just derivative emanations as opposed to tattoos of what they thought they despised. Aerith was aware—she wasn't distressed about it

but she knew this poor albino guy would in time take the brunt of it from Cloud. Cloud questioned whether he didn't deserve it? Plus like they'd already implied—they must to proceed from the immanent to the transcendent no?

Canto II "Tifa's Dream" η/ω 2174:3037 .716

Cloud found it a tad befuddling

just because Tifa said she'd had an odd dream about him the previous night

and he'd replied bluntly that he "didn't usually have dreams about people he knew"

somehow completely purging the fact from his mind that just that night

he'd had a vivid dream involving one of his first girlfriends and her current (to the best of Cloud's knowledge) spouse. How could that have possibly slipped his memory

given the vivacity of the dream itself? Barrett didn't have a clue either

really. His ex and her husband were living with Cloud and his fictional wife in a modest condo they'd been leasing in Upper Midgar

yet he told Tifa he "never dreamt" about people he knew yet perhaps the most befuddling aspect of it was that when he'd said that to her he actually believed it! Cloud's ex-girlfriend and his fictional wife had become somewhat friendly in the dream

in the condo

and the whole ordeal—in Cloud's dream—struck him as totally fine initially. His fictional wife was obscured a pure mirage

while his ex was an image of how he'd known her in the past

not how she was now (not that he knew how she was now!)

- but eventually Cloud began to come to the realization that this was his ex-romantic interest
- and that his current wife and ex-girlfriend becoming friends was an absolutely "cataclysmic development" for him socially
- that it was the probably worst thing that could possibly happen to his marriage. He wondered what the husband of his ex was thinking—Cloud was wondering how it was exactly that he got roped into this whole thing as he was exiting this apartment into an Upper Midgar that

of course

wasn't exactly Upper Midgar at all!—yet only hours later when Tifa told Cloud she'd had a dream with him in it that night he claimed to never dream about people he knew. Odd! Barrett noted that he just did

though

right? That his statement to Tifa was false

no? Um

yeah

that's exactly what Cloud just said! Cloud reiterated that it was "literally that night" that he'd had the dream

further emphasizing the absurdity of his statement to Tifa. Maybe

Cloud thought

- it was closer to a coincidence than an acute misremembering or forgetting? Was that possible? Memory was elliptical sometimes. But in any case
- he told Barrett he'd had another dream recently—if Barrett was by any chance interested in listening to more "bullshit about his dream states?"—where Cloud had discovered a glowing

fluorescent insect in one of the drawers on a screened-in patio that didn't exist in so-called "real life"

and Cloud tossed the fucking thing outside onto the grass

kind of disgusted by it to be honest

only to discover that same insect just a few moments later—but now appearing in a humanoid form

standing outside the screened-in patio

hoping to be let in. Now

in the dream there was a little get-together on this patio so Cloud was a little wary of letting this being—who was female

to be clear—into the party

but curiously everyone else at the pow-wow seemed totally incapable of perceiving her

even after Cloud allowed her in? Yes

Cloud allowed her in and the form of communication between himself and the entity was simply a series of "vague feelings"

perhaps

he thought

this was some kind of reminder that you couldn't just you know

create things—that refreshing syntheses are the best we could do? With that said

they started copulating on the patio. Barrett wanted to clarify that it was the butterfly woman that Cloud was fucking? Or whatever she was? Well

Cloud noted

only when she became a human being

of some sort

that that was when the copulation occurred

obviously! But

with that said

it was actually (kind of?) intriguing to Barrett

to be honest? But

more importantly

Cloud really wanted to know how Seventh Heaven was last night

because Barrett stopped by there

didn't he? How was it? Well. Let's see. Barrett definitely felt the purity of the booze expand within his chest upon his first sip

and while the bartender (obviously not Tifa

but he didn't catch her name) was slightly more affable than when he went there with Cloud

but she didn't actually ask what fruit he wanted in the drink. Sitting alone at Seventh Heaven Barrett took note of himself tossing the single orange slice onto his thin

now immediately moist napkin and manually extracting the single seed that had been expelled from the orange into the liquor from the glass

and in doing so

he noted that all that he'd accounted for at the bar—the affability

the fruit

the seed—that extracting those ideas out of the air was basically the same as the "coordinate-tracking" reported by remote viewers. He glanced back at the bar and took brief note of the bartender chugging a shot of booze with a customer and was violently smacked in the face with an acute memory of ripping similar shots with a specific bartender from his past

which was basically just another set of coordinates

but these particular coordinates returned to him

he didn't pluck them out of the air. He didn't pluck these ripping shots with a bartender coordinates from a rapid rush of information—no

said coordinates returned to him as he sat in solitude at the bar totally involuntarily

violently smacking Barret in the fucking face and somewhat rudely collapsing time itself in the process right as Barrett sat at that tiny table alone

innocently sipping his drink in Seventh Heaven. Barrett then went on to tell Cloud how

before the bar

he'd seen a bunch of people with Mako poisoning that he hadn't seen in months

and Cloud noted that's how they knew Spring was approaching

right?! Yet

on that note

it was kind of funny because Cloud was actually thinking to himself the other day—what was the "exact definition of sobriety" anyway—like how could they actually "distinguish sobriety from intoxication?" Barrett perked up a bit. Cloud made it clear that

no

he wasn't necessarily like talking about smoking crack or exposing yourself to high intensity make shards for decades on end

- but maybe just drinking white wine or something?

  Because Cloud was crossing the Washington Street
  bridge contemplating a particular vision of indivisible
  Oneness the other night
- as Barrett knew too well that Cloud was apt to do from time to time
- and believe it or not he was actually discovering a decent amount of enjoyment in the material world at the time!—drinking a mini water bottle filled with Mezcal
- but also attempting to gauge whether he'd have the time to grab just one more beer before Tifa was supposed to be at his apartment. Cloud was contemplating the nature of an indivisible Oneness

but he was also comforted by the material realm while coldly calculating his odds of being able to chug another beer while still making it back to his apartment before Tifa was supposed to arrive. And as Cloud was contemplating this nature of an indivisible Oneness

crossing a Washington Street bridge

drinking Mezcal from a mini water bottle Cloud remarked to Barrett how he'd started to question this very definition of sobriety. But it was here Barrett began to question—well—what did Cloud actually mean by that? Well

what Cloud was trying to get at

Barrett

was that sobriety itself was supposed to be a baseline of sorts

no? Of course it was! Yet how could they measure this baseline exactly?—was there a measurement at all?—was sobriety to be defined by a lack of passion or a vague sense of the "even-keeled"? But the problem was

in Cloud's mind at least

that there was no universal emotional baseline with which to define sobriety. Some people—he meant

even Cloud himself could be totally unhinged emotionally on occasion while quote-unquote "completely sober"! Furthermore

even if they—Barrett and Cloud—could define some baseline emotional status as axiomatic

then they would still have to combat philosophically with external substances that weren't considered intoxicants that would obviously shift this emotional baseline. What did Cloud mean? Well

like

a lack of food could alter mood. The same could be said of caffeine! Consuming dirt would probably shift someone's emotional state. Historically

according to Cloud

people ate fucking plants with small doses of psychedelics embedded within them and probably thought very little about "intoxication" proper!" People used to fucking sanitize water with alcohol! Smoking tobacco altered mood. Basically

#### Barrett

"anything we ingest alters our latent state of existence and therefore changes us in some form or another

which in most all cases probably filters into our mood." Cloud noted

for him personally

a shift in his diet could do wonders for his intellectual disposition—so then what was sobriety? It seemed impossible to even think about sobriety as a thing at all! Well

Barrett hadn't exactly considered it like that and wasn't sure if he would. But Cloud thought that maybe they'd taken a false baseline of sobriety conceptually no? After all

what technically was an external substance? Could they dig even further and consider the definition of an external substance? A conversation could certainly alter a person's temperament exponentially as well!—but did that technically count as an exogenous substance? Did words not carry weight? A vociferous thought or even a fleeting memory—especially in Cloud's case!—could often toss a person completely off-kilter

yet they still for some incomprehensible reason clung to an idea of an objective sobriety

- and then they subsequently targeted select substances as intoxicating
- while deeming so-called "other" substances—which also altered temperaments—as totally fine! Well

this was what Cloud was thinking at least

as he walked over the Washington Street bridge—that if people didn't view consuming fresh vegetables as something fundamentally mind altering

then it was possible

in Cloud's mind

- that they just experienced the world in vastly different ways
- and Barrett for his part found this to be intriguing yet unconvincing
- but Cloud insisted that there simply was no true and extended stability of our mental states—even if they were hypothetically deprived of external tinkering
- because even thought itself was fundamentally external to some extent
- was it not? And people on average were constantly accosted by specific thoughts
- were they not? Thought almost never ceased accosting these people
- which were all people? And even if they confined themselves to commonly agreed upon material substances
- then there was still no consistent way to calculate the degree of alteration to a mental state across people of different walks of life
- period. Barrett might not experience the same mental shift after the consumption of a fresh stick of celery that Cloud would
- even if the celery itself remained entirely static. Walking across the Washington Street bridge

Cloud drank from a tiny water bottle filled with Mezcal and didn't feel intoxicated in any way

shape

or form—any more than had he been drinking a cup of coffee

or eating a delicious snack

- or receiving a specific thought. In his mind at the time there was no true division between intoxication and sobriety
- and this was Cloud's final conclusion—regardless of whether or not Barrett agreed—as he somewhat anxiously sent Tifa a text message letting her know he was "taking a walk"
- just in case she arrived at his apartment before he finished slugging down one last beer at the bar that he was walking to.

# Canto III "Dinner & Drinks" η/ω 1403:1994 .704

"Well

no " were the two words Cloud began with as he explained that his point was that there was a significant distinction between the two

meaning dinner and drinks!—that if you make it out like it's "just drinks" and then last minute it becomes dinner?—then yeah Cloud's gonna be a little fucking pissed off! Especially if he didn't know the fucking people

you know Aerith? How did that make any sense? He found it a bit absurd

frankly. Sure

he'd go tie one or two on with a total stranger

that was fine

but to sit down and actually engage in a dinner?—that was an entirely distinct level of socializing

and it was one that

frankly

Cloud didn't particularly care for. And he wasn't ashamed to admit it!—that

frankly

he felt this Philistine notion of just "going out to dinner" with any and every acquaintance

that if you didn't acquiesce to that standard then you would be deemed

what?—anti-social? Well color Cloud anti-social then!
But Aerith noted that while

sure

to be fair

it was a different level of socialization

if he truly didn't know the people but

you know

if it was her personally? Supposing it was Aerith

then she'd hope that it wouldn't be that big of a deal to Cloud? To just go out to dinner? Was she kidding him?! Oh

of course not

Aerith! With her? You fucking kidding? Cloud was always down to grab a nosh with someone like her

no

it was just that the hypothetical notion of eating supper with a complete stranger ("a more or less complete stranger")—what were they discussing? Cloud and the hypothetical stranger? Did he have to come prepared with a portfolio of talking points?—Cloud couldn't imagine that they'd be super intrigued with anything he had to say

or that they'd end up on the precipice of any revelation that he'd conclude to be particularly enlightening either. Cloud was simply going by empirical evidence really. That was all. He wasn't

like

trying to be a dick or anything! Just that

empirically speaking

it seemed unlikely they'd have a lot to converse about Cloud and this hypothetical stranger. But Aerith added

that to be fair

wasn't Cloud the one who was always railing against so-called sensory data? Yet

in this case

he was all bent out of shape about this impromptu dinner because

in his own words

because of empirical data? Of past experience which was sensory data? Memories right? Which

wouldn't Cloud agree

was some of the most unreliable data available no? Of course he did! Aerith

even fucking quantum physics was still fundamentally sense-forward

in the sense that they were beginning with sense perception—this was what contemporary so-called science had achieved of course! Placing sense perception as an apex predator until finally

with the discovery of quantum physics

it'd reduced the observable world to a degree that even linear sense-perception no longer made any fucking sense in the upper worlds! That was what they'd done

and quite smugly at times too!—but wasn't that what Cloud was doing with this impending dinner? Aerith queried him on this point. Well

Cloud supposed that

thinking about it again

veah

he was kind of acting like a quantum physicist a bit wasn't he? Well

Aerith was just saying—to the extent that his argument was fundamentally empirical

but it was kind of intuitive in a sense too

his argument

in Cloud's opinion. He agreed with Aerith to the extent that

yes

he was basing his disgust partially on empirical evidence but he'd also allege that he felt an intuitive disgust with these types of social gatherings as well and then he

to her point

to be blunt

did tend to dip into the world of empiricism to validate said intuitive disgust. Although

technically

they should probably be a little cautious to even employ the word empiricism here

because he didn't think empiricism necessarily needed to be restricted to sense-perception necessarily

you know? Aerith supposed there

yes

was probably an empiricism of the intelligible realm as well? Honestly

to Cloud—it was certainly possible that he maybe wasn't even in the best mind state to even assess it one way or another. Aerith took advantage of this capitulation to say she'd recently had a dream about Cloud—would he mind hearing her out?—where he was emailing her a question about whether a specific action was defined as 'insider trading'

while she was processing some non-descript 'orders' for something in a bath tub

which consisted of

for some reason

washing large chocolate cookies down the drain

watching them as they slowly disintegrated under the hot water

then

after that

realizing that the cookies related to Cloud's question about insider trading

she contemplated if she should have flushed them all down the drain before answering the question? Did she do wrong by Cloud by washing these cookies preemptively down the drain? If Cloud truly wanted the "order processed"

so to speak. In a sense Aerith felt an affinity for the cookies

didn't she

Cloud inferred. Cloud postulated that she felt like they were actual beings as she crumbled them down the unforgiving drain with the scorching hot water? In retrospect

Aerith admitted that that may have been the case. Cloud noted that there was a certain "level of gnosis" achieved through contemplating your dreams—yet was there any to be gleaned from participating in double date dinners? Aerith admitted she'd been clinging onto the fact of the cookies being washed down the drain

and she knew Cloud had a particular talent when it came to interpreting dreams. Well then let's see here

Cloud contemplated

the dissolution of a sweet food in an apparatus usually used to clean yourself? But with a transactional

abutting capitalist undertone. And Aerith was doing it perhaps unintentionally

for someone else (Cloud)

without their knowledge

and not only without their knowledge but while ignoring their inquiry—actually

Cloud guessed it was his inquiry technically about whether it was legal

as apparently this was somehow potentially 'insider trading'? So she was repurposing an apparatus for cleansing the body to destroy large

life-like pieces of unhealthy food for Cloud without his consent

Cloud meanwhile wondering if destroying this junk food in a bath tub was actually illegal? Of course in any dream they also should consider whether what was represented was a representation of another representation

meaning maybe not an analogy at all? But if they proceeded as if what was represented in Aerith's dream appeared as it was intended to appear

then that would be a decent start. So

in a sense

Aerith thought

that she was cleaning particular attributes of Cloud without his permission

while Cloud was thinking—perhaps suspecting—that cleansing himself in this way may have actually been a type of insider trading

it could have been a very serious crime. Cloud noted that—Aerith

cleaning yourself was "basically a crime against the state these days". No surprise there! Although Cloud liked a nice cookie every now and then

he didn't necessarily find anything that bad about eating a few cookies on occasion

but Cloud also found it intriguing that Aerith personally identified with the cookies as they broke apart and tumbled down the drain

that she saw a certain goodness

a specific being within them

and subsequently felt a sadness at the fact they had to be washed down the drain of this bath tub. Even what's fundamentally bad for you isn't necessarily bad

Aerith noted. But yes

it was sad to see them fall apart in a bath tub faucet

huh? "Even the running shoes you need to toss into the trash are eternal," Cloud said.

# Canto IV "Institutional Norms" η/ω 1332:1960 .680

Cloud was for sure fine with whatever Tifa wanted to say to him ("I always want you to speak your mind!")

but he just wasn't going to back off his well-developed (in his mind) idea that the institution itself (as a concept) was basically restrictive

that they shouldn't necessarily care what's there in the container ("Category theory!")

but also that "eros was a gateway". Tifa just wasn't certain that engaging in that in the bar

after hours—she didn't know

was that actually appropriate

Cloud? Even if she wanted to do it! In the bar?! Of course

Cloud totally understood

but

again—just to reiterate—"eros was a gateway". It didn't have to be about

you know

purely that. What?—was Tifa now gonna allow herself to be tyrannically restrained by the institutional norms of Shinra

et al? Was that now how she was gonna live her life?—by the contemptuous rules of Shinra? She could "pop that pussy wide open" whenever she wanted to!—if she really wanted to

even if it was just super quickly! (What exactly was the temperature in the room?) There wasn't anything inherently out of bounds about any of that

assuming the correct context

because—well

no

Cloud wasn't saying he was in support of indiscriminate promiscuity—no

not at all! It needed to be rigorous—perhaps "even ritualistic"

and he wasn't even suggesting Tifa should ipso facto just quote-unquote pop that pussy open to spite the moral norms of Shinra—it was actually the opposite!

Cloud was simply asserting she "shouldn't not make" beautiful love in Seventh Heaven simply because of some societal Shinra code—she shouldn't allow herself

Tifa

to be regulated by an institutional entity whose primary purpose was the employment of the universal restriction. To Cloud it wasn't in any way

shape

or form Shinra's place to enforce any universal restrictions whatsoever. Fuck Shinra specifically and fuck the institution in a more generic sense. Ugh

shut up Cloud! He was kidding

wasn't he? Oh yeah!—Cloud admitted it was certainly possible he was exaggerating certain elements of his argument intentionally

in terms of the whole-well

"vou know"—no

he wasn't suggesting Tifa should "pop that pussy" in the bar! No

that was absurd! Unless she wanted to! Because if she wanted to Tifa should know that Cloud took no offense

like

at all! They both laughed at themselves but didn't he

Cloud

in the abstract kind of have a point? No

just listen for a second

Cloud said

please Tifa—he knew she felt an anxiety

from time to time

and according to Cloud it was actually entirely possible that it was the anxiety of the younger Socrates. Namely

it was this anxiety that Tifa

she felt like she might have fallen into a pit of "bottomless nonsense"—this idea that there could be an "actual conceptual idea" behind all phenomena that had ever occurred

that every action she took had some "capital-I" Idea behind or above it

that every single sensory perception

every single moment of their lives emerged from some conceptual Idea behind it

that ideas themselves became sub-atomic particles which become multiplied into an infinite ("seeming!") nonsense. It was an extreme vertigo to experience that without a doubt!—and Cloud was all too familiar with that type of madness himself! In fact

his entire experience in the ether

so to speak

was fundamentally in agreement with this anxiety of young Socrates. But what Cloud would say in response

to Tifa

to himself

to Socrates—what Cloud would say in reply is exactly what Parmenides said to this young Socrates himself

that this anxiety was an anxiety of youth ("Cloud

we're basically the exact same age . . . ")

one that would be extinguished when she'd "learned not to despise any of these things". In short

Tifa shouldn't allow Shinra mores—or

frankly

institutional mores from anywhere else for that matter!—to interfere with her own processes

that was all Cloud was saying really. If Tifa wanted to do that at Seventh Heaven

then

sure

that was fine! Well

Tifa appreciated the kind words

even if it was an awkward subject for Cloud of all people to be broaching

given the fact that it was kind of blatantly obvious that it was Cloud that Tifa would probably do that with in the bar. Why would they kid one another about that! But for Cloud's part—no

he didn't care one way or the other—he just thought that when someone spent a decent chunk of time in the ether that it changed their perspective on that kind of shit—what conclusion

after all

should they draw from the "contemplation of sensible objects"? If she wanted to bend over in her own bar

it wasn't philosophically out of bounds to him in the least.

Like he said

- to some extent "eros was a gateway"—they shouldn't view it simply organically or purely sensibly even if it was to some extent existent inextricably within those realms
- at least from their perspectives in their bodies or whatever. A gateway to what though

- Tifa wondered. To a different type of knowledge Cloud confirmed. Wasn't he against sensual empiricism
- Tifa queried—but Cloud quickly countered that it was by amplifying the sensory experience
- by speeding it up that the sensory experience itself was transcended—that was the whole gateway part.

  Again
- Cloud wasn't arguing for any of this indiscriminately!—he was instead making the case that these amplifications couldn't be completely cut off!—that if "other bitter and bilious humors wander about in the body and find no exit or escape
- but are pent up within and mingle their own vapors with the motions of the soul

and are blended with them

- they produce all sorts of diseases". That just like particles of matter could be sped up to create anti-gravitational waves
- the sensory organs could be similarly sped in order to transcend themselves

basically. Cloud made a decent point

but had he heard back from Biggs and Wedge—were they going to make it to the little thing Tifa was hosting that Sunday? She just needed to

you know

- get a definite head count so she could know how much food she'd need. Cloud hadn't heard back
- and frankly he was finding it a little ridiculous at that point—because at the very least

to Cloud

they could at least RSVP one way or the other. Sure of course

eros was a gateway—there couldn't be a totally universal restriction oppressing every single member of a society

but at the same time if a person couldn't RSVP to an event they basically should start eating mud out of troughs with pigs

in Cloud's view at least! People who refused to RSVP to events in a timely manner really had no place in polite society!—or

for that matter

in any society! That was Cloud's perspective at least!

And Tifa agreed! Frankly

she was getting a little frustrated with the whole process.

She was

in her mind

doing a nice thing—throwing an Avalanche quote-unquote Sunday Funday

but she just needed to know a head count ASAP. It was already Wednesday night! Cloud noted that they'd sent out the invitations

like

two weeks back

and they hadn't even heard back from half of the potential attendees

which actually moved Cloud to think that maybe Tifa should just cancel the whole damn thing! But

no

Tifa was right—it was too late to cancel

because then "she'd look like the asshole". Cloud thought that maybe that was preferable! Maybe that's what needed to happen! There needed to be some rules to this shit

right?

# Canto V "The Memory of Capitalism" η/ω 1768:2478 .714

- Cloud asked Barrett point blank right in Seventh Heaven: What "was capitalism" really?—because that's what he was actually philosophically opposed to vis-a-vis Shinra
- no? The mass production of make energy—was that not fundamentally just free market capitalism at its finest?—and therefore wasn't capitalism just fundamentally a singularity of sorts
- just a complete evisceration of memory
- to the extent that memory is the context in which we construct ourselves
- our societies? Cloud asserted that capitalism didn't give a fuck about that at all!—simply because capitalism couldn't
- because if capitalism didn't ruthlessly pursue maximum profits
- then someone else would. Cloud eventually asked Barrett if capitalism actually consisted of memory at all? But Barrett didn't fucking know. The fuck did he even care—he was attempting to make an active difference in things. No

#### it didn't at all

- did it? Capitalism was the singular focus sans memory par excellence—it sought an increase at whatever the cost
- regardless of the context—driven by the hypothetical other
- the hypothetical other moving capitalism to completely ignore memory holistically

- the only context in which capitalism would even remotely consider memory was in its future forecasts
- but even those types of reports were fundamentally myopic in character
- weren't they? Plus "past performance isn't indicative of future results!"—and even a five year forecast would basically just cover the attention span of a beta fish in the grand scheme of things. No

Cloud said

capitalism clearly operated sans memory

- as a singularity—and therefore was fundamentally an agent of destabilization from a political standpoint—he was agreeing with Barrett! Barrett wasn't seeking agreement when Cloud then asked if there wasn't also something abutting divine to that type of singularity—to Cloud it was almost like the radiation poisoning of pure make itself and shit
- no? Capitalism as a singularity contained a divine element
- in its radical rejection of memory capitalism was certainly divine-adjacent. It was like capitalism as an unfettered seeking of increase of expansion was in itself something worthy of praise in the abstract
- but for an actual sensible society the "employment of unrepentant capitalism" was the most "destabilizing and self-destructive" political philosophy you could ever subscribe to! Capitalism was magnificent in the abstract
- but if you actually subscribed to the theory in practice then you would almost definitely

in due time

totally destroy yourself and everything around you! Ultimately

Barrett reiterated that he didn't really have a ton of time to discuss these types of details—philosophical discussions wouldn't

after all

fundamentally alter the rapid environmental destruction that was ongoing at the hands of Shinra! Cloud didn't disagree

yet

at the same time

weren't the two of them at Seventh Heaven drinking fucking beers? How many draft beers had they drank at that point? They weren't gonna slow down Shinra's degradation of the planet via consuming draft beers either! Shit

bro. It was like—Cloud actually woke up that morning thinking about memory—not capitalism

but memory at least—about how he could be himself across multiple platforms and shit

but how

with that in mind

memory perhaps wasn't "attached to Being itself either".

Cloud was always concurrently multiple iterations of himself

and he to some extent partook in Being across those iterations

but at the same time—the thought occurred to Cloud that memory wasn't necessarily attached to Being at all times either? Being and memory—what was their exact relationship? That the soul could fundamentally be eternal

but if its being was disassociated from memory as we understood it then obviously it would kind of be difficult to verify!—as we tend to confirm experiences via memory and shit. Barrett gulped down his eighth pint of Midgar Light

but that didn't deter Cloud from prodding further at the point—namely

that fundamentally capitalism contained no memory and Being itself perhaps only partially partook in memory? Was capitalism a form of being? No

it couldn't be!—not unless they took a static vantage point on an infinite urge to increase and expand

which

to some extent

wasn't that the drive of the infinite

which was fundamentally the transcendent

which was—no Being couldn't be transcendent

not totally

right? Cloud didn't think so. Barrett had had enough of this fucking shit!—and he slammed his mug of Midgar Light on the counter and moseyed out the bar (he'd heard about "some new Queen's Blood thing" that was being introduced to Sector Seven that he wanted to try anyway). Tifa took the opportunity to ask Cloud if he'd had any encounters with—you know?—those ruthless apparitions that seemed to be haunting him intermittently since returning to Midgar? Well

Cloud was after all a "remade man"—in more ways than one

but no? Why? Who else around the slums had seen them recently? It was weird to Cloud

a little curious

he noted to Tifa

mostly because it seemed like sometimes (a) he'd see them

yet sometimes (b) no

he wouldn't necessarily see them but intuit them

- but then other times—like the other day—(c) the apparitions would be everywhere for everyone to see
- and he'd whip out his fucking Buster Sword with Tifa by his side. Tifa asked him to extrapolate on the triad of a-b-c
- if he could. She clearly wanted to assist Cloud in reaching the bottom of all of this

so to speak. Well

to Cloud

- it was almost like the Eleatics were correct all along—that this type of phenomena—where sometimes (a) he'd see them and she wouldn't
- sometimes (b) he wouldn't even see them but he'd feel them
- and then other times (c) they'd appear to the public at large

well

- phenomena like that basically undermined the entire idea of empiricism via sense perception
- no? If sense perception was something that they could reliably employ as a first principle to gather data and then arrive at conclusions regarding the nature of the corporeal world—then shit like what Cloud just described couldn't be possible
- right? Cloud asked how could it possibly?! There had to be a separate first principle they'd need to reference.

  Also
- he'd "switch to Fernet" if that was okay with Tifa? But the problem with this notion—both he and Tifa agreed (Tifa reluctantly agreed)—was that (a) there was no evidence that he saw them when others didn't
- and (b) there was no evidence even to himself that he felt them when he didn't see them. Cloud could see them and he'd be sure that he saw them even if Tifa

didn't—he'd have an empirical data point that he just couldn't prove!—but when Cloud simply felt himself to be in communion with something formless and incorporeal

then even he couldn't be sure from an empirical standpoint what it was he experienced

because his experience lacked a form entirely—he didn't have a sense-based empirical data point to even prove to himself that he experienced anything! Tifa poured the Fernet and said something about wanting to believe Cloud. At that point Cloud said

hearkening back to the point that previously caused Barret to stomp out of the bar

what was memory anyway?—if not this type of communion with a formless and incorporeal experience like these ruthless apparitions? After all

he remembered a boatload of shit that didn't necessarily have images attached! A lot of his memories were in fact formless feelings

but then—like some of Cloud's other encounters—did indeed contain images

but they featured images that only appeared to Cloud

just like Tifa's image-memories only appeared to her! So Cloud was of the "acute opinion" that memories themselves were to some extent like these ruthless apparitions he'd been experiencing?—yet Tifa quickly corrected him

aptly pointing out that Cloud's memories

to the best of her knowledge

had never swarmed around Seventh Heaven and attacked innocent civilians? He had to grant that as true!—"but you know what I mean

Tifa". She did. Cloud's memories were similar to those ruthless apparitions in terms of (a) and (b)

but not in terms of (c). Cloud continued on to say sipping a fresh Fernet that the point more or less remained that while sure memories were distinct these apparitions—these unidentified flying apparitions they fundamentally undermined the utility of our sense-perception

which was something

to Cloud's original point

that the Eleatics really emphasized. Tifa acknowledged Cloud's point about memory—she didn't necessarily disagree with it just because memories

to the best of their knowledge

never physically manifested themselves in corporeal forms

that it struck Tifa as basically true that memory was a similar type of experience

something that they interacted with sometimes via an image that wasn't sensible to anyone else

and sometimes via a vague feeling that they couldn't even corroborate themselves!—even memory to some extent completely undermined the idea that our sensory faculties were reliable instruments to use to come to accurate conclusions about what we perceive to be the corporeal world.

#### Canto VI "Yellow Flower Gossip" η/ω 1247:1707 .731

Cloud knew that of course Aerith was suffering from this gnawing inkling that

you know

Cloud may have gone and given away the flower

or perhaps that was a tad too strong a phrase—maybe "passed along was a better way to put it"

that's what Cloud postulated at least

but in any case he knew that Aerith knew that he forwarded the flower

right? But how did she come to possess that knowledge exactly?—could it have possibly been via the under city whisper network? Or did Aerith come to realize Cloud gave the shit away via some sort of divine intuition? Basically

Cloud was attempting to ascertain the source origin of Aerith's knowledge—was it opinion or intuition—whereas Aerith was chiefly concerned with the "implications of the knowledge itself". She actually made it quite clear that she wasn't sure if Cloud's prevarications were really the point she was attempting to make when she brought the whole flower re-gifting up to Cloud—that the issue at hand wasn't

perhaps

"how she obtained this particular knowledge" but instead "whether or not Cloud gave the flower away" which to be fair she wasn't

like

offended by—Aerith was just a little curious? Who'd Cloud "forward it to" anyway? Tifa

right? Of course it was Tifa

which was totally fine! They were actually friends! But Cloud

if possible

wanted to stay on this prior point—this epistemological point—because he thought there was a pretty important distinction to be found there

between knowing something via opinion—because for instance

some Sector Six dipshit was yapping his fucking gums in the slums—or

by contrast

becoming familiar in a more pure fashion. There was pure knowledge of things

and then there was bullshit you heard third hand from douchebags in the Sector Six Slums. Cloud felt like Aerith probably knew via the former method—could she confirm though? Instead Aerith chose to posit the radical notion that maybe it could have been both? Sure

Cloud thought that was possible (he guessed . . .)

but he didn't think so—it was possible yet not probable—in fact

Cloud felt like he knew that Aerith knew

no

not via some whisper network

no

not by opinion at all

but instead by direct intuition

and it just so happened that it was by his own intuitive capabilities that Cloud knew that Aerith knew that he gave that very fucking flower away via her own intuition

not by any lurid rumor monger frolicking shamelessly in the slums. Were there any rumor mongers frolicking shamelessly in the slums though? Spreading disinformation about Cloud giving away flowers to a plethora of women in Midgar! No

that wasn't the way Aerith had accessed her knowledge—not at all. Anyway

Aerith thought maybe Cloud should consider thinking twice before giving away flowers again. That was all. Not that she was particularly perturbed. Not in the least actually! But maybe Cloud could just

hypothetically

if a girl like her were to "give him a beautiful yellow flower" in the middle of Midgar

maybe he should hold onto the thing! Or at the very least don't go and give it to some other fucking chick! Was it really that difficult to just continually keep a single flower on your person? Not that it was Aerith's business anyway

because clearly if Cloud wanted to gift the flower to Tifa—sure that was fine

it was totally his option if that's how he wanted to go about it

but didn't Cloud think it was just a little rude? No

instead he thought that there was a notable distinction between the two types of knowledge

but if Aerith did so happen to hear it in the street

then would she be willing to tell Cloud who was flapping their lips? Was anyone out in the slums specifically looking to rat his spiky ass out? In any case

regardless of all that

Cloud totally understood where Aerith was coming from and he guessed he just wasn't really thinking at the time when he re-gifted the flower—Tifa took note of the flower and he didn't want to go into "the whole flower girl anecdote"

so he figured it might be kind of nice to

you know

pass along the love? Aerith repeated the phrase "pass along the love" in a way that

quite amazingly

wasn't completely filled to the brim with consternation and contempt. To Cloud there was something ineffably true about contemplating the female form

in its blunt physical iteration—there was no lurid opinion present within it

although Cloud didn't explicitly express this idea to Aerith at the time

given her reticence to engage in the opinion versus intuition dichotomy he started the conversation with

yet he was still obviously contemplating her form as this back and forth occurred. Her typical philosophical disposition when it came to love triangles was waning just slightly—this little flower incident seemed to "almost rile her up" emotionally

although it was clear to Cloud when she repeated the phrase "pass along the love" that she wasn't entirely riled up. Not yet at least. Aerith finally confirmed for Cloud that

ves

it was via pure intuition she'd surmised her flower no longer resided on his person

and

sure

she agreed that there was a certain distinction between the two types of knowledge. Cloud then asked Aerith what she thought was the cause of each type—well obviously opinion consisted of literal whisper networks she said

from what people saw and heard and all that. This allowed Cloud to note that wasn't everything Shinra

was working on—especially Hojo—was that not basically another whisper network

that Hojo

despite being a so-called scientist

was simply working off of what he and his associates heard and saw? Aerith was tempted to say Hojo's operation was a more systematic version of that

yes

but instead abruptly cut herself off

because when she considered it further she concluded the under city whisper networks were actually quite complex themselves! So instead she accused Cloud of changing the subject

then she noted that

actually

she wanted to shift topics

but not to the so-called whisper networks of Hojo versus the well-known whisper networks of the Sector Six Slums

no! No

Cloud understood. Even he didn't even really want to talk about Hojo! Maybe he was obfuscating. Cloud apologized

but Aerith said it wasn't necessary

there was no sorry needed really—they probably shouldn't beat a dead horse

so to speak. But

ugh

what a horrendous turn of phrase. No

Cloud agreed—it was a terrible saying

a scumbag saying

really—Hojo probably would do it though

beat a dead horse?—and then fucking

like

inject it with make or some shit

make it a mutant steed! Gross! Fucking loser!

# Canto VII "New Co-Op Cashier False Doppelganger Arguments" η/ω 1227:1739 .706

Cloud just at that moment had begun to recapitulate this time to the two of them—Aerith and Tifa—how it wasn't actually the case that he'd seen the being

no

there wasn't in fact an actual physical being in that sense of the phrase—it wasn't like the men in the black cloaks they'd be following in Rebirth (were either of them familiar with that plotline yet?). He'd just began to explain this to the both of them

and Cloud didn't feel any different about it necessarily—the fact that he was telling the both of them—Tifa was behind the bar and Aerith just happened to be there. It was fine. Were they familiar with Rebirth yet? Probably not

right? But no

in this case Cloud had been fucking

you know

just sitting on this carpet in Wutai at the time—he sat on the carpet cross-legged

and then he suddenly intuited a "purely divine being" emanating in the triangle head encapsulated in the perfectly square design that repeated endlessly throughout the entire carpet. This triangle head was what Cloud could only describe as a "laughing Allah"

that's how it struck him—there wasn't really a question about it in Cloud's mind

and it was actually beautiful. Yes

a "laughing Allah" was the only way he could describe the divine being

which certainly "communicated with him" as he sat cross-legged in Wutai in a somewhat mystical manner

albeit not quite verbally

but the being certainly communicated in a way that caused Cloud to smile. Cloud—smile?! The two women found that totally hilarious! Tifa nearly fucked up the beer she was pouring she was so surprised to hear Cloud of all people talking about himself "smiling"

but neither Tifa nor Aerith found this anecdote of Cloud's to be disingenuous in any way—in fact they both fully supported Cloud's confessions and more often than not even found them legitimately intriguing (but there were

of course

some exceptions!)

albeit they generally found the anecdotes intriguing in a one-on-one setting

as opposed to this FFM arrangement. But that was clearly fine! It just so happened Aerith was around and she popped in the bar. No big deal at all! Yet

while contemplating whether or not another Moscow Mule was advisable or not

Cloud expressed quite vigorously that he wanted to relay a subsequent anecdote that he viewed apropos of the carpet encounter

if that was okay? Of course! Well

specifically it was that when he popped into his local co-op grocery store that morning

for just a few minor items

a couple hand fruits really

and the new cashier asked him—right as he shifted his headphones up off of his ears to start the formalized sales transaction—if his "brother or something" went

there sometimes?—to the grocery store? Did Cloud "have a brother" by any chance? Because she

the new cashier

felt like she'd seen him before? Well

Cloud said to the cashier

thinking about it for a second

he found it quite possible that this alleged doppelganger was actually fucking just him!—Cloud himself!—that the cashier was in that particular instance confusing Cloud "for his actual self"

that this cashier "only believed she'd seen" someone who looked "just like Cloud" before because she'd in fact

seen Cloud before. He walked away just momentarily he told Tifa and Aerith

just to toss his basket back into the stack of baskets behind the automatic doors. Yeah

he'd take one more Mule

please Tifa? The new cashier was chuckling when Cloud arrived back at the checkout counter ready to pay for his shit—she was in the process of entering the item number for his red quinoa

chuckling alone—"it could've been you" she repeated chuckling

but then

Cloud relayed to Tifa and Aerith

she actually came around to Cloud's particular hypothesis. The new cashier

after thinking about it

came to agree with Cloud

that she actually probably had seen him in the grocery store before

and that she'd just now erroneously figured he had a brother

when in fact this hypothetical brother was "actually just Cloud himself". Tifa considered

after she'd ingested the full anecdote and served Cloud his refreshed Moscow Mule

that it was somewhat likely that the cashier wanted to quote-unquote suck his cock

and Cloud didn't necessarily disagree with the notion!—he certainly considered it possible

that this cashier may have been amenable to something like that

but that wasn't quite the point! There was a type of wisdom latent in the exchange

wasn't there?—regardless of whether or not the cashier wanted to "perform fellatio" on Cloud? Aerith

by contrast

took a more philosophical angle to her analysis of the encounter

because she agreed with Cloud that the cashier exhibited a certain spiritual insight

even if it was inadvertent. Aerith

for her part

didn't put much of any stock into the cashier's intentions whether or not they were sordid

benign

or simply indifferent. Upon acknowledging this Tifa noted that she recognized Aerith's point of view as valid that it was probably the "right way to take it in"

even if she

Tifa

wasn't personally at the point of participating in quite that level of objectivity (if they could

in fact call it that). Cloud noted that at the end of the day

- he couldn't help it if a "certain person felt an urge" to suck his cock—that whether or not someone wanted to suck anyone's cock is something ultimately unknowable
- that he couldn't simply toss potential spiritual encounters to the wayside purely because of a purported sordid subtext or intention. Both women agreed with this
- yet perhaps Aerith just a tad more than Tifa?—not to say Tifa was somehow beside herself with jealousy in any material way—no
- this distinction between Tifa and Aerith was probably rooted more so in Aerith's basically absurd ability to remain philosophically undeterred about other women while steeped in an obvious love triangle. Did she even like Cloud

really? Because it was really quite evident that Cloud Tifa

and Aerith were "collectively entwined in a sort of love triangle"

but Aerith

for her part

maintained quite the unique ability to remain essentially philosophical about it all—she didn't seem to allow feelings of jealousy to overcome her in the least when Cloud relayed anecdotes about cashiers that

if the three were being honest

- clearly wanted to whip the guy's cock out and suck on it for an extended interval of time. Did she even really like Cloud? His individual feelings on the situation were a little ambiguous
- even when he was all alone—Cloud was of course incapable of assessing his own feelings for somewhat obvious reasons.

Part II: Koreatown Bok Choy (Subtitled: "Chapter 6: What is the point of numbers?")

### (1) Abstract (unmetered)

In 387 BC, around the age of 40, the renowned Hellenist philosopher Plato (428-348 BC) founded his Academy in the then flourishing city of Athens, only a dozen or so years following the execution of his mentor Socrates, whose purported last words were, "Crito, please remember we owe a cock to Asclepius." By contrast, around 390 AD, on nearly equal opposite sides of the so-called Christ event, the Neoplatonic philosopher Plutarch of Athens (350-430 AD) would re-establish the Platonic Academy in Athens, at age 40, where the last of the great Late Antique philosophers—Syrianus and Proclus and Damascius-would work in the shadow of Constantinople. The last of the Academies were shut down by the Imperial decree of Justinian in 529 AD. Yet the birth of Parmenides, one of the great mentors of Socrates (and, via osmosis, of Plato), is believed to have taken place somewhere between 540 and 520 BC, on the equal opposite side of the so-called Christ event as Justinian's decree.

### Canto 1.1 (.769)

Araqi told Jo Yu-ri

as they sat in the small hallway wide Udon Lab on West Thirty Second

right next to the Martinique

how he had no recollection of re-reading Rings of Saturn whatsoever—in fact the only reason Araqi even realized he'd started re-reading Rings of Saturn at all was a sole blue pen underline strike under the word Rumelia

right on top of page ninety nine that

now re-reading it yet again

Araqi knew all too well he would have never made when he initially read Rings of Saturn

because at that time Araqi barely knew what Rumelia referenced

but upon a second reading

assuming said second reading took place when Araqi believed it did

he was totally balls deep in Rumelia lore. For all of these reasons Araqi believed he'd only began his second reading of Rings of Saturn when he picked up the book again just the other afternoon

but in actuality

according to this particular blue underline on the ninety-ninth page of the novel

it seemed like he'd actually

in fact

recently started a third reading

not a second

but wasn't it a bit befuddling

a tad disconcerting perhaps that a person could have absolutely no recollection of reading a whole fucking hundred pages of a novel less than five years prior

Aragi thought

a sentiment he expressed to Jo Yu-ri and she agreed that it did seem egregious but also perplexing and maybe even not to be hyperbolic

but a bit ominous? But all this

the entirety of the pair's specific stream of dialogue was abruptly interrupted when Jo Yu-ri noted Araqi's visibly concatenating frustration as they were suddenly

violently upstreamed at the bar by some greasy fuck in a cobalt blue soccer jersey—the fact of the matter was the two friends only popped in the spot to begin with to take a quick listen to a particular "xylophone jazz trio" Araqi and Jo Yu-Ri heard playing from the foyer as they walked past on West Thirty Second

Aragi being intrigued by a trio led by xylophone

but once in line at the bar they both slowly realized how loquacious this bartender was with each customer

Araqi's frustration concatenating with each second he continued to wait for a beer

and now

this customer in a cobalt blue soccer jersey popped up out of seemingly thin air to upstream them this customer

who

for his part

had apparently been repeatedly scorned in his quest to get a second beer himself

by none other than this loquacious bartender

who kept continuing on about checking the pipes in the basement

and now this customer in the cobalt blue soccer shirt audaciously cut them both in line to ruthlessly expedite his subsequent beverage. Araqi was abutting an audible complaint but remained unwilling to abandon his just-discovered excitement for this "xylophone jazz" as Jo Yu-ri noted that there was a Vietnamese food truck outside

right on the corner of Sixth and Thirty Second

that she could go get a few egg rolls if they wanted?

Araqi wasn't really in the mood

but this didn't deter Jo Yu-Ri from ambling outside to see "what was up with their dumplings"

right as the bartender finally attended to Araqi's pending request for an overpriced quote-unquote Italian style beer

which didn't taste like Peroni at all

and by the time the two got to a seat the jazz trio finished its first set and began its break

lighting cigarettes and walking back to the bar for their respective

Araqi assumed free refills.

### Canto 1.12 (.775)

Of course it was the case that Araqi

despite his agitation at the fact he and Jo Yu-Ri entered this establishment with the explicit intent of listening to this "xylophone jazz trio"

only to get stiffed by a prevaricating bartender

by a mysterious shit stain wearing a cobalt blue soccer shirt

to the extent that by the time they were seated with an overpriced beer and a handful of subpar Vietnamese egg rolls

the fucking trio itself stopped pounding xylophones and ceased playing jazz. But Araqi had other more pressing and dire topics of discussion

despite the sudden silence in the corridor wide restaurant

specifically about Jo Yu-Ri's new so-called employee Πρίαπος

because the fucking guy had been talking his ear off about Soju for like the whole last week. Jo Yu-Ri nodded at the comment without even an inkling of a hint of shock in her gaze. She wasn't caught off guard at all

as Araqi continued to recapitulate the guy's monologues about how this country

if this nation had any chance at all whatsoever

then it needed to immediately adopt Soju as its national drink

that there was no other option but to adopt all iterations of Soju

of Korean Rice Wine as the proper Bud Light replacement

to co-opt this Korean wine and rebrand it as essentially fucking American

Araqi said. That the Joe Rogans of the internet sphere had prescribed the Donald Trumps of the physical world as the panacea this country needed

via reactionary channels posted on a platform that ironically enough started as a CIA front

yet the reality was the true corrective could never be found in a Donald Trump. No

only in Korean rice wine

according to Πρίαπος

people needed to start drinking it in bars and restaurants in place of carbonated light beers! Araqi and Jo Yu-Ri both noted that they respected the passion of Πρίαπος

and that he was essentially correct in his assessment that nothing was more American than stealing the domestic culture of others and rebranding it as our own

and Soju was in fact

after all

an optimal bar drink

as it was specifically designed to provide more of a buzz than beer

but not quite the ill-advised lift of the average eighty proof grain alcohol. Yet

according to Araqi

Πρίαπος was dubious that the country could actually adopt Soju

primarily because of people

he said

like the median second cousin

people who would be reticent to drink something quote-unquote Korean on the regular

people who clung to beliefs that people like Ted Cruz actually had decent ideas about the world

that any person who found Ted Cruz to be philosophically intriguing would obviously be a little reticent about imbibing Soju

when it was obviously the case that

in fact

Ted Cruz was probably one of the top ten most despicable people on the planet? Πρίαπος noted Cruz's prevarications when asked questions like 'Does AICAP ever interact with Israel 'saying how it once again demonstrated the innately despicable baseline of his personality. But people like the median second cousins of America would actually prefer to discuss Ted Cruz with a modicum of nicety than just imbibe Korean rice wine as their default drink of choice

which was clearly why this country was on the precipice of an irreversible decline

if not in the midst of it already! This country was clearly fucking finished

Πρίαπος said

and it was solely because of this intersection of Ted Cruz Soju

and the conceptual second cousin of course

Araqi repeated

slowly almost believing what  $\Pi\rho$ ia $\pi$ o $\varsigma$  had repeated into his poor eardrums day after day that week. It was clear to  $\Pi\rho$ ia $\pi$ o $\varsigma$  at least that the second cousin was a topic they must actually legislate against. No

not just pontificate about

because these second cousins—they wouldn't just rescind of their own accord

second cousins were instead indicative of a structural rot. Πρίαπος thought that he Jo Yu-Ri and Araqi

- should all move to communicate with their New York state representatives to see if they could begin drafting a bill opposing the concept of the second cousin in this country. Was that doable
- did they think? Araqi took a bite of an egg roll that was somehow still scorching hot five minutes after Jo Yu-Ri put the plastic plate down on the table. The fact it felt a hundred fucking degrees out in Midtown probably didn't help.

### Canto 1.13 (.753)

Jo Yu-Ri

wiping her petite fingers on a thrice folded napkin

smearing select remnants of truck cooked egg roll grease onto the pure white paper

shook her head side to side and showed Araqi the page of the book she'd just opened up

Ashbery's Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror

and muttered look at all this scribbling!—in reference to the inane notes the previous owner of the paperback had strewn all over the first page in pencil. Araqi asked her what condition she'd bought the book in exactly? Was she aware of that level of scribbling prior to buying it? No

she replied

but to be fair nearly every other page of the book was entirely clean

until of course this final poem

the self-titled entry of the collection. Obviously some nitwit who probably had to write

like

a term paper about it

Araqi suggested

some kind of dissertation

and Jo Yu-Ri agreed

head bowed in defeat. Araqi alleged it remained readable even if

sure

the incessant pencil scribblings were a little distracting certainly off-putting

he could totally relate to that! The fact of the matter was it was increasingly difficult to pay discounted prices for used books these days

- without some incessant and/or inane scribbling dominating the margins of select pages
- without delays in shipping or unexpectedly bent covers or subpar paperback bindings
- although Jo Yu-Ri did note of all the fine poems the collection consisted of she found the title poem to be the least essential—so if one particular poem had to be ruined by said scribbling she was at least glad it was that one. Books

#### Aragi asserted

were actually becoming slowly impossible to acquire

- as production volumes dropped due to the increasing illiteracy all around them. It was basically a case of when before a functional embargo would take hold in terms of acquiring decent books at affordable prices. They were rapidly reverting back to the Middle Ages or something
- with rare libraries gated away from aficionados jizzing themselves over simple access to printed paper. Jo Yu-Ri thought the emergence of the PDF black market ran counter to Araqi's hyperbolic claims but of course she preferred to peruse physical copies as well so she felt the overall pull of his lament
- but Jo Yu-Ri then abruptly continued on to note in a more vigorous fashion her agreement with Araqi regarding  $\Pi\rho i\alpha\pi\sigma\zeta$ —did he know that just the other day
- while watering her bok choy plants with his massive phallus
- he told a story about rendezvousing with an exotic dancer?  $\Pi\rho i\alpha\pi\sigma c$  said he'd met the stripper just a couple weeks previous and that she'd asked to meet with him

which he said to Jo Yu-Ri he assumed meant she intended to bilk him out of some cash at her club in Astoria

but apparently—to her surprise—Πρίαπος wasn't above that

so he actually showed up to the club

Jo Yu-Ri told Aragi

but then

the dancer

half in the bag according to Πρίαπος

told him she actually meant to meet outside the club

so as her shift ended he took the dancer down the street to some hookah spot

smoked shisha then

according to Πρίαπος

quote-unquote "railed her in her SUV on a side street after she moved her kid's carseat to the side". Jo Yu-Ri was a slightly flabbergasted at the anecdote

which Πρίαπος continued

noting how the chick had some issues with "suicidal ideation"

but to Jo Yu-Ri

she relayed to Aragi

it was a little concerning

no? Just because she'd hired the guy because his phallus was supposed to be beneficial for plant growth

and while clearly that was ideal for bok choy cultivation in Midtown Manhattan

she wasn't so certain she'd get the maximum value of his phallus if he was—plowing sluts in SUVs on side streets next to shisha establishments

Araqi finished?

#### Canto 1.14 (.744)

No

Aragi noted

it was certainly uncouth that Πρίαπος was

you know

potentially having sex with strippers outside shisha spots in Queens

but still

with that said

he had come to question Jo Yu-Ri's arithmetic just slightly

mostly because while he understood the phallus of  $\Pi \rho i \alpha \pi \sigma c$  was being employed for bok choy cultivation and engaging in illicit activities

and that that particular addition seemed to portend poor outcomes. But three plus four

Araqi said

didn't equal seven—not exactly. Because truly it equaled seven plus the Form seven

because sans the Form seven it would be basically impossible for them to even conceive of seven

but

Aragi noted

Form seven by its very nature didn't engage in the same unitary mixing that the mathematical seven did. What Aragi was saying

he reiterated to Jo Yu-Ri

was that it was possible Πρίαπος

being a divine being (of sorts!)

was probably not tethered to the same rubrics of arithmetic as others?—that Πρίαπος was very possibly closer to the Form seven than the mathematical seven

in which case

while sure

his sojourns with certain Astoria strippers was in poor taste

it might not actually have a palpable effect on Jo Yu-Ri's bok choy?

## Canto 1.15 (.794)

Jo Yu-Ri flashed back briefly to a bulbous penis that was sprayed in graffiti onto the foundation of a home on Bridgham that she passed while walking to a Family Dollar the other day. It was like ever since she employed this  $\Pi\rho i\alpha\pi\sigma c$  she'd been surrounded on all sides by unrepentant penis

which probably

she reflected

- served her right for going into business with a Hellenic entity (especially a so-called deity). At the same time growing fresh bok choy in Midtown gave her a competitive advantage no one else had in Koreatown
- so was it all possibly worth it? As Araqi received the tab (after drinking his second shitty pseudo Italian pilsner)
- at four twenty pm (as opposed to Jo Yu-Ri's receipt being received at three twelve pm) he wrote out the tip and
- when laying the paper down on the table next to Jo Yu-Ri's the two realized both tabs came to exactly twenty-nine eighty-four a piece
- with each tab exactly consisting of a twenty three buck subtotal with a dollar eighty four tax assessment and five even tip

which was a bit of a coincidence

almost like a chance event that had some sort of cosmic significance? The two stared at the two tabs in silence as a chubby white guy hammering away on his xylophone slowly faded to black.

(2 + 3 - 0) = 5 (1 + 8 - 4) = 5 (5 + 0 - 0) = 5

3:12 pm subtotal: \$23.00 sales tax: \$1.84 tip: \$5.00 total: \$29.84

### 4:20 pm

subtotal: \$23.00 sales tax: \$1.84 tip: \$5.00 total: \$29.84

(2 + 3 - 0) = 5 (1 + 8 - 4) = 5(5 + 0 - 0) = 5

### (2) Abstract(unmetered)

According to the online archive of The New York Times. on February 9 1984, a series of Reagan-era American warships spent nine hours bombarding Syrian and Druze gun batteries in Lebanon. The Druze population of Lebanon and Syria is of course the ancient peoples who arose in the aftermath of the disappearance of the infamous Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr (985-1021). The Druze, for their part, place a great significance on the number five, believing that prophets of each era come in groups of five, which they date back to the days of Antiquity, proclaiming the five great prophets of that era to be: Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Parmenides, and Empedocles. Pythagoras, the eldest of the five, was a strict vegetarian born on an island called Samos in West Asia around 570 BC. He's since been renowned for, among other accomplishments, his musical tunings, the theory of the transmigration of souls, and a unique perspective on numbers, as well as the fact that there's not a single detail of his life that uncontradicted. Allegedly Pythagoras Samos at the age of 40. Perhaps the greatest distillation of what we believe to be Pythagorean teaching can be found in the dialogue Timaeus by Plato, who founded his Academy in Athens at the age of 40 himself, around the year 387 BC, nearly two centuries after the birth of Pythagoras. Parmenides, the second eldest of the five, was born about 50 years after Pythagoras in Elea, in Southern Italy, where Pythagoras, by some accounts, committed suicide in Calabria—when Parmenides would have still been an adolescent. Only fragments remain of Parmenides' primary poem on the indivisible Oneness of Being, where a great focus is placed on the concept

One, but his ideas are present in more extended form in the dialogue Parmenides by Plato, as well as an extended, partially extant commentary on Parmenides by Proclus. Empedocles, another vegetarian (and the younger contemporary of Parmenides), was born in Sicily not long after the purported suicide of Pythagoras in Calabria. The last Greek philosopher to record his ideas in verse, he would be succeeded, informally, by Plato and Aristotle. Yet the former, the only native born Athenian of the five, wasn't born until a half decade after Empedocles' death, in the late 420s BC. While Aristotle wouldn't be born until Plato was in his mid-forties. Yet he'd remain at Plato's Academy until he was 37. Yet even Aristotle, the youngest of the five by far, remains an interpersonal mystery to us today. Nothing is known about his life for certain except for the fact he was born in modern day Thessaloniki and that he had a passing interest in botany.

### Canto 2.1 (.761)

Hakim Allah actually desperately needed a waifu in Cairo

like "so bad"

but he also felt a certain longing for summer

for the sun and the heat and the accompanying irresistible urge to indulge in a nice cold wine

being born after all in the peak summer month of August in Nine Eighty Five and all. Some would suggest there was possibly even a mystical element to it

the thirteenth day of the eighth month

perhaps an arithmetic calculation or something of the sort

the violent vacillations he experienced philosophically?

Weren't those in themselves a residue of an indivisible Oneness

violently vacillating between strict philosophical schools that vehemently disagreed with one another? Wasn't vacillating between philosophical poles

violently

in a sense

a real dissembling of the pernicious dualities and multiplicities we encounter every damn day? A middle-aged man was adorned in dapper cloth sitting on the patio smoking a thin cigarette and Hakim

who didn't smoke regularly

suddenly felt an intense urge to indulge in just one cigarette

reflecting back to past moments

on equivalent patios where he'd maybe puffed a cigarette or two

where events were inevitably felt

felt in the way that feelings must inevitably extend muddied and disgusting to recollection and thoroughly incomprehensible in material ways. Ultimately

it was only when you were smoking cigarettes that you actually felt things

and feeling things was usually a kind of composite phenomena. Hakim pulled out a single dinar and asked the guy for the great privilege of bumming a single cigarette

smoking it next to the man who was obviously a high ranking court officer of the most respectable order

to which the man bluntly replied sorry last one

but there's a "camel shop across the street that sells them". In no way

shape

or form was this man smoking the last remaining unit from his pack of cigarettes—it would have been fairly clear to any person with even half of a functioning brain that this man had many more cigarettes remaining in his pack

that while the precise amount of cigarettes the man had remaining was uncertain it was also abundantly clear that that amount certainly equaled more than one. It was utterly absurd to assume this man was smoking his last cigarette on the patio. With this in mind

purely out of spite

Hakim

after waiting a few moments in deep contemplation crossed the street and stood in place at the camel station

where three people were already impatiently waiting in front of a hand-written sign that read Bathroom Break Be Back in Ten Minutes. There was no option but for Hakim to buy an entire pack of cigarettes purely out of spite

a spiteful lust to just smoke one cigarette. A heavy set pasty middle aged lady wearing a black napsack with thinning light hair on the top of her head was first in line

and would remain longer than the roly poly fair-skinned man with the macho accent

or the run of the mill day laborer—yet

fueled by this mixture of nonsensical lust and irrationally insatiable spite

Hakim would wait nearly an entire half hour for the attendant to return to purchase this pack of overpriced cigarettes to smoke a small percentage of on the patio. He outlasted not only the heavy set pasty female and her initial companions but even subsequent others who approached the window then quickly left exasperated at the ridiculous wait

at the absurd claim on this cardboard sign. Yet once this escapade was completed Hakim returned to the patio to

to his surprise find the same man still smoking a cigarette which Hakim quickly calculated must have been a subsequent cigarette or even worse

a subsequent to a subsequent cigarette

and the same heavy set woman with the black napsack and thin light hair—now also smoking a cigarette

despite the fact she left the camel station before being able to buy a pack

which Hakim quickly calculated

must have also been supplied by the man in the high class cloth. The man just moments ago was allegedly smoking his quote-unquote last cigarette on the patio. The man in the high class cloth must have gifted the heavy set pasty female her cigarette

because Hakim was just with her at the camel station

and she had no cigarettes

the only reason she was even at the station was to obtain additional cigarettes. So it was basically corroborated that the man adorned in the royal attire

at the very least

at the bare minimum

had two additional cigarettes

if not three additional cigarettes

in his pack when he ruthlessly told Hakim he was smoking his quote-unquote last one

which of course was unsurprising

yet

like all implied lies

it stung Hakim more vociferously when it was finally confirmed beyond a reasonable doubt. All obvious lies are more benign when still existing in an unproven state

despite being obvious

because a blatant lie

once proven

despite the fact its essence was already assumed fictitious

despite already having attained a certain reality as a lie stings with a certain vigor when finally confirmed as a blatant distortion of the truth. All truth is ultimately distorted to some degree

and we know this implicitly

yet without fail we're monumentally dejected upon confirming certain distortions of the truth. We believe the obvious lie to be fictitious

having been obvious

that it will mean nothing once confirmed as a falsity as nothing has essentially been altered

what we already treated as a probable lie simply becomes an actual lie

yet when the obvious lie shifts from assumed to proven it irrationally concatenates and becomes an even more egregious lie. Hakim had been shamelessly betrayed by a man who owed him less than nothing in the world

yet wasn't it perhaps the case that by the sole act of smoking cigarettes

to some extent

the man entered into a social contract of benevolently acquiescing a request for a single cigarette at shitty dive bars. To smoke a cigarette at a dive bar is to voluntarily enter into a commune of like-minded citizens bumming cigarettes off each other on occasion

and

with that in mind

wasn't falsely claiming tobacco poverty in such a setting a "faux pas of the highest order"? Hakim came around to the idea it was as he smoked two brand new cigarettes on the patio from his brand new overpriced pack

after somewhat sarcastically offering the man in the royal attire an additional cigarette after his so-called last one was done

as he drank from the white wine the bartender was nice enough to keep on ice for him while he waited at the camel station for upwards of a half an hour purely out of spite.

# Canto 2.12 (.813)

At the age of thirty five which is

we know

only truly divisible by the numbers seven and five

it's almost inevitable to arrive at the realization that the sky itself is little more than a tin roof

Hakim considered as he sat on the patio eyeing the douche bag in the royal attire walk away

that beyond the sky our senses relay to us only mirages and lurid falsifications

purely out of habit

with no ill intent whatsoever. It's never been with ill intent that our senses have utterly let us down in nearly every regard

it's simply the intrinsic nature of things that cause our senses to relay lurid falsities. Sans memory there can't be time. At the tender age of thirty five all of this without fail becomes clear to you

that everything is aesthetics in a certain sense

that the sky itself is just a tin roof

and Hakim went back into the bar to ask the aged bartender

who it turned out was only a couple years older than him for just one more wine

where a younger man and his wife complained about being banned from some local establishment. The young man calculated how much money he spent at this establishment

how much money they were forsaking by so unfairly banning him

- never taking a second to analyze whether the amount of money he was spending at one bar was even advisable to disclose in public
- with complete strangers. There was a criminal element to this banishment in the eyes of this young man
- as this was a situation where he was completely sans fault
- where this establishment had acted erroneously
- to the extent the error was actually criminal. He'd never be able to go back to that bar again. But would they survive economically sans his patronage? When Hakim went down the road
- leaving the riveting conversation of the young man behind him
- to his dismay he didn't find a single waifu marauding around the city
- the city was completely void of any and all waifus. No
- just some middle-aged dudes discussing the current state of the Fatimid military. How to transcend the tin roof was always a matter of great dispute
- and a recurring voice would whisper to Hakim in his sleep that very night that there was nothing beautiful in the streets that afternoon for a specific reason
- because the digestion of beauty at certain times can make a person exceptionally dyspeptic
- this was protection. Hakim agreed
- still tasting the six falafels he scarfed down on his way home even after brushing his teeth multiple times
- violently vacillating in his own way even as he re-entered into a calm
- deep sleep where he'd have a recurrent dream of killing himself to cleanse himself. Hakim would kill himself in his dream
- yet afterward he'd subsist in a superior form post successfully killing himself

void of the memories that haunted him
depriving him of a peaceful slumber. He questioned
these voices he frequently heard in his head
their origin
the ones constantly calling him until
finally able to assert control of his environment
he screamed Allah is One repeatedly
until the containment of his dream was cleansed by his
yelling. With Hakim in a state of great distress and
only half-awake

The Prophet Muhammed appeared briefly as a mirror image of himself and uttered nothing he could recollect.

### (3) Abstract (unmetered)

In American folklore it's often posited that "second place" is actually "the first loser." While scholars of various stripes have conflicting opinions on the accuracy of such claims, the reality is, at least according to the general populace of the world's greatest country, the saying is functionally viewed as true. The second cousin, strictly defined, is the child of the first cousin in relation to the child of another first cousin, first cousins of course being the respective children of siblings. The number 2 is, in theory, the beginning of all multiplicity, the primal source of a multitude. Without the number 2 there would be no linear single-digit path to 3 and 4 or even 5. In fact all evenness itself is defined, in theory, by an ability to be divided by this number 2. Even binary code, while only consisting of 0s and 1s is still comprised of 2 numbers (0 and 1). And all duality is derivative of the number 2. The number is at times associated with Ceres or Demeter, a goddess of agriculture and fertility, an alleged sister of Zeus. In certain forms of Neo-Pythagoreanism and/or Neo-Platonism, a certain indefinite dyad is an originator of the entire universe, emanating from an ineffable One, whereas certain cosmologies, such as Gnosticism and Manichaeism, are notable for their dualist structures, placing a duality as a first principle, which are in sharp contrast to the more monist constructions found in Akbarism and other orders.

Canto 3.1 (.747)

Enzo told Daria how he was considering that it was perhaps with a tyrannical exactness that he proceeded about his life

right up through his weekly high fades

that he considered a latent geometrical tyranny to be possibly ruthlessly guiding his life as he took quick note of a quite sizeable posterior in light blue jeans that was walking right past him as he approached the large brick building that contained the Department for Economic Development on a sunny Friday afternoon at four pm on the dot. Daria knew Enzo walked there to try and slip the clerk a quick so-called "business registration form"

but before she could confirm what she already knew for a fact Enzo went on to note that it turned out the city clerks' offices closed half an hour early for their so-called summer hours

which as it so happened was right at four pm. Enzo muttered what the fuck before continuing on to note that he was wearing his new tan Walmart mesh basketball shorts with his white vans as the voluptuous woman walked past him—by contrast—wearing wire rimmed glasses on the tip of her thin nose

surrounded on three sides by curly black locks. According to Enzo

sometimes it was just preferable to sit on a roof with your shirt off and think about fucking nothing for a little bit—even if it was five fifteen on a Friday afternoon? There was

after all repetition and number

he said to Daria

but did all numbers "actually repeat"? Daria noted she'd been noticing an insane amount of five fifty fives and two twenty twos

plus eleven elevens

and even one elevens of late but to date she'd refrained from any attempt to google an explanation. But wasn't it the case

Enzo interjected

since they'd gotten onto the topic of sequences of integers anyway

wasn't it the case that the "second cousin as a conceptual artifice was collectively accelerating the downfall of their country"

I mean

Enzo said

second cousins are in aggregate all basically cunts right? In Enzo's mind it was the clearly the case that the second cousin was basically objectionable a pitiful clinging to a so-called bloodline that was

even when more potent

still somewhat ambiguous if not nonsensical. What was blood anyway? Daria

for her part

didn't have a particularly strong opinion on the concept of the second cousin one way or the other

but she admitted that she didn't have as big of a family as Enzo

which perhaps played a part in her quizzical nonchalance? No

Enzo went on

the second cousin was something indicative of a structural rot

in fact it was something that probably needed actual legislation to be properly combatted

because these second cousins—they wouldn't just rescind of their own accord. No

Enzo and Daria both

they needed to start "petitioning local representatives" to pass legislation to abolish this concept of the second cousin.

# Canto 3.12 (.731)

It was abundantly clear to Enzo that there was a recurring splitting into two that was perhaps the most nefarious act of all

that the first of this or that inevitably would become extended to the so-called second of the same substrate—but why? It was this counting—this lurid linear extension that perhaps offended Enzo the most

to which Daria

thinking about her bok choy with an unerring sense of dread

was only partially paying attention to. They'd fundamentally forgotten something about number

Enzo said

they'd become addicted to dividing and adding extending and subtracting

instead of focusing on concepts more steeped in purity.

Enzo felt as though they were meant to recall

something essential about number

but now

somehow

that was impossible for them

that they'd forgotten for good an essential aspect of number

which made every situation they encountered immeasurably more bleak. The second cousin itself was nothing beyond a symptom of a much greater sickness

the common cold of counting numbers

of becoming unitary until they reached infinity. Nothing was more infinite than the unitary

yet the unitary becoming infinite was utterly absurd! Everything was split into two

or split into three

all around them were doppelgangers and trinities of what was what. Multiplicity couldn't exist this way! Enzo continued as Daria simultaneously considered bringing up a few concerns she had with an employee she'd contracted specifically in a botanical manner

but who

given his unorthodox methods

had started to concern her given some of his more licentious habits. Of course botany and personal matters were probably

in most cases

considered completely separate issues

but due to the specific nature of this particular job it had begun to bother Daria just slightly. Enzo

for his part

had an entire pack of cigarettes in his drawer—he said to Daria—because he'd bought a whole pack the other day

"just purely out of spite". Did she want to go out onto the deck and whack a puff or two from one? Was she drunk enough yet? To smoke a quick cig? Because she clearly wasn't listening to any of the fucking shit about he was saying integers or second nonsensical division cousins—about the of everything all around them! No Daria was

she was listening (kind of ...)

it was just that she was just a tad preoccupied

even before coming by she'd been walking through a small courtyard in the city

taking note of the big trees growing next to the large brick condo buildings

contemplating connecting with nature

but also with inanimate objects as well? It was one thing to connect with nature and trees and plants

that was almost cliche

but what about connecting with inanimate objects "made of plastic by wage slaves in East Asia"? She'd recently attended divine liturgy for the first time in ages

she told Enzo

and while occasionally staring up at the series of icons people would have indiscriminately killed people for worshipping just a few short centuries ago

she could have sworn a set of voices were speaking to her

solely in her mind

comforting her but also informing her that there would be an upcoming time that they'd snap their fingers

and she'd finally return to them

as if that was where she actually belonged

in this plane she could hardly comprehend

yet communicated to her with no problem. She exited her body just momentarily

filled with pure relief

then the beings reiterated a time would arrive when they would snap their fingers and she'd return

finally

to them. Perhaps she'd have discounted the encounter if she hadn't

on a whim

she told Enzo

decided to go up to take communion with her dad—and as her turn finally arrived to imbibe the blood of Christ Himself

- she noticed sitting calmly to the left of the priest was a Wind Tunnel brand floor fan. The exact same floor fan she'd
- after taking entirely too many mushrooms one particular evening eons ago
- engaged in an extended conversation with regarding the true nature of things

during which a certain clarity descended upon her finally understanding with the utmost purity her true origin and in turn the primal source of all things.

## (4) Abstract (unmetered)

"In another dream of wider significance I saw Jonas Lie. with a gilt bronze clock curiously ornamented. Some days later, when I went to walk on the Boulevard St. Michel, a watch-maker's shop window attracted my attention. 'Jonas Lie's clock!' I exclaimed aloud. It was indeed the same. It was crowned by a celestial globe on which two female figures leaned; the works were supported by four pillars, and on the globe a date-indicator pointed to the 13th of August. In a future chapter I will explain what the fateful 13th of August brought with it. This and other occurrences took place during my stay in Hotel Orfila between 6th February and 19th July, 1896. Concurrently with them a larger adventure pursued its often interrupted course till, with my exit from the hotel, a new section of my life began ... August 13th.—The day announced on the Boulevard St. Michel has arrived. I wait for something to happen, but in vain: none the less. I am certain that somewhere something is happening, the result of which I shall hear in a short time. August 14th.—On the street I pick up a leaf out of an old office calendar; in large type there is printed on it 'August 13th' (the same date which was on the clock). Underneath it in smaller type is a sentence. 'Do nothing secretly which thou canst not do also openly." - August Strindberg, The Inferno

## Canto 4.1 (.782)

Ultimately

whether the cults of Aphrodite engaged in sacred prostitution or not is something scholars of history are still bitterly torn about

but there exist perhaps legitimate reasons to agree with either camp. On the one hand

if the Greeks engaged in

what certain participants of the Symposium at least believed to be

an abutting sacred form of pederasty

then is it really that farfetched to suggest dudes in Corinth were banging whores in an Aphrodite temple but just in an intensely ritualistic way? Isn't it possible Aphrodite was

in some sense

a pre-waifu? The true origin of the waifu as we know it?

Later that night

at Itaewon Pochu in Koreatown

Araqi was surreptitiously saving hentai jpegs onto his camera roll as he sat at the small window table overlooking West Thirty Second

splitting an eel appetizer with Jo Yu-Ri

who after a couple shots of Soju

was suddenly more forthcoming than she'd been previously. Unaware of yet also unconcerned with Araqi saving hentai jpegs into his phone's camera roll

Jo Yu-Ri found herself more comfortable with you know

sharing her feelings after about half a dozen shots of Soju. Was she herself possibly engaged in an ... "iteration of sacred prostitution"? No!—employing

some Greek demigod to rub his cock on your bok choy plants wasn't —well

she didn't know what it was exactly

she muttered to Araqi. Maybe avant-garde botany? But in any case definitely not prostitution! Araqi noted that: wasn't it possible that some thing or some one had some sort of

you know

"hold" on Πρίαπος? That maybe the dude just needed help

some assistance

that all this shit she was so concerned about

vis-a-vis his recent whore mongering was the result of certain something having a vice grip hold on him? Well

clearly he was a little off-kilter! she said

that much they could both agree on! But the essence of that condition

the condition of being hypnotized in an abutting mystical manner—was she the most appropriate one to say

or was it possible she didn't actually care

that this was an exclusively capitalist endeavor

that her role in the whole matter was solely rationalist

that as long as her bok choy imparted a competitive leg up in the heat of Koreatown she didn't care one way or the other? And

by the way

the "bok choy at Itaewon was atrocious"

she noted

so at least that was good! The fact of the matter was Jo Yu-Ri could definitely question how she quote-unquote arrived here

so to speak

a budding

barely semi-successful

restauranteur in Midtown

a Johnson and Whales dropout and Food Network junkie helplessly perusing Craig's List ads

desperate for a leg up in the most viciously competitive restaurant metropolis perhaps on the planet

when she stumbled upon Πρίαπος's plight

deciding to take it on as a botanical advantage. People would always note in awe how her blue eyes displayed a certain reddish gold tint about them

possibly some faint Spanish blood on her Filipino mother's side? It seemed her Korean-American identity was always slightly undermined by this Catholicism of her adolescence—Catholicism has a tendency of making everyone a fourth generation Italian-American

and Jo Yu-Ri felt this tugging at times as well

but then again

it wasn't quite like the guy necessarily owed her anything because there was nothing in their contract (which was non-existent) that stipulated how he should spend his free time. Yet

Araqi interjected

is there not an implicit agreement in any business relationship to

you know

like

he said

when George Costanza became a hand model in Seinfeld—he wasn't traveling around laying bricks and dipping his toes into amateur boxing in his free time! Yes

the Costanza analogy was an apt one here

yet again there was the question of the essence of  $\Pi \rho i \alpha \pi o c$ 

how he interacted

or was interacted with in the corporeal sphere which became an increasingly latent issue as the two requested a second bottle of Soju. It was possible Jo Yu-Ri considered that "his cock wasn't existent" in the way she may have initially thought.

### Canto 5.1 (.760)

Of course Hakim entered the establishment looking solely for Amina

as at the time he was completely captivated by her beauty

unwilling to part with this particular image of her form that relentlessly ricocheted within the confines of his mind

captivated

not like he'd been once before

by the "comparative witchcraft of clever conversation". No

instead Hakim found himself hypnotized by the blunt pure form of her beauty

with no edification or extrapolation

with no capitulation to reason—or even to feeling for that matter! It was simply the case that there was no interlocutor

not even any remote contemplation of this very form that so clearly had wafted Hakim through the double doors that evening

trying to find what could perhaps be deemed a waifu.

Now of course there's a complex hierarchy of refraction to matters like these

of which Hakim

having a decent amount of philosophical education wasn't unaware of per se

however

whether or not it was at the top of his mind at the time is a separate matter entirely (it wasn't!). There are long range correlations—did a female look like someone familiar

from years ago

like perhaps exactly the same? In fact

it was possible Hakim actually mistook this particular waifu for another person entirely at first

back from his secondary school days. He wasn't even certain it was her when he first stumbled upon her form. He encountered her form but recalled a co-ed he was acquainted with from some years ago

assuming incorrectly Amina was in fact an old friend.

She informed Hakim softly her name was Amina

as if people were possibly listening in to each syllable uttered from her exquisitely proportioned lips

as if specific court jesters were waiting in the wing to transcribe their conversation to latent gossip columnists. Scholars

for their part

would ultimately retroactively conflate two possible Aminas as well

mimicking unintentionally their own source of study. The fact that Amina was

technically speaking

you know

an orphan in a harem didn't faze Hakim in the least because all of the prophets previously noted historically were

if not pure whore-mongers

then at least sympathetic to the plight of the prostitute

the prostitute simply existing as an extension of the destitute and downtrodden as a whole. Hakim saw no reason to diverge from his predecessors in this regard. There's a certain idea that the deepest relationships are the ones based on so-called illuminating conversation

predicated upon getting to quote-unquote know each other

- yet you could counter that there's actually nothing to know of us really at all
- that we're purely refractions of a source infinitely simpler than we seem to be
- that convolutions are by their very nature fictional and steeped in hypocrisy. Having a great conversation is the acute fallacy of humanity
- believing you've discovered some eternal bond with another person is perhaps an affront to Allah Himself. Hakim and Amina didn't discuss themselves at first
- and when they did they struggled to recall who they even were

which was appropriate. Hakim's madness

his indiscriminate killing of others was based in this idea.
There was an immediacy to their coming into contact with one another. Hakim

#### again

didn't contemplate Amina's beauty

- simply because it was an impossible act. Memory was something they both struggled to interact with. Amina's beauty was a motor skill. Her outline was a recollection someone would never become conscious of
- a lurid memory a person completely forgot about but still stayed hugging their body like a shark jaw. It was the immediacy of Amina's beauty that slowly began to erode Hakim's sanity. Possession sans contemplation can be confusing for some

Hakim not excluded

because we often consider possession akin to growing old and decaying with someone

repeating vows into an open air that

if rearranged just slightly

- would become heavy as bricks. At the time he passed through the double doors to place an eye on her
- Hakim incorrectly assumed Amina's beauty to be of a decaying nature
- basically that he could possess her in a contemplative sense. Hakim made a poor attempt to seem like he wasn't looking for Amina as he walked through the double doors
- her beauty already within him but in a way that eschewed contemplation entirely. Hakim lusted for decay

to possess beauty in a contemplative sense to recite vows in air pockets of brick and Amina danced around his ambitions to be honest

- fairly effortlessly. Had Hakim been able to properly contemplate this very real immediacy of Amina
- then perhaps his sanity wouldn't have slowly eroded in the manner it ultimately did. When he executed those closest to him on a whim

in increasingly violent and drastic ways

slicing off heads and slitting throats by the hundreds

- it was only because Hakim fundamentally misinterpreted the immediacy of Amina's beauty. Had he been able to perceive her beauty in its actual sense as opposed to ruthlessly attempting to tether it to his own contemplation
- then he probably wouldn't have gone batshit crazy! Court officers would be beheaded because Amina's beauty was a motor skill to Hakim
- when he incorrectly believed it to be a roman à clef. Yet isn't an eroded sanity necessary? Could we possibly suggest that? When Hamza ibn Ali proclaimed Hakim to be divine incarnate

was it possibly because Hakim had sacrificed his own sanity to make Amina's beauty

which was of a purely waifu variety

decay? Hakim would disappear years later

in fact not long after two distorted Aminas appeared to him in dream

one dark

the other of a light variety

yet still even then he remained unable to disentangle what it was he saw. Yet in any case

all that's perhaps a better topic for a later date

because when Hakim walked through those double doors his sanity had already started to decay

his mental faculties were already in a state of disarray. As Hakim focused his energies on this false image of decaying with Amina his sanity itself became dilapidated. Hamza ibn Ali called him Hakim Allah. It wasn't necessarily the phrases Amina repeated that reached Hakim

but more so the mode in which she said them. She'd whispered pure nonsense to Hakim that was nothing if not totally logical only a few years before his friend Hamza would deem him Hakim Allah. Hakim would spend his nights and weekends locked in his three hundred square foot living space

an ascetic decision of his own accord

and meditate extensively on the beauty of Amina

its true nature

recreating her geometry in his mind

speaking with Amina in his imagination

creating an interpersonal brand of beauty based entirely on contemplation

one where they would decay together into old age a human shape that fades with time existing solely temporally

- never emanating anywhere except into the memories and photographs which distort and falsify everything worthy of our awe. This was how Hakim's sanity eroded. His asceticism played at least a part in his own decay
- but mostly because he employed asceticism to create images in his mind
- to delve into his memories as images as if they contained an essence more immediate than Amina's beauty. They didn't! It's the proliferation of the imagined image that ultimately drives us all basically insane all the time without fail
- because of the distance we place between ourselves and the image
- by necessity of course! Being deprived of the immediate beauty of Amina
- Hakim chose to ascetically attempt to recreate it via his own imagined images
- existing almost exclusively within the confines of his own contemplative states
- but whereas his (seemingly shallow) interactions with Amina required nothing
- they merged into each other sans conscious thought his imagined images were fleeting
- always decayed immediately post-construction. At five thirty five pm one afternoon the thought occurred to Hakim that he'd been forty for his entire life
- despite the fact he'd disappear forever at just thirty five. He was still obsessed with distance. No
- it was precisely the notion of distance that drove his sanity off the fucking cliff. Hakim's greatest creation was perhaps Dar al-Ilm
- or it could have possibly been his own interaction with his sanity

because perhaps by dealing with Amina's beauty incorrectly Hakim ultimately arrived at the true notion of beauty

rather than moderately deluding himself and decaying with a palatable fib

he stampeded full force into delusion. He lost track of his sanity completely because of it

in a sense accurately assessing the false notion of Amina's beauty as an item you could decay beside. The sacred prostitute is incapable of decay

there's in fact absolutely nothing more absurd than growing old with a so-called sacred prostitute. How could you?! In Ten Twenty One

Hakim would dream of two distorted Aminas and then he too would disappear

not as a result of a palace intrigue

or a surreptitious murder

or age and decay

because even if those events seemed to occur

we should stress that they're no less veil-like than the veils Hakim witnessed around Amina's beauty. No

to be clear

it's fairly evident Hakim himself became a waifu in his thirty fifth year

which was entirely appropriate. Disappear is probably the incorrect word to describe it! because Hakim gave away his sanity in a very real way the second he walked through those double doors to greet Amina in his own establishment

the establishment where he saw himself enclosed like in a large box like container

one Spring afternoon

the same place he contemplated the idea that Allah is the very mirror in which you see yourself

- that you're the mirror in which He witnesses His Names. We seek to claim beauty in a subject-object relationship because certain beings have made themselves seem to be that way
- not to trick us necessarily but just to innocently cause us to go appropriately insane
- and via that appropriate insanity finally arriving at the proper nature of beauty. Amina in her current state enjoyed the fact that Hakim had half of his robe off in the middle of the venue

his face bleeding

tossing dinars into the air screaming at men twice his size that he had money! Didn't they know this? He'd fucking kill them all

then he'd eliminate their families

- then he'd assassinate the acquaintances of their second cousins! But sacred prostitutes are of course inveterately drawn to this exact type of insanity
- a sort of Dionysian losing of the self. Years later Hakim would dream of killing himself repeatedly as a method of cleansing himself
- a related process. It's probably interacting with the atrocities of beauty where the greatest lessons are learned
- but certainly not in an interpersonal and quote-unquote deep conversation driven way. No
- it's via a divine immediacy that everything becomes idiotic and your rational self is finally recognized among everyone as an unwelcome interlocutor
- unable to wrap his pea-brained head around why you're not currently wearing a shirt in a public place.

# Canto 5.12 (.775)

Walking through the (in retrospect somewhat ominous) double doors Hakim took note of the same tin roof that comprised the sky on dive bar patios as Amina made it clear she had business to take care of

she was after all on shift

but that it was also important that Hakim wait for her please! Don't leave! Just wait a minute! But fundamentally there was nothing for the two to discuss beyond Amina staring silently into Hakim's eyes for extended intervals of time. When she finally moseyed over toward him as he stood nervously

still near the double doors

he told her he wanted to take her quote-unquote out of this place

maybe even

he didn't know

take her out to dinner? and she laughed in a way that spoke to the seeming impossibility of the idea

and

in turn

Hakim considered the false duality of the physical and the Platonic

considering that

actually

the proper division of kind when it came to love wasn't physical and spiritual but instead the delayed and the immediate. There was no dialectic present here

no long conversations on the phone

no getting to know one another's so-called secrets and indulging in the thrilling idiocy of what's hidden

of the amusement park of tiny little secrets. There inevitably would come a time when Amina actually asked Hakim to tell a little more about himself

that it seemed like

now that she thought about it

she barely even knew him! to which Hakim considered his own trauma

which of course wasn't exactly real

he contemplated his youth with a rare momentary fervor and witnessed that all these memories became mass-produced action figures completely melted into a strip of pavement in the unforgivingly blistering Cairo sun

and as he turned to his left

solely to escape Amina's ever intensifying gaze

he couldn't help but note a Sandra Bullock poster for a movie called Miss Secret Agent hung up adjacent. Repeating the title again to himself Hakim slowly arrived at the disquieting conclusion that there perhaps existed an entire Sandra Bullock economy all around him

that entire swathes of the film industry were indiscriminately dedicated to the ruthless production of additional Sandra Bullock content

exclusively constructed for a ravenous Sandra Bullock fan base. People

not at all in obscure numbers

absolutely adored Sandra Bullock

apparently! But how could this be?—that these shit stains just couldn't get enough of Sandra Bullock

could they?—to the extent an entire industry had developed to quench the thirst for this Sandra Bullock content. Oh no! Miss Congeniality wasn't nearly enough Sandra Bullock for these lurid masses of Sandra Bullock shit stains! Hope Floats was

barely scratching the surface of what was clearly a Mariana trench-like itch for the unadulterated production of Sandra Bullock films. Speed and Demolition Man and The Proposal—no! these insatiable zealots demanded Miss Secret Agent as well! Miss Congeniality the Second: Armed and Fabulous

not even that acutely cocksucking film could suffice for these cocksucking Crusaders of everything Sandra Bullock. To Hakim's amazement

Miss Secret Agent was still somehow necessary! Bird Box

Ocean's Eight—this endless list of insipid films could there ever be enough Bullock? Hakim thought avoiding Amina's gaze

realizing his entire childhood was a blob of plastic melted into a Cairo pavement. There existed an entire sub-population that subsisted seemingly solely on Sandra Bullock films? Hakim asked Amina if she'd seen that movie posted over there

Miss Secret Agent? With Sandra Bullock? Was that like

a sequel to Miss Congeniality by any chance? Amina noted excitedly that she'd actually seen the sequel to Miss Congeniality

that it was called Armed and Fabulous

so she cast doubt upon whether particular film could be its proper sequel

but then suggested that it was possibly part of a trilogy?

This Sandra Bullock industry had been allowed to proliferate

seemingly incessantly and now Hakim realized once and for all that he and Amina basically lived derivative lives in what was functionally a Sandra Bullock driven economy.

# Canto 5.13 (.758)

All around him

his whole life

he'd been unrepentantly surrounded by Sandra Bullock's filmography

but only in this moment did this unfailingly depressing fact become apparent to him. In fact

Amina continued

glancing at the poster again

Miss Secret Agent was actually just another name for Miss Congeniality

the first film

not Armed and Fabulous

had Hakim seen it? It was actually pretty decent! Bullock plays a quote-unquote tough and tomboyish FBI agent in the Action slash Comedy

it was a film that contained action yet also comedic relief as Bullock was

despite being traditionally attractive

a tough but also tomboyish detective

which challenged traditional gender norms. One aspect Amina enjoyed about the film was the balance of action with spurts of comedic relief! She loved spurts of comic relief! This would contrast with Bullock's later work in a film like Bird Box

where she'd take a much more serious turn in her acting career. Hakim admitted to Amina that

actually

he believed Sandra Bullock

well

that she sucked. No

not that she was the worst per se

no there were obviously more atrocious actresses than Sandra Bullock. But how many exactly? Because Sandra Bullock

according to Hakim

was a particularly nauseating personality. He just found her

he didn't know

a bit of an annoying imbecile? While

no

he hadn't seen many of her feature films start to finish he didn't feel like he needed to to be able to arrive at a fairly confident conclusion that she was basically vomit inducing. She certainly wasn't a pillar of creative brilliance! The world

in Hakim's mind at least

didn't require any further Sandra Bullock films! This idea Hakim said

that Sandra Bullock should have basically an entire industry built around her

for the sole purpose of producing more and more Sandra Bullock films

it seems completely absurd to me! Sandra Bullock? If there's a single data point we can reference to suggest that our society is in dire need of reform I think it's the putrid fact that a movie was produced and released under the title Miss Congeniality Two: Armed and Fabulous! The fact that

not only was that film actually produced

but this entire Sandra Bullock industry continues to operate and proliferate

even to this day?—how can you not be just a little offended by that

Amina? It's all just a tad grotesque you have to admit! Well I disagree! Amina retorted

Llike her movies

Hakim! I think she's amusing but also brazen in a way I find endearing. Endearing Hakim repeated equally in disgust and disbelief endearing? No

I watched Bird Box

and I'll simply note that my left nut after a half an hour run is more endearing than that movie

Amina! And Speed with Keanu Reeves? C'mon! Oh

and don't even start with Hope Floats! —the fact there exists an entire sub-population of Egyptians dedicated to

- what?—the collected Sandra Bullock filmography?—is just absolutely mind boggling to me!—it's actually an affront to good taste Amina
- it's actually the best Christmas gift of all time to utter absurdity
- it's something we need to employ teams of our finest scholars to study to produce rigorous case studies detailing extended hypotheses as to how this state of affairs was allowed to occur!

Diagrams

The Madness of a Cloud: Diagrams

Mode: >.667

# of Macrotones (Blocks): 7 [echoes] / syllables = >.667

Total: 11,010:15,461 .712

Canto I

Total Echoes: 1,859 Total Syllables: 2,546

Approximate Self-Similarity: .730

[C][l]oud was [s][i]tt[i]ng at [S][e]v[e]nth H[ea]v[e]n d[r]in[k]ing a Fernet on the [r]o[ck]s e[n]g[a]g[i]ng i[n] [l]ight [c]onver[s][a]t[i]on with a [c]o[ck][s]u[ck]er h[e]'d ne[v]er [e][v]en met [a][b]out [a] [Q]ueen's [B][l]ood g[a]me that [p][l][ay]-in he'd - this [p]arti[c]ular [c]o[ck][s]u[ck]er - [r]e[q]uested to [b]e [p]ut on the [T][V] at the [b]ar. Well, a[c]tual[l]y [C][l]oud [c]o[r]re[c]ted, for the [r]e[c]ord, that he'd a[c]tua[l]ly been [r]eading a [f]ew [p][a]ges of [T]im[a]eus [p][r]ior to all this, [m][a]king a [f]ew [d]is[p]a[r]ate notes, [f]in[d]ing him[s]el[f] [p]uzzled at the [s]en[s]o[r]y in[f]or[m]ation that [c]on[t]inued [t]o [r]e[l][ay]ed in[t]o his [b][r][ai]n. [C][l]oud [b][a]si[c]a[l]ly a[l]leged he was [f][l]u[m]moxed a[b]out the [s]en[s]o[r]y in[f]orm[a]tion that [b]e[c][a]me, in [s]ome [w][ay], [r]el[ay]ed to [w]hat he guessed [w]as his [b][r][ai]n? - how any of that was [c]o[r]ro[b]o[r]ated, [b]ut [m]ore [s]o [C][l]oud [c]on[t]em[p][l][a]ted the [s][t]ati[c] n[a]ture of [s]aid i[m]ages - that's [w]hat he [w]as [s][p]e[c]ifi[c]a[l]ly [c]on[t]em[p][l]ating [w]hen [a] guy [w]ith [a] r[ou]nd-a[s]s [f]a[c]e [l]eaned [o]n[t]o the [b]ar, [s]ee[k]ing to [c][l]ose his [t]ab, obviou[s][l]y ex[c]ited [t]o [t]ell the [b]ar[t]ender that he may n[ee]d to show [h]er [h]is I[D], just [b]e[c]ause he [t]oo[k] his wife's [l]a[s]t name and [h]adn't [h]ad a [ch]an[c]e to [ch]ange his

[l]i[c]en[s]e yet? The pa[t][r]on with the [r]ound-a[s]s [f]a[c]e [n]oted how [n]i[c]e the bar[t]ender was ([T]i[f]a!), [b]ut [w]hat [w]as her [n]ame again? He [c]ould [d]e[f][i][n][i]te[l][y] [d]isp[l]ay his I[D] if sh[e] r[ea][l]I[y] [n][ee]ded, just be[c]ause, again, his [l]ast [n]ame [w]as [d]i[f]ferent [n]ow - ta[k]ing his [w]i[f]e's [n]ame and all! Of [c]ourse, [C][l]oud [n][o]ted, [th]at it was [c]lear [th]at [n][o] one gave [a] [f]u[c]k [a]bout the [p][r]inted name on [a] [c][r]edit [c][ar]d in that b[ar], and Ti[f]a, [f]or her [p][ar]t, [d]i[d]n't exa[c]t[l][y] [s][ee]m [l]i[k]e she was [r]am[p]ing [u][p] to [s][u]ck this [d]ude o[f]f i[u]st be[c][au]se he was a [r]a[d]i[c]al [f]eminist. [F]or [C][l]oud's [p]art he was still, you know, a[tt]em[p]ting [t]o get [b][e]hind the [b][l]unt [s]en[s]ations [b][e]ing [r]e[l]ent[l]e[s]s[l]y into [s]o-[c]alled [s]muggled his [c]onsciou[s] [e]xi[s]ten[c]e. [E]ve[r]ything was [a]n [i]mage to [s]ome e[x]tent, [r]ight Ae[r]ith? Touch it[s]el[f] was a [f]u[c]king [s]en[s]o[r]y [i]m[a]ge. [l]t was a [q]uaint [S]p[r]ing evening where [C][I]oud [f]elt m[or]e [or] [I][es]s [d][es]tined to [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph][i]ze, having [s]tarted [d][r]in[k]ing w[i]ne in [p][r]e[p]a[r]ation [f]or a [F][r][i][d]ay [n][i]ght [d]inner, on[l]y to have Ti[f]a [b]ail [l]ast mi[n]ute, [b]e[c]ause sh[e] [n][ee]ded to [p][i][c]k u[p] a [b]ar sh[i][f]t - [l][ea]ving him [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] fr[ee] to [c]ontinue this wine [d][r]in[k][i]ng [i]n a [r][i]tual[i][s]ti[c] [w]ay that [w]ould be [c]on[d]u[c]ive to [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al i[d]eas. [C][l]oud [c]on[t]inued [t]o Ae[r]ith, [b]asi[c]a[l]l[y] on[l][y] vi[a] d[r]in[k]ing [a][l]one, [b]ut in [a] [r]itua[l]i[s]ti[c] [f][a]shion, th[a]t h[e]'d ach[ie]ved any [s]ort of [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph][i][c]al [i]n[q]uiry. You [c]oul[d]n't just [s]it at a [d]e[s]k and be[c]ome [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al, at [l]ea[s]t [n]ot for [C][l]oud! May[b][e] [s]ome [p][eo][p]le [c]ould! [B]ut, [n]o, [n]ot [C][l]oud. He'd i[m]agine [th]at [th]ere were [p]ro[b]a[b][l]y a [l]itany of [p]o[s]si[b]le ways [b]e[c]o[m]ing [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al - [l]i[k]e, [f]or

in[s]tan[c]e, [f]or the round-[f]a[c]ed al[b]ino ch[a][p], [p]erh[a][p]s [t]e[l]ling [T]i[f]a that he'd [t]aken his wi[f]e's [l][a]st n[a]me, m[ay][b]e that could [b][e] [s][ee]n as po[s]si[b][l][y] ritua[l][i][s]t[i][c] [i]n a w[ay], a g[a]tew[ay] to [s]ome [s]ort of be[c]oming [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al. This was a[c]tua[l]ly [s]cien[c]e, [C][l]oud [t]old [h]er [h]e [th]ought at [th]e bar, [s]uc[c]e[s]sfully avoidi[ng] [m]a[k]i[ng] any eye [c]on[t]a[c]t with the round-fa[c]ed [m]an. Was it [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]ily [s]t[r]ange at all that [o]n[c]e the G[r]ee[k]s [w]ent extin[c]t [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]y went m[or]e [or] [l]ess [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] and utter[l][y] downhill and [n]ever [l]oo[k]ed b[a][c]k in the [l]ea[s]t, [th][a]t [th]e [l][a][s]t group to [r][ea]l[l]y [r][ea]ch much of any [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al [s]u[c]ce[s]s made a [s]in[c]ere effort to [c]onjoin getting [f][u][c]ked [u][p] with [c]on[t]em[p][l]ating in[t]e[l]ligible [ph]e[n]o[m]e[n]a? -[th]at [th][e]se G[r][ee][k]s a[tt]em[p]ted [t]o [m]a[r]ry i[n][e]b[r][i]ation and [r]igo[r]ous dia[l]e[c]tic? [Th]at all [th]ought since - to [p]a[r]a[ph][r]ase [N]orthhead - had been a mi[n]or [f]oot[n]ote to [P]lato or [w]hatever? [Th]e [th]ing [w]as, a[c]cording to [C][l]oud, you just [c]oul[d]n't w[i][l]l[y] n[i][l]l[y] [d]elve into metaph[y]s[i]cs [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] [s]o[b]er! [B]ut that wasn't to [s]ay a [p]er[s]on should [n]e[c]es[s]arily [b]e[c]ome [s]ome dege[n]e[r]ate al[c]oho[l]i[c] either, [b]e[c]ause [d]ege[n]e[r]ate [d][r]unk would in [n]o w[ay] [m][a]ke a [m]eta-phys[i][c][i]st either that g[r][ea]t [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly impo[s]si[b]le, [b]e[c]ause, [l]i[k]e [C][l]oud [s]aid, the [s][o][l][o] m[o]de of in[e][b][r][i]ation should [b][e] done [r]itua[l]i[s]ti[c]a[l]ly, in [s]p[ur]ts, at [c][er]tain times. You [c]ouldn't just [b]e [l]i[k]e h[i]tt[i]ng the [b]ottle [a]s soon [a]s you wo[k]e [f]rom a [s]lum[b]er! - a[f]ter [s]aid in[e][b][r][i]ation [s]essions vou'd [s]o[b][r][i]ety to [p]arse through [w]hatever it [w]as that [c]ame to you via [s]aid [c]ontem[p]lation, [n]o? In f[a][c]t,

the [a][c]tual [s]cience was [n]othing [b]eyond this [p]ar[s]ing th[r]ough of in[e][b][r][i]ation [s]essions of [r]igo[r]ous [c]ontem[p][l][a]tion! That was it - what [l][ai]d [b]eh[i]nd [l]ogi[c] and metaph[y]s[i][c]s, in [C][l]oud's m[i]nd at [l]east! [B]ut in[e][b][r][i]ation [c]ould [b]e anything [r]eally - [C][l]oud [c]ould en[t]er a s[t]ate of in[e]b[r][i]ation in [a] [c]ar [a][l]one on [a] Tuesd[ay] [A]M, without [c]onsuming a damn thing. [A]e[r]ith [m][or]e [or] less ag[r]eed, [a]dding th[a]t on the one hand a [ph]i[l]oso[ph]ical [m][i]nd should [b]e a[b]le ana[l][y]ze, in[t]er[p][r]et, ex[t][r]a[p]o[l]ate, all of that [s]cien[t][i][f][i]c [s][t]u[f]f - but, on [th]e o[th]er, i[f] you [f]ail to [p][l]a[c]e yourself [i]n a [p]os[i]t[i]on to [r]e[c]eive [a][n]ything to [a][n]a[l]yze, in[t]er[p][r]et, or ex[t][r]a[p]o[l]ate then you were [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly [s][c][r]ewed! [C][l]oud m[or]e [or] [l]ess ag[r]eed [b]ut [a]dded th[a]t - [s][a]ns this ty[p]e of "in[s][p]i[r]ation," [s]o to [s][p][ea][k] - they'd [b][e] [s]tu[c]k [s][i]tt[i]ng at [a] ta[b]le just [n]ood[l]ing [a]r[oun]d [n][on][s]en[s]i[c]a[l]ly, v[a][c]i[l]lating [b][a][c]k [a]nd forth [b]e[t]ween [t]wo [t]ypes of [n]othing[n]ess, and then just pr[o][b]a[b][l]y k[n][o][c]king [o]ff s[o]me[o]ne else's [w]ork [a][c]cident. [B]ut [n]one of this [w]as [n]ew! It [w]asn't [l]i[k]e [C][l]oud [w]as [b][r][ea][k]ing [n]ews i[n] a[n]v[w][ay]. [A]t this point [A]e[r]ith [a]sked - you k[n][o]w, was thi[s] [a]l[b]i[n][o] douche [b]ag, he was an e[l]ement of this [a][n]a[l]y[s]is? [N]o, [n]ot real[l]y - a[c]cording to [C][l]oud - maybe the g[uy] was [t][r][y]ing a [t]ad [t]oo hard? - to [p][r]es[e]nt him[s][e]l[f] as a [s][p]e[c][i][f][i]c ar[c]he[t]y[p]e [t]o the gene[r]al [p]ubli[c], as a g[uy] who [d]e[c][i][d]ed to [s][p][i]t [i]n the fa[c]e of his [o]wn [c]h[r][o]mo[s][o]me [c]ount, [w]hich [w]as [s]omething [C][I]oud [p]er[s]ona[I]ly en[d]or[s]ed! Gran[t]ed [C][I]oud [p]ro[b]a[b][l]y [w]oul[d]n't [d]o it [b]y [t][a][k]ing his [w]ife's [l]ast [n][a]me, [b]e[c]ause [C][l]oud

[p]er[s]o[n]al[l]y was obviou[s][l][y] more [p]rone [t]o a [t][y][p]e of [i][s]o[l]ated and over[l][y] [d]ramatic [s]elf-ann[i]hi[l]ation than [s]ub[s]ervient and а [m][u]ted [d][i][s][i]ngen[u]ous[l]y [f]e[m]i[n]ist b[u]t he w[a]sn't i[p][s][o] [f]act[o] a[n]nihi[l]ation, op[p][o]sed to either! Ae[r]ith ag[r]eed [on]e h[un]d[r]ed [p]er[c]ent! But [C][l]oud [s]till would g[o] a [l]ittle [f]urther, n[o]ting [th]at i[n] [th]e i[n]telligible [s][ph]ere, as [s][o]me[o]ne [l]i[k]e, [s]ay, Pr[o][c][l]us would n[o]te, that were [s][o]-[c]alled [f]orms [s]omehow able to [p]arti[c]i[p]ate in [o]ne an[o]ther w[i]thout m[i]xing, [w][i]th[i]n the [s]en[s]ible [w]hereas realm [p]art[i][c][i][p]ated [i]n th[i]ngs and [s]ub[s]e[q]uent[l][y] got [d]irt[y]. But [C][l]oud [th]ought [th]at it [w]as [w]orth [s]tep [f]urther - [s]ince they were going [o]ne [d]i[s][c]u[s]sing a[n]nihilation [a]nd [s]tu[f]f [a][n]yway, [th]at [th]e [p]er[c][ei]ved m[i]x[i]ng be[t]w[ee]n [f]orms that [t]ook [p]lace in the [s]en[s]ible a[r][e]na was it[s]el[f] i[u]st [a] [p][r]oje[c]tion of [m]ixture but not a[c]tual [m]ixture. The in[t]el[l]igi[b]le sphere, [b]eing [p]ure[l]y e[m]an[a]ted, [p]ar[t]i[c]i[p][a]ted w[i]th[i]n [i]t[s]elf without [m][i]x[i]ng [i]t[s]el[f], while i[n] the [s]e[n][s]i[b]le [s][ph]ere [i]t [d][i][d]n't [s]eem like that was [p]o[s]si[b]le, that [b]y [p]arti[c]i[p]ating w[i]th[i]n [s]en[s][i]ble [th][i]ngs [th]ey [b]e[c]ame e[s]sential[l][y] m[i]xed w[i]th them, a[s]suming they were [c]ategori[c]a[l]l[y] [s]en[s]ible. E[s]sential[l][y] [n][a]ture was t[ai]nted, which of [c]our[s]e [C][l]oud [a]nd [A]erith k[n]ew all [t]oo [w]ell! [W]ay [t]oo [w]ell! He[n][c]e thei[r] sha[r]ed a[c]quie[s]ce[n][c]e toward [o][c]c[a]sio[n]al [a][n]nihil[a]tion! [B]ut even this [s]en[s][i][b]le f[i]lth, [s]o to [s][p]ea[k], [C]loud [th]ought, [p]er[c]eived m[i]x[i]ng u[p] [i]n [th]i[s] [p]arti[c]i[p]ation of [s]en[s][i]ble th[i]ngs, wasn't it [a]l[s]o [a] [p]rojec[ti]on? - [a]n [e]man[a][ti]on, just as the [p]ar[t]i[c]i[p][a][ti]on of the in[t]elligible [s]phere was

al[s]o [a]n [e][m]a[n]ation of the [p][r]i[m]a[r]y u[n]ity of all things? Which, yeah, [b][r]ought [C][l]oud [b][a][c]k to th[a]t al[b]i[n]o [r]ound-[f]aced [f]u[c]k at the [b]ar, wi[f]e's [t]a[k]ing his [l]ast [n]ame -[b]e[c]ause ul[t]i[m]ate[l][y] the al[b]ino's [v]antage point wasn't [r]e[m]ar[k]a[b][l][y] di[v]ergent f[r]om [C][l]oud's Ae[r]ith's, [C][l]oud thought. Thi[s] al[b]i[n]o was [p][r]o[m]oting a [c]ertain t[y][p]e of an[n][i]hilation of their [c]ultu[r]al-[s]en[s]i[b]le [r]ealm, [th]in[k]ing [th]at [th]e [p]at[r]iar[c]hal lineage of their [s]o[c]iety was [b]a[s]i[c]ally [s]omething obje[c]tiona[b]le, [s]omething e[s]sential[l]v t[ai]nted, that should [b]e a[n]nihi[l][a]ted in the [s]ervi[c]e of [s]omething [m]ore pure. O[k]ay, well, [C][l]oud [th]ought [th]at [m][a]de a [m]odi[c]um of [s]ense! [M][a]ybe t[a][k]ing his wi[f]e's [l]a[s]t n[a]me was in a [s]ense a g[r][ea]ter [f]orm of [p]u[r]ity than [l]o[c]king a woma[n] i[n] a [k]itche[n] and [e]xpe[c]ting a blowjob [e][v]ery other [e][v]ening, [C][l]oud thought. Ju[s]t as [P][r]o[c][i]us and [S]o[c][r]a[t]es [s]en[s]ed [th]at [th]e in[t]el[l]igible [s][ph]ere [p]arti[c]i[p]ated w[i]th [i]t[s]el[f] yet not in a [w]ay [w]here it m[i]xed w[i]th [i]t[s]elf, [th]at [th]i[s] was [d]i[s]tinct [f]rom our [f]urther [d]e[s]cen[d]ed, [s]en[s]i[b]le [s][ph]ere where things [p]arti[c]i[p]ated [w]ith [o]ne another [b]ut got [m]ixed u[p] in the [p]ro[c]e[s]s - well, [m]ay[b]e this al[b]i[n][o] [m]an was [n][o]ting [th]at [th]e [p]a[t]riar[c]h[v] was а [p]ar[t][i]c[i][p]a[t]o[r][y] m[i]x[i]ng that [l]eft un[s]eem[l]y [c]um [s]t[ai]ns - [f]or [l]a[c]k of a better [ph]r[a]se! - on hu[m]an ex[p]e[r]ience. [P]at[r]iar[c]hy, in the al[b]i[n]o [m]an's [m][i]nd, should [b]e a[n]n[i]hilated [b]e[c]ause of this [s]en[s][i][b]le m[i]x[i]ng u[p], this [p]u[t]rid [t][ai]nting of [w]hat [w]ould [b]e [b]etter o[f]f [p]ure. And [t][a][k]ing your [n][i]ce wi[f]e's [n]ame was a [p][r]o[p]er [m]ode of an[n]ihilation in [r]es[p]onse. Ae[r]ith [r]e[m]ar[k]ed that she knew [C][I]oud would inevita[b][I]y [b][r]ing the

dis[c]ou[r]se [b]a[c]k to this [p]oo[r] ch[a][p] [c][l]osing his t[a]b, [b]ut, just to [b]e [c][l]ear, [w]hat [C][l]oud [w]as saying [w]as [th]at [th][i]s m[i]xing [th]at o[c]curred in the [s]en[s]ible [r]ealm was it[s]elf ju[s]t a [s]e[p]a[r]ate [p][r]ojection - ju[s]t a l[e][s]ser mode of [p]roj[e]cting! So [w]hile the [m]a[t]erial [w]orld [m]ay have di[s]gu[s]ted them, [p]erha[p]s [m]oving the [t]wo [t]oward [s]ome [s]ort of [a]ll-en[c]om[p]a[s]sing [c]on[c]e[p]tual [a]nnihilation, [a]nd [a]s [m]uch as the [p]a[t][r]iarchy [m]ight have seemed [p]u[t][r]id to the al[b]ino hus[b]and at the [b]ar who [l]oo[k]ed to an[n]ihi[l]ate him[s]el[f] [b]y ta[k]ing his [n][i][c]e w[i][f]e's [l]a[s]t [n]ame, it [c]ould be wise to [c]on[s]i[d]er [th]at [th]ese [d]i[s]gu[s]ting a[g]g[r]e[g]ates were them[s]elves [s]im[p]ly [d]e[r][i]vat[i]ve [p]roje[c]tions, [th]at [th]ey weren't a[c]tual [m]ixtures, [th]at [th]ey were just [d]erivative e[m]anations as o[p]posed [t]o [t]at[t]oos of what [th]ey [th]ought [th]ey [d]e[s][p]ised. Aerith [w]as a[w]are. She wasn't [d]i[s]tressed a[b]out it, [b]ut she k[n]ew this poor al[b]i[n]o g[uy] would in [t][i]me [t]a[k]e the [b]r[u]nt [o]f it from [C]loud. [C]loud [q]uestioned whether he [d]i[d]n't [d]eserve it? [P][l]us [l][i]ke they'd al[r]eady im[p][l][i]ed they [m]u[s]t to [p][r]o[c]eed from the i[m]mane[n]t [t]o the [t]ran[s]cende[n]t, no?

Canto II

Total Echoes: 2,174 Total Syllables: 3,037

Approximate Self-Similarity: .716

[C][I]oud [f]ound it a [t]ad [b]e[f][u]dd[I]ing, j[u][s]t [b]e[c][au]se [T]ifa [s]aid sh[e]'d h[a]d [a]n [o]dd [d][r][e]am [a][b]out him the [p][r][e]v[i]ous night, and h[e]'d [r]e[p][I]ied [b][I]unt[I][y] that he [d]i[d]n't usual[I][y]

have [d]reams a[b]out [p][e]o[p]le h[e] knew, somehow [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [p]urging the [f][a][c]t [f]rom his m[i]nd th[a]t, just that n[i]ght, [h]e'd [h]ad a [v]i[v]id dream in[v]ol[v]ing one of his [f]i[r]st gi[r]l[f]riends and he[r] [c]u[r]rent (to the [b]e[s]t of [C][l]oud's know[l]edge) [s][p]ouse. [H]ow [c]ould th[a]t [h][a]ve [p][o[s]si[b][l]y [s][l]i[p]ped his [m]e[m]o[r][y], given the [v]i[v]a[c]it[y] of the [d][r]eam it[s]elf? [B]ar[r]ett [d]i[d]n't have a [c][l]ue [e]ither, [r]eal[l][y]. [H]is ex and [h]er [h]usband were [l][i]v[i]ng w[i]th [C][l]oud and h[i]s [f][i][c]tional wi[f]e in a [m]o[d]est [c]on[d]o they'd been l[ea]sing in Up[p]er [M]idgar, yet he [t]old [T][i][f]a he "[n]ever [d]reamt" about [p]eo[p]le he k[n]ew, yet [p]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t be[f]uddling a[s][p]e[c]t of it [w]as that [w]hen he'd said th[a]t to [h]er [h]e [a][c]tua[l][[y] [b]e[l][ie]ved it! [C][l]oud's ex-girlfriend and h[i]s [f][i][c]tional [w]i[f]e had [b]e[c]ome s[o]me[w]h[a]t [f][r]iend[l][y] i[n] the [d][r][e]am, i[n] the [c]on[d][o], and the wh[o]le or[d][e]al, in [C][l]oud's [d][r]eam, st[r]u[c]k him as total[l][y] [f]ine [i]n[i]tial[l][y]. H[i]s [f][i][c]tional [w]i[f]e [w]as ob[s][c]u[r]ed, a [p]u[r]e [m]irage, [w]hile his ex [w]as [a]n [i][m]age of [h]ow [h]e'd k[n]own [h]er in the [p]ast, [n]ot [h]ow she was [n]ow ([n]ot that [h]e k[n]ew [h]ow she was [n]ow!), [b]ut eventua[l]ly [C][l]oud [b]egan [t]o [c]ome [t]o the [r]ea[l]ization [th]at [th]i[s] was his ex-[r]oman[t]i[c] in[t]ere[s]t. and that his [c]u[r]rent wi[f]e and [b]e[c]oming [f][r]iends ex-girl[f][r]iend [a]n [a][b]solutely [c]ata[c]l[y]s[m][i][c] deve[l]op[m]ent for him [s]ocial[l]y, [th]at it [w]as [th]e [p]ro[b]a[b]l[y] [w]or[s]t [th]ing [th]at [c]ould [p]o[s]si[b]l[y] [h]a[p]pen to his [m]arriage. [H]e [w]ondered [w]h[a]t the [h][u]sband of [h]is ex [w]as thin[k]ing - [C]loud [w]as [w]ondering how it [w]as ex[a]ctly th[a]t he got r[o]ped into this wh[o]le [th]in[g] as he was [e]xitin[g] [t]his a[p]art[m]ent into an U[p]per [M]idgar that, of [c]ourse, wasn't [e]xa[c]tly

U[p]per [M]idg[a]r at [a]II! Yet on[I]y hours [I]ater when [T]ifa [t]old [C][l]oud sh[e]'d had a [d]r[e]am w[i]th h[i]m [i]n [i]t that [n]ight he [c][l]aimed to [n]ever [d]r[e]am a[b]out [p]eo[p]le he k[n]ew. Odd! [B]ar[r]ett [n][o]ted [th]at he just [d]id, [th]ough, [r]ight? [Th]at his [s]tatement [t]o [T]i[f][a] was [f][a]l[s]e, [n][o]? Um, yeah, th[a]t's what [C][l]oud ju[s]t [s]aid! ex[a][c]t[l]y [C][l]oud [r]e[i]te[r]ated that it was "[l][i]te[r]al[l]y [th]at night" [th]at [h]e'd [h]ad [th]e [d][r]eam, [f]urther em[ph]asizing the ab[s]ur[d][i]ty of h[i]s [s]t[a]te[m]ent [t]o [T]ifa. [M][a]ybe, thought, it was [c][l][o][s]er [C][l]oud [c][o]in[c]i[d]en[c]e th[a]n [a]n alclute [m]i[s][r]e[m]em[b]erin[g] o[r] fo[r]gettin[g]? Was that [M]e[m]o[r]y[p]os[s]i[b]le? was elli[p][t]i[c]al [s]ome[t]imes. [B]ut i[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, he [t]old [B]a[r]rett [h]e'd [h]ad another d[r][e]am [r][e][c]ent[l]y - if [B]a[r]rett was [b]y any chan[c]e [i]nte[r]e[s]ted [i]n [l][i][s]tening to more [b]ullshit a[b]out his [d][r]eam [s]tates? - where [C]loud had [d]i[s][c]overed a g[l]owing, f[l]uo[r][e][s]cent i[n][s][e][c]t i[n] one of the [d][r]awers on [s][c][r]eened-in patio that [d]i[d]n't ex[i][s]t [s]o-[c]alled "[r]eal [l]i[f]e," and [C][l]oud to[s]sed the [f]u[c]king thing [o]ut[s]ide [o]nto the gras[s], [k][i]nd of [d]i[s]gu[s]ted [b][y] it to [b]e hone[s]t, on[l]y to [d]i[s][c]over that [s][a]me in[s]e[c]t ju[s]t a [f]ew [m]o[m]ents [l][a]ter - but [n]ow a[p]pea[r]ing in a huma[n]oid [f]orm, [s]tanding out[s]ide the [s]c[r]eened-in [p]atio, ho[p]ing to b[e] [l]et in. Now, in [th]e dr[ea]m [th]ere was a [l]ittle [g][e]t-to[g][e]ther on [th]i[s] [p]ati[o], [s][o] [C][l]oud [w]as a [l]ittle wa[r]y of [l]etting this [b][e]ing - who was female, [t]o [b][e] [c][l]ear - in[t]o the [p]arty, [b]ut [c]u[r]ious[l][y] [e]ve[r]yone [e]lse at the [p]o[w]-wo[w] [s][e]emed total[l][y] in[c]a[p]a[b]le [p]er[c][ei]ving her, [e]ven a[f]ter [C][l][ou]d al[l][ow]ed her in? Yes, [C][I][ou]d al[I][ow]ed her in and the [f]orm of

[c]ommuni[c]ation be[t]ween him[s]el[f] a[n]d e[n][t][i]t[y] was [s][i]m[p]l[y] a [s]eries of vague [f]eelings, [p]erha[p]s, he [th]ought, [th]i[s] was [s]ome [k][i]nd of [r]em[i]nder that you [c]ouldn't just, you know, [c][r]eate [th]ings - [th]at [r]e[f][r][e]shing [s]ynthe[s]es are the b[e][s]t [w]e [c]ould do? [W]ith [th]at [s]aid, [th]ey [s]tarted [c]o[p]ulating on the [p]atio. [B][a][r]rett wan[t]ed [t]o [c][l][a][r]i[f][y] [th]at it was [th]e [b]utter[f][l][y] [w]oman that [C][l]oud [w]as [f]u[c]king? Or [w]hatever she [w]as? [W]ell, [C][l]oud n[o]ted, [o]nly [w]hen she [b]e[c]ame a human [b]eing, of [s]ome [s]ort, [th]at [th]at [w]as [w]hen the [c]opu[l]ation o[c]curred, obviou[s][l][y]! [B]ut, with that [s]aid, it was a[c]tual[l][y] ([k]ind of?) int[r]iguing [t]o [B]a[r]rett, [t]o [b]e honest? [B]ut, mo[r]e impo[r]tant[l][y], [C][l]oud [r]eal[l][y] wan[t]ed [t]o know how [S][e]v[e]nth H[ea]v[e]n was [l]a[s]t night, [b]e[c]ause [B]a[r]rett [s]top[p]ed [b]y there, [d]i[d]n't [h]e? [H]ow was it? Well. [L]et's [s]e[e]. [B]arrett [d]e[f]inite[l][y] [f]elt the [p]urit[y] of the [b]ooze ex[p]and w[i]th[i]n h[i]s che[s]t u[p]on his [f]ir[s]t [s]i[p], and while the [b]ar[t]ender ([o]bvious[l][y] [n][o]t [T]i[f]a, [b]ut he [d]i[d]n't [c]atch her [n]ame) was s[l]ight[l][y] more a[f]fable than [w]hen he [w]ent there [w]ith [C][l]oud, but she [d]i[d]n't [a][c]tual[l][y] [a]sk [w]hat [f]ruit he [w]anted [i]n the dr[i]n[k]. [S]itting a[l][o]ne at [S][e]v[e]nth H[ea]v[e]n Bar[r]ett [t]oo[k] n[o]te of him[s]elf [t]o[s]sing the [s]ingle orange [s][l]i[c]e onto h[i]s th[i]n, i[m]m[e]d[i]ate[l][y] [m]oist [n][a][p][k]in [m][a]nual[l][y] extr[a][c]ting the [s]ingle [s]eed th[a]t h[a]d been ex[p]elled [f][r]om the o[r]ange [i]nto the [l][i][g]uor [f]rom the g[l]a[s]s, a[n]d i[n] doing [s]o, he n[o]ted [th]at all [th]at he'd a[cc]ounted for [a]t the [b]ar - the [a][f]fa[b][i][[i]t[y], the [f]ruit, the s[e]ed - that extr[a][c]ting those id[e]as [o]ut [o]f the air was [b][a][s]i[c]ally the [s][a]me as the [c]oo[r]dinate-t[r]a[c]king [r]epo[r]ted [b]y [r]emote viewers. He gl[a]nced [b][a][c]k [a]t the [b]ar and

too[k] [b]rief note of the [b]artender ch[u]gging [a] shot [o]f [b]ooze with a [c][u]stomer and was vio[l]ent[l]y sma[c]ked in the [f]ace with an a[c]ute [m]e[m]o[r]y of [r][i][p]p[i]ng [s][i]m[i]lar shots with a [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] [b]artender [f]rom his [p]ast, [w]hich [w]as [b]a[s]i[c]ally ju[s]t a[n]other [s]et of [c]oordi[n]ates, [b]ut these [p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar [c]oordinates [r]e[t]urned [t]o [h]im, [h]e [d]i[d]n't [p][l]u[c]k them [o]ut [o]f the air. He [d]i[d]n't [p][l]u[c]k these ri[p]ping shots with a bartender [c]oordinates [f]rom a [r]a[p]id [r]ush of in[f]ormation - no, [s]aid [c]oordinates [r]eturned to him [a]s he [s][a]t in [s]o[l]i[t]ude [a]t the bar [t]otal[l]y in[v]o[l]un[t]ari[l][y], [v]io[l]ent[l][y] sm[a][c]king B[a]rret in the [f]u[c]king [f]a[c]e and [s]omewhat [r]ude[l]y [c]o[l]la[p][s]ing time [i]t[s]el[f] [i]n the [p][r]o[c]e[s]s, [r]ight as [B]ar[r]ett [s][a]t [a]t th[a]t [t]iny [t]a[b]le a[l]one, [i]nn[o][c]ent[l]y [s][i]pping h[i]s dr[i]n[k] [i]n [S][e]v[e]nth H[e]av[e]n. [B]arrett the[n] w[e]nt on [t]o [t]ell [C]loud how, [b]efore the [b]ar, he'd s[ee]n а [b]unch of [p][eo][p]le with [M]a[k][o] [p][o]isoning that [h]e [h]adn't seen in [m]onths, and [C]loud [n]oted that's how they k[n]ew S[p][r]ing was ap[p][r]oaching, [r]ight?! Yet, on that [n]ote, it was [k]ind of [f]unny be[c]ause [C][l]oud was a[c]tual[l]y thin[k]ing to himsel[f] [th]e o[th]er [d][ay] - [w]hat [w]as the exa[c]t [d]e[f][i]n[i]tion of sobriety any[w][ay] - li[k]e how [c]ould thev a[c]tually [d]i[s]t[i]ngu[i]sh [s]o[b][r]iety f[r]om intoxi[c]ation? [B]a[r]rett [p]er[k]ed [u][p] [a] [b]it. [C][l]oud made it [c][l]ear that, [n]o, he wasn't [n]e[c]e[s]sari[l]y [l]i[k]e [t]al[k]ing about s[m][o][k]ing [c]ra[c]k, exp[o]sing your[s]elf to high in[t]en[s]ity [m][a][k]o shards for [d]e[c]ades on end, [b]ut [m][a]y[b]e ju[s]t [d]rin[k]ing [w]h[i]te [w][i]ne or [s]omething? [B]e[c]ause [C][l]oud [c]r[o][s]s[i]ng the [W][a]sh[i]ngton [S]t[r]eet [b][r]idge [c]on[t]em[p][l]ating a [p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar [v]is[i]on of [i]nd[i][v][i]sible One[n]ess [th]e o[th]er [n]ight, [a]s

[B][a]rrett k[n]ew too well th[a]t [C]loud was [a]pt [t]o do [f]rom [t]ime [t]o [t]ime, and [b]e[l]ieve it [n]ot he was a[c]tua[l]ly [d]i[s]covering [a] [d]e[c]ent [a][m]ount of e[n]joy[m]ent i[n] the [m]a[t]e[r]ial [w]orld at the [t]ime! -[d][r]in[k]ing a [m]ini [w]ater [b]ottle f[i]lled w[i]th [M]ez[c]al, [b]ut [a]lso [a]t[t]emp[t]ing to [g]auge whether [h]e'd [h]ave the [t]ime [t]o [g]rab just one [m]o[r]e [b]eer [b]e[f]o[r]e [T][i][f]a was su[p]posed to b[e] at his a[p]art[m]ent. [C][l]oud was [c]ontemp[l][a]ting n[a]ture of a[n] [i][n]d[i]v[i]sible [O]nenes[s], [b]ut he [w]as al[s][o] [c]omforted [b]y the mate[r]ial [r]ealm while [c][o]Id[I]v [c]al[c]u[I]ating his odds of [b]eing a[b]le to ch[u]g an[o]ther [b]eer while still ma[k]ing it [b]a[c]k to his [a][p]artment [b]e[f]ore Ti[f]a was sup[p]osed to [a]rrive. [A]nd [a]s [C][I]oud was [c]ontem[p][I][a]ting this n[a]ture of a[n] i[n]d[i]v[i]s[i]ble [O]neness, [c]r[o]s[s][i]ng a [W][a]sh[i]ngton [S]t[r]eet b[r]idge, [d][r]in[k]ing [M]ez[c]al from a [m]ini water [b]ottle [C]loud [r]e[m]ar[k]ed to [B]a[r]rett [h]ow [h]e'd [s]tarted to [q]ue[s]tion this very [d]ef[i]n[i]tion of [s]o[b][r]iety. [B]ut it was here [B]a[r]rett [b]egan to [q]uestion - [w]ell - [w]hat did [C][l]oud [a][c]tua[l]ly mean by th[a]t? [W]ell, [w]hat [C]loud [w]as [t][r]ying [t]o get [a]t, Ba[r]rett, was th[a]t [s]o[b]riety it[s]elf was [s]up[p]osed to [b]e a [b]a[s]eline of [s]orts, no? Of [c]our[s]e it was! Yet how [c]ould [th]ey [m]easure [b]a[s]e[l]ine exa[c]t[l]v? - was there [th]i[s] [a] [m]easure[m]ent at [a]ll? - was so[b]r[i]ety to [b]e def[i]ned [b]y a I[a][c]k of p[a]ssion, or a vague [s]en[s]e of th[e] "[e]ven-[k][e]eled"? [B]ut the pro[b][l]em was, in [C][l]oud's [m]ind at [l]ea[s]t, [th]at [th]ere was [n]o u[n]iver[s]al e[m]otional [b]a[s]eline [w][i]th [w]h[i]ch to def[i]ne [s]o[b]r[i]ety. [S]ome [p]eo[p]le - he [m]eant, even [C][l]oud [h]imself [c]ould be t[o]tal[l][y] un[h]inged e[m][o]tional[l][y] on o[c]casion while [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te "[c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] [s][o][b]er"! [F]urther[m]ore, even i[f]

they - [B]arrett and [C][I]oud - [c]ould de[f]ine [s]ome [b]a[s]e[l]ine e[m]otional [s]tatus [a]s [a]xio[m][a]ti[c], [th]en [th]ey would [s]till have to [c]ombat [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]i[c]al[l][y] with e[x]ternal [s]ub[s]tan[c]es that weren't [c]on[s]i[d]ered int[o][x]i[c]ants that would [o]bviou[s][l][y] sh[i]ft th[i][s] e[m]otional ba[s]e[l]ine. What did [C][I]oud [m]ean? Well, [I]i[k]e, [a] [I]a[c]k of f[oo]d [c]ould [a]Iter m[oo]d. The [s]ame [c]ould be [s]aid of [c]a[f]feine! [C]o[n]suming dirt would pro[b]a[b]ly shi[f]t s[o]me[o]ne's emotional [s]tate. Hi[s]to[r]i[c]al[l]y, a[c]co[r]ding to [C][l]oud, [p]eo[p]le ate fu[c]king [p][l]ants with [s]mall [d]o[s]es of p[s]y[c]he[d][e]l[i][c]s em[b][e][d]d[e]d w[i]th[i]n them and [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly thought ve[r]y little about "in[t][o]xi[c]ation" [p][r][o][p]er! [P]eo[p]le u[s]ed to fu[c]king [s]ani[t]ize [w]ater [w]ith al[c]ohol! [S][m]o[k]ing [t]o[b]a[c]co al[t]ered [m]ood. [B]a[s]i[c]ally, [B]arrett, "a[n]ything we i[n]ge[s]t alters our [s]t[a]te of exi[s]ten[c]e and there[f]o[r]e ch[a]nges u[s] in [s]ome [f]o[r]m or [a]nother, wh[i]ch [i]n [m]o[s]t [a]ll [c]a[s]es pro[b]a[b]ly [f][i]l[t]ers [i]n[t]o our [m]ood." [C]loud [n]oted, [f]or him [p]er[s]o[n]al[l]y, a shifflt in his [d]iet [c]ould [d]o won[d]ers for h[i]s [i]ntel[l]e[c]tual [d]i[s][p]osition - [s]o then [w]hat [w]as [s]o[b]riety? It [s]eemed im[p]o[s]si[b]le to even [th]in[k] a[b]out [s]o[b][r]iety as [a] [th]ing at [a]II! Well, [B]a[r]rett h[a]dn't ex[a][c]tly [c]on[s]idered it li[k]e that and [w]asn't sure if he [w]ould. [B]ut [C][l]oud [th]ought [th]at m[a]y[b]e th[ey]'d t[a][k]en a [f]al[s]e [b][a][s]e[l]ine of [s]o[b]riet[y] [c]on[c]eptual[l][y], no? A[f]ter all, [w]hat [t]e[c]h[n]i[c]al[l][y] [w]as an ex[t]er[n]al [s]ub[s]tan[c]e? [C]ould they [d]ig even [f]urther and [c]on[s][i][d]er the [d]e[f][i][n][i]tion of an ex[t]er[n]al [s]ub[s]tan[c]e? A [c]onver[s]ation [c]ould [c]ertainly [a]Iter [a] [p]er[s]on's [t]em[p]erame[n]t ex[p]one[n]tial[l][y] as well! - but did that [t]e[c]h[n]i[c]al[l][v] [c]ount as [a]n [e]xoge[n]ous

[s]ub[s]tan[c]e? Did [w]ords [n]ot [c]arry [w]eight? A vo[c]i[f]e[r]ous thought or [e]ven а [f]l[e]eting [m]e[m]o[r][y] - e[s][p]ecial[l][y] in [C][l]oud's [c]a[s]e! -[c]ould [o][f]ten t[o][s]s a [p]er[s]on [c]om[p][i][e]te[i]y yet they [s]till [f]or o[f]f-[k]ilter, [s]ome in[c]om[p][r]ehen[s]i[b]le [r]eason [c][l]ung to an [i]dea of obi[e][c]tive [s]o[b]r[i]et[y], and [th]en [th]ev [s]ub[s]e[q]u[e]nt[l][y] [t]argeted [s]e[l]e[c]t in[t]oxi[c]ating, while [s]ub[s]tan[c]es as deeming [s]ub[s]tan[c]es - which [a]l[s]o [s]o-[c]alled "other" [a]l[t]ered [t]emperaments - as [t]otally fine! [W]ell, [th]is [w]as [w]hat [C][l]oud [w]as [th]in[k]ing at [l]east, as he [w][a]l[k]ed over the [W][a]shington [S]treet [b]ridge - that [p]eo[p]le [d]i[d]n't [v]iew [c]on[s]uming i[f] [f]resh as [s][o]mething [f][u]nda[m]en[t]ally [v]ege[t]a[b]les [m]ind al[t]ering, then it was [p]o[s]si[b]le, in [C]loud's [m]ind, [th]at [th]ey ju[s]t ex[p]e[r]ien[c]ed the [w]orld in va[s]tly dif[f]e[r]ent [w]ays. [A]nd [B][a]r[r]ett [f]or his [p]art [flound this to [b][e] int[r]iguing yet un[c]onvin[c]ing. [B]ut [C][l]oud in[s][i][s]ted [th]at [th]ere [s][i]mp[l][y] was no [t]rue [a]nd [e]x[t]ended [s]tabi[l]it[y] of our men[t]al [s]tates - even if [th]ey were hy[p]o[th]eti[c]al[l][y] de[p][r]ived of ex[t]ernal [t]in[k]e[r]ing, be[c]ause even thought it[s]el[f] was [f]undamen[t]al[l][y] e[x][t]ernal [t]o [s]ome e[x][t]ent, was it not? [A]nd [p]eo[p]le on were [clonstant[l][v] a[c]costed bγ [a]verage [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] th[ou]ghts, were they [n][o]t? Thought [n]ever [c]ea[s]ed [a]lmost [a][c]co[s]ting [p][e]o[p]le, [w]hich [w]ere all [p]eo[p]le? And even i[f] [th]ey [c]on[flined [th]emselves to [c]ommonly ag[r]eed u[p]on mate[r]ial [s]ub[s]tan[c]es, [th]en [th]ere was [s]till no [c]on[s]i[s]tent way to [c]al[c]u[l]ate the [d]eg[r]ee of al[t]e[r][a]tion [t]o a men[t]al [s]t[a]te a[c][r]o[s]s [p]eo[p]le of [d]i[f]fe[r]ent walk[s] of [l]i[f]e, [p]e[r]iod. Bar[r]ett [m]ight not ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e the [s]ame [m]ental sh[i][f]t

afflter the [c]on[s]um[p]tion of a [f][r]esh [s]t[i][c]k of [c]e[l]e[r]y that [C][l]oud would, [e]ven i[f] the [c]e[l]e[r][y] it[s]el[f] [r]emained en[t]irel[y] [s][t]atic. [W][a]l[k]ing a[c]ro[s]s the [W][a]shington [S]treet [b]ridge, [C]loud [d]ran[k] [f]rom a [t]iny [w]ater [b]ottle [f][i]lled w[i]th [M]ez[c]al and [d]i[d]n't [f]eel in[t]oxi[c][a]ted i[n] a[n]y w[ay], sh[a][p]e, or [f]orm - any [m]ore than [h]ad [h]e been [d]rin[k]ing [a] [c]u[p] [o]f [c]of[f]ee, or [ea]ting a [d]el[i]c[i]ous [s]n[a]ck, or re[c][ei]ving a [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] thought. [I]n h[i]s m[i]nd at the t[i]me there was no [t]rue [d][i]v[i]sion [b]e[t]ween in[t]oxi[c]ation and so[b][r]iety, and this was [C][l]oud's final [c]on[c][l]usion [r]egard[l][e]ss of wh[e]ther or not Bar[r]ett ag[r]e[e]d -[a]s he [s]omewhat [a]nxious[l][y] [s]ent [T]if[a] [a] [t]ext m[e][s]sage [l][e]tting her know he was "[t]a[k]ing a wal[k]," just in [c]a[s]e she [a]rrived at his [a]partment be[f]ore he [f][i]n[i]shed [s][l]ugging down one [l]a[s]t [b]eer [a]t the [b]ar th[a]t he [w]as [w]alking to.

Canto III

Total Echoes: 1,403 Total Syllables: 1,994

Approximate Self-Similarity: .704

"[W]ell, no," [w]ere the two [w]ords C[l]oud began [w]ith as he ex[p][l]ained [th]at his [p]oint was [th]at [th]ere was a [s][i]gn[i]f[i][c]ant d[i][s]t[i]n[c]tion be[t]w[ee]n the [t]wo, m[ea]ning [d][i]nner and [d]r[i]nks! - that if you [m]a[k]e it out [l]i[k]e it's just [d]rin[k][s] and then [l]a[s]t [m]i[n]ute it [b]e[c]omes [d]i[n]ner? - then yeah [C][l]oud's gonna [b]e a [l]ittle [f]u[c]king [p]i[s]sed o[f]f! E[s][p]eciall[y] i[f] h[e] [d]i[d]n't k[n][o]w the [f]u[c]king [p]eo[p]le, you k[n][o]w [A]e[r]ith? How did that ma[k]e [a]ny [s]en[s]e? He [f]ound it [a] [b]it [a][b][s]urd, [f][r]an[k]ly. Sure, he'd go

[t][i]e one or [t]wo on with a [t]otal [s]tr[a]nger, that was ffilne, but to [s]it [d]own [a]nd [a][c]tually e[n]g[a]ge in a [d][i]nner? - that was a[n] e[n]tirely [d][i][s]t[i]n[c]t [l]evel of [s]ocia[l]izing, and it [w]as [o]ne that, [f]ran[k][l][y], [C][l]oud [d]i[d]n't parti[c]u[l]ar[l][v] [c]are [f]or. [A]nd he wasn't ashamed to [a]dm[i]t [i]t! - th[a]t, [f]r[a]n[k][l]y, he [f]elt th[i][s] [Ph][i][l][i][s]tine n[o]tio[n] of ju[s]t g[o]i[n]g out to [d]inner with an[y] and ever[y] a[c]quaintan[c]e, that [i]f you [d]i[d]n't a[c]quie[s]ce to [th]at [s]tan[d]ard [th]en you [w]ould b[e] [d]e[e]med, [w]hat? - ant[i]-s[o]cial? [W]ell [c]o[l]or [C][l]oud ant[i]-s[o]cial then! [B]ut Aerith n[o]ted that while, sure, to [b]e [f]air, it was a di[f]ferent [l]evel of s[o]cia[l]ization, if he tru[l][y] [d]i[d]n't k[n][o]w the k[n][o]w, if [p]eo[p]le, but, you it was he[r] [p]e[r][s]onal[l][y]? [S]u[p]posing it was Aerith, then she'd h[o][p]e that it woul[d]n't [b]e that [b]ig of a [d]eal [t]o [C]I[ou]d? [T]o just go [ou]t to [d][i]nner? Was she k[i][d]ding him?! Oh, of [c]ourse not, Ae[r]ith! With her? You fu[c]king [k]id[d]ing? [C]loud [w]as al[w]ays [d]own to g[r]ab a [n]osh with s[o]me[o]ne li[k]e her, [n][o], it was just [th]at [th]e hypo[th]eti[c]al [n][o]tion of [ea]ting [s]u[p]per with a [c]om[p][l][e]te [s]tranger ("a mo[r]e o[r] [l]e[s]s [c]om[p][l]ete [s]tranger") - [w]hat [w]ere they di[s][c]u[s]sing? [C]loud and the hy[p]otheti[c]al stranger? [D]id [h]e [h]ave to [c]ome [p]re[p]ared with a [p]ortf[o][l]i[o] of tal[k]ing [p]oints? - [C][l]oud [c]oul[d]n't [i]magine [th]at [th]ey'd b[e] [s]u[p]er [i]ntr[i]gued with an[y]thing [h]e [h]ad to [s]ay, or [th]at [th]ey'd [e]nd u[p] on the [p]r[e][c]i[p]i[c]e of [a]ny r[e]v[e]lation that he'd [c]on[c][l]ude to b[e] [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l][y] en[l]ighten[i]ng [e]ither. [C][I]oud was [s]im[p][I]y going by [e]m[p]i[r]i[c]al [e]viden[c]e [r]ea[l]ly. That [w]as all. He [w]asn't, [l][i][k]e, tr[v]ing to be a dick or [a]nything! Ju[s]t that, [e]m[p]iri[c]a[l]l[y] [s][p][e]a[k]ing, it [s][e]emed un[l]i[k]e[l][y] they'd have [a] lot to [c]onver[s]e [a][b]out,

[C]loud and [th]i[s] hy[p]o[th]eti[c]al [s]tranger. [B]ut [A]erith [a]dded that, to [b]e fair, [w]asn't [C]loud the [o]ne who [w]as al[w][ay]s r[ai]ling again[s]t [s]o-[c]alled [s]en[s]ory data? Yet, in thi[s] [c][a][s]e, he was [a]II [b]ent [ou]t of sh[a][p]e [a][b][ou]t this im[p]rom[p]tu [d]inner [b]e[c]ause. in his own words. [b]e[c]ause [e]m[p]i[r]i[c]al [d]ata? Of [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]e, [p]a[s]t [w]hich [w]as [s]en[s]o[r]y [d]ata? [M]e[m]o[r]ies, [r]ight? [W]hich, [w]ouldn't [C]loud ag[r]ee, was [s]ome of the mo[s]t un[r]eli[a][b]le [d][a]ta [a]v[ai]la[b]le no? Of [c]our[s]e he [d]id! Aer[i]th, ev[e]n [f]u[ck]ing [q]uantum [s]till [ph][v]s[i][c]s was [f]un[d]amentally [s]en[s]e-[f]orward, in the [s]en[s]e [th]at [th]ey were beg[i]nn[i]ng w[i]th [s]en[s]e [p]er[c]e[p]tion - this [w]as [w]hat [c]ontem[p]o[r]a[r]y [s]o-[c]alled [s]cien[c]e had [a]chieved [o]f [c]our[s]e! [P]la[c]ing [s]en[s]e [p]er[c]e[p]tion [a]s [a]n a[p]ex [p]re[d]ator un[t]il [f]inally, with the [d]i[s][c]ove[r]y of [q]uan[t]um [ph][y]s[i][c]s, [i]t'd [r]e[d]u[c]ed the obse[r]vable wo[r]ld to a [d]egr[e]e that [e]ven [l]inear [s]en[s]e-[p]er[c]e[p]tion no [l]onger [m]ade any fu[ck]ing [s]en[s]e in the u[p]per [w]orlds! [Th]at [w]as [w]hat [th]ey'd done. [A]nd [q]uite [s][m]ugly [a]t [t]imes [t]]oo! But [w]asn't that [w]hat [C]loud [w]as [d]oing w[i]th th[i]s im[p]en[d][i]ng [d][i]nner? Ae[r]ith [q]ue[r]ied him on thi[s] [p]oint. Well, [C]loud [s]u[p]posed [th]at, [th]in[k]ing [a]bout it [a]gain, yeah, he was [k]ind of a[c]ting li[k]e a [q]uantum [ph][y]s[i]c[i]st a b[i]t, [w]asn't he? [W]ell, Aerith [w]as just saying - to [th]e [e]xtent [th]at his argu[m]ent was [f]unda[m][e]ntally [e]mpirical. But it was [k]ind of [i]n[t]uitive [i]n a [s]en[s]e [t]oo, his argument, i[n] [C]loud's opi[n]ion. H[e] agr[e]ed with A[e]rith to the [e]xtent that, ye[s], he was [b]a[s]ing his [d]i[s]gu[s]t [p]artially on [e]m[p]irical [e]vi[d]en[c]e, [b]ut he'd [a]|[s]o [a]||[e]ge that he f[e]|t a[n] i[n][t]uitive [d]i[s]gu[s]t with these [t]y[p]es of [s]ocial g[a]therings

[a]s well, and then [h]e, [t]o [h]er [p]oint, [t]o [b]e [b][l]unt, [d][i]d [t]end [t]o [d][i]p i[n][t]o the world of em[p]iri[c]ism to va[l]i[d]ate [s]aid i[n][t]uitive [d]i[s]gu[s]t. Although, [t]e[c]hni[c]al[l][y], they should [p]ro[b]a[bl][y] [b][e] a [c]autious to ev[e]n [e]m[p][l]oy the word [l]ittle [e]m[p]iri[c]ism here, be[c]ause he [d][i][d]n't th[i]n[k] [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]il[y] [n][e]eded to em[p]iri[c]ism [r]e[s]t[r]i[c]ted to [s]en[s]e-[p]er[c]e[p]tion [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]il[y], you k[n]ow? Ae[r]ith [s]u[p]posed the[r]e, ye[s], was [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [a]n [e]m[p]i[r]i[c]ism of the intel[l]igi[b]le [r][e]alm as w[e]ll? Hone[s]t[l][y], to C[l]oud - it was [c]ertain[l][y] [p]o[s]si[b]le that h[e] may[b][e] wasn't [e]ven in the [b]e[s]t mind [s]tate to even [a][s]se[s]s it [o]ne [w]ay or [a]nother. [A]erith too[k] [a]dvantage of this [c]apitu[l][a]tion to [s]ay sh[e]'d [r][e][c]ent[l][y] had [a] d[r][e]am [a]b[ou]t [C]l[ou]d would [h]e mind [h]earing [h]er out? - [w]here he [w]as emailing her a [q]ues[ti]on [a]bout whether [a] [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] a[c][t]ion was [d]e[f]ined as 'in[s]i[d]er tra[d]in[q]', while she was [p]roce[s]sin[q] [s]ome non-[d]e[s][c]ri[p]t 'or[d]ers' for [s]omething in a bath t[u]b, which [c]on[s]i[s]ted [o]f, for [s]ome [r]eason, w[a]shing [l]arge ch[o][c]o[l]ate [c]oo[k]ies [d]own the [w]atching [th]em as [th]ey [s][l]ow[l]y [d][r]ain, [d][i]s[i]nteg[r]ated un[d]er the hot [w]ater. Then, after [th]at, [r]ea[l]izing [th]at [th]e [c]oo[k]ies [r]e[l][a]ted to [C][l]oud's [q]ue[s]tion about in[s]i[d]er [t][r][a]ding, she [c]on[t]emp[l][a]ted if [sh]e [sh]ould have [f][l]ushed them all [d]own the [d][r][ai]n be[f]ore an[s]we[r]ing the [q]ue[s]tion? [D]id she [d]o w[r]ong [b]y [C]loud [b]y washing these [c]oo[k]ies [p][r]eemptive[l][y] [d]own the [d][r]ain? If [C][l]oud [t][r]u[l][y] wan[t]ed the 'order [p][r]o[c]e[ss]ed,' [s]o to [s][p]ea[k]. In a [s][e]n[s]e Aerith [f][e]lt an a[f]f[i]n[i]t[y] [f]or the [c]oo[k][ie]s, [d]i[d]n't sh[e], [C]loud in[f]erred. [C][l]oud [p]ostu[l]ated [th]at she [f]elt

[l]i[k]e [th]ey were [a][c]tual [b]eings [a]s [c][r]um[b]led [th]em [d]own [th]e un[f]org[i]v[i]ng [d][r]ain [w]ith the [s][c]orching hot [w]ater? In [r]et[r]o[s]pe[c]t, [A]e[r]ith [a]d[m]itted [th]at [th]at [m][ay] have been the [c][a][s]e. [C][l]oud [n][o]ted [th]at [th]ere was a [c]ertain of q[n][o][s]is ach[ie]ved [c]ontem[p][l]ating your dr[ea]ms - yet was there any to [b][e] g[l][ea]ned from [p]artici[p][a]ting in [d]ou[b]le [d][a]te [d]inners? [A]erith [a]dmitted she'd [c][l]inging onto the fa[c]t of the [c]oo[k]ies [b]eing washed [d]own the [d]rain, and she knew [C][l]oud had a [t]a[l]ent when [p]ar[t]icu[l]ar ſi]t [c]ame [i]n[t]er[p][r]eting [d][r]eams. W[e]II th[e]n [I][e]t's [s][e]e here, [C][I]oud [c]on[t]em[p][I]ated, the [d]i[s]so[I]ution of a [s]w[e]et [f]ood in an [a][p]par[a]tu[s] [u]sual[l]y [u]sed t[o] [c][l]ean your[s]el[f]? [B][u]t with a [t]rans[a][c]tional, a[b][u]tting [c][a][p]ita[l]i[s]t un[d]er[t]one. [A]nd [A]erith was [d]oing it, [p]erh[a][p]s unint[e]ntional[l]y, their [s]omeone [e]lse ([C][l][ou]d), with[ou]t k[n]ow[l]edge. and [n]ot on[l]y [w]ith[ou]t their k[n]ow[l]edge but [w]hile [i]g[n]oring their [i]n[q]uir[y] a[c]tual[l][y], [C]loud guessed it [w]as h[i]s [i]n[q]uir[y] te[c]h[n]i[c]all[y], about [w]hether it [w]as [l]egal, as a[p]parent[l][y] this was [s]omehow [p]otential[l][y] 'in[s]ider trading'? So sh[e] was [r][e][p]ur[p]o[s]ing [a]n [a][p]pa[r][a]tus for [c][l]eansing the boldly to [d]e[s]troy [l]arge, [l]ife-[l]i[k]e [p]ie[c]es [o]f [u]nhealthy [f]ood [f]or [C]|[ou]d, [w]ith[ou]t his [c]on[s]ent, [C][l]oud mean[w]hile [w]on[d]ering i[f] [d]e[s]troying thi[s] jun[k] [f]ood in a b[a]th tub was [a][c]tua[l]|[y] i[l]|[e]gal? Of [c]our[s]e in any [d]ream they al[s]o should [c]on[s]i[d]er [w]hether [w][a]s [r]e[p][r]esented [w]as [w]h[a]t [a] [r]e[p][r]esen[t]ation [o]f [a]nother [r]e[p][r]esen[t]ation, [m]ea[n]ing [m]ayb[e] [n]ot [a]n [a][n]a[l]og[y] [a]t all? But i[f] they [p][r]o[c][e]e[d]ed as i[f] [w]hat [w]as

[r]e[p][r]esented in Ae[r]ith's [d][r][e]am a[p]p[e]ared as [i]t was [i]n[t]en[d]ed [t]o a[p]pear, [th]en [th]at would b[e] a [d][e][c]ent [s]tart. [S]o, in a [s]en[s]e, Aerith [th]ought, [th]at sh[e] was [c][l][e]aning [p]arti[c]u[l]ar attributes of [C][I][ou]d with[o]ut his [p]erm[i]ss[i]on, [w]hile [C][I]oud [w]as th[i]n[k][i]ng - [p]erha[p]s [s]u[s][p]e[c]ting - that [c][l]eansing him[s]elf [i]n th[i]s w[ay] m[ay] h[a]ve [a][c]tual[l]y been a [t]y[p]e of insider [t]rading, it [c]ould have been a ve[r][y] [s]er[i]ou[s] [c][r]ime. [C]loud [n][o]ted that - Ae[r]ith, [c][l]eaning your[s]elf was b[a][s]i[c]a[l]ly [a] [c][r]ime [a]gain[s]t [th]e [s]t[a]te [th]ese [N][o] [s]urprise [th]ere! Al[th]ough [C]loud [l][i][k]ed a [n][i]ce [c]oo[k]ie [e]very [n]ow and th[e]n, he [d]i[d]n't [n]e[c]e[s]sarily [f]ind a[n]ything th[a]t [b][a]d a[b]out [ea]ting a [f]ew [c]oo[k]ies on o[c]casion, but [C]loud also [f]ound it intr[i]guing that Aerith [p]ersonally [i]denti[f][i]ed with [th]e [c]oo[k]ies as [th]ey [b][r]o[k]e a[p]art and tum[b]led [d]own the [d][r]ain, that she [s]aw a [c]ertain goodnes[s], a [s]pe[c]i[f]i[c] [b]eing w[i]th[i]n them, and [s]u[b][s]e[q]uently [f]elt a [s][a]dne[s]s [a]t the [f][a]ct they h[a]d to [b]e washed [d]own the [d]rain of this [b][a]th tub. Even what's fundamental[l][y] [b]ad for you isn't [n]e[c]e[s]sari[l][y] [b]ad, Aerith [n]oted. [B]ut ye[s], it was [s]ad to [s]ee them [f][a]ll [a]part in [a] [b]ath t[u]b [f][au][c]et, h[u]h? "[E]ven the [r]unning shoes you n[ee]d to [t]o[s]s in[t]o the [t][r]ash are e[t]ernal," Cloud [s]aid.

Canto IV

Total Echoes: 1,332 Total Syllables: 1,960

Approximate Self-Similarity: .680

Cloud was [f]or sure [f][i]ne [w]ith [w]h[a]tever Ti[f]a [w][a]nted to [s][a]y to him ("I al[w][a]ys [w][a]nt you to

[s]peak your m[i]nd!"), [b]ut he just [w][a]sn't going to [b]ack off his [w]ell-[d]eveloped (in his m[i]nd) [i][d]ea [th]at [th]e [i]n[s][t]itution [i]t[s]elf (as a [c]on[c]ept) was ba[s]i[c]ally [r]e[s]t[r][i][c]t[i]ve, [th]at [th]ey shouldn't ne[c]e[s]s[ar]ily [c][ar]e what's th[e][r]e in the [c]ontainer ("[C]atego[r][y] theo[r][y]!"), but al[s][o] that e[r][o][s] [w]as a g[a]te[w][a]y. Ti[f]a ju[s]t wasn't [c]ertain th[a]t e[n]gaging i[n] [th][a]t in the bar, [a][f]ter hours - she [d]i[d]n't kn[o]w, was th[a]t [a][c]tual[l]y ap[p][r][o][p][r]iate, [C][l]oud? [E]v[e]n [i]f sh[e] wan[t]ed [t]o [d]o [i]t! [l]n the [b]ar?! Of [c]our[s]e, [C][l]oud total[l]y un[d]er[s]tood, [b]ut, again - ju[s]t to [r]eite[r][a]te - e[r]os was a g[a]tew[a]y. [l]t [d][i][d]n't have to [b]e a[b]out, you know, purely that. [W]hat? - [w]as [T]i[f]a [n]ow gon[n][a] [a][l]low her[s]el[f] to [b][e] [t]y[r]an[n]ical[l][y] [r]e[s]t[r]ained [b]y the [i]n[s]t[i]tutio[n]al [n]orms of Shin[r]a, et al? [W]as that [n][ow] h[ow] she [w]as go[n]na [l]ive her [l]ife? - by the [c]ontem[p]uous [r]ules of [Sh]in[r]a? [Sh]e [c]ould [p]op that [p]ussy [w]ide o[p]en [w]henever she [w]an[t]ed [t]o! - if sh[e] r[e]all[y] ev[e]n [i]f [i]t was ju[s]t [s]u[p]er [w]an[t]ed [t]o, [q]u[i][c]k[l][y]! ([W]hat exa[c]t[l][y] [w]as tem[p]e[r]ature in the [r]oom?) There wasn't an[y]th[i]ng [i]nhe[r]entl[y] [o]ut [o]f [b][ou]nds [a][b][ou]t an[y] of that, [a]ssuming the [c]orr[e][c]t [c]ont[e]xt, [b]e[c]ause - [w]ell, no, [C]loud [w]asn't [s]aying he [w]as in [s]u[pp]ort of [i]nd[i][s][c]r[i]m[i]nate [p]rom[i][s][c]uit[y] - [n]o, [n]ot at all! It [n][ee]ded to b[e] [r][i]go[r]ou[s] - [p]erhaps [e]ven [r][i]tual[i][s]t[i]c, and h[e] wasn't [e]ven [s]ugge[s]ting [T][i]fa should [0][s][q]i [f]a[c]t[o] [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [p]o[p] that [p]u[s]sy [o][p]en to [s][p]ite the m[o][r]al n[o][r]ms of Shinra - it was a[c]tually the o[p]posite! No, [C]loud was [s]im[p]ly a[s]serting [sh]e [sh]ouldn't not ma[k]e [b]eautiful [l]ove in [S][e]v[e]nth H[ea]v[e]n [s]im[p][l]y [b]e[c]ause of [s]ome [s]o[c]ietal

Shinra [c]ode - [sh]e [sh]ouldn't al[l]ow her[s]el[f], Ti[f]a, to [b][e] [r]egu[l]ated [b]y a[n] i[n][s]titutional e[n]tity whose [p][r]i[m]a[r]y [p]ur[p]o[s]e the was em[p][l]oy[m]ent of the univer[s]al [r]e[s]t[r]i[c]tion. To [C][l]oud it [w]asn't in any [w][ay], sh[a][p]e, or [f]o[r]m Shi[n]ra's [p]la[c]e to e[n][f]o[r][c]e a[n]y u[n]iver[s]al [r]e[s]t[r]i[c]tions what[s]oever. [F]u[c]k [s][p]e[c][i][f][i][c]ally and [f]u[c]k the [i]n[s]t[i]tution in a more generi[c] [s]en[s]e. [U]gh, sh[u]t [u]p [C]loud! He [w]as [k]idding, [w]asn't he? Oh yeah! - [C]loud ad[m][i]tted [i]t was [c]ertain[l]y [p]o[s]sible he was [e]xaggerating [c]ertain [e][l]e[m]ents of his argu[m]e[n]t i[n]te[n]tiona[l]ly, i[n] terms of the [w]h[o]le - [w]ell, you k[n][o]w - [n][o], he [w]asn't [s]ugge[s][t]ing [T]ifa should "[p]o[p] that [p]u[s]sy" in the [b]ar! No, that [w]as a[b][s]urd! Unle[s]s she [w]an[t]ed [t]o! [B]e[c]ause if she wan[t]ed [t]o [T]i[f]a should know that [C]loud [t]oo[k] no o[ff]en[s]e, li[k]e, at all! [Th]ey both [l][au][gh]ed [a]t them[s]elves, but [d]i[d]n't he, [C][l]oud, [a]bstr[a][c]t [k]ind of h[a]ve a [p]oint? No, ju[s]t [l]i[s]ten for a [s]e[c]ond, [C][l]oud [s]aid, [p]l[ea]se T[i][f]a - h[e] knew she [f]elt [a]n [a]nxiety, [f]rom [t][i]me [t]o [t][i]me, a[c]cording to [C][l]oud it was a[c]tua[l]l[v] en[t]ire[l][y] po[s]sible [th]at it was [th]e anxiet[y] of the younger [S]o[c]rat[e]s. Namel[y], it was [th]is anx[i]et[y] [th]at T[i][f]a, sh[e] [f]elt [l][i]ke she m[i]ght have [f]a[l][e[n] i[n]to a pit of "b[o]ttomle[s]s n[o]n[s]en[s]e" - this [i]dea [th]at [th]ere [c]ould be an a[c]tual [c]on[c]eptual [i]dea beh[i]nd all phe[n]ome[n]a th[a]t h[a]d o[c]cu[r]red, th[a]t e[v]e[r]y [a][c]tion she too[k] had some [c]apital-[l] [l]de[a] [b]eh[i]nd or [a][b]ove it, that eve[r][y] [s]ingle [s]en[s]o[r][y] [p]er[c]e[p]tion, eve[r][y] [s]ingle [m]o[m]ent [o]f their |[i]ves [e][m]erged fr[o]m [s][o]me [b]eh[i]nd [c]on[c]eptual [l]dea it, that [i]deas them[s]elves [b]e[c]ame [s]u[b]-a[t]omi[c] [p]arti[c]les which [b]ecome mul[t]i[p]l[i]ed i[n]to a[n] i[n]f[i][n][i]te ("[s]eeming!") [n]on[s]en[s]e. It was [a]n [e]xt[r]eme vertigo to [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]e that with[ou]t a d[ou]bt! - and [C]|[ou]d was all [t]oo [f]amiliar with that [t]y[p]e of him[s]el[f]! In [f]a[c]t, his [e]ntire [m]adnes[s] [e]x[p][e]rien[c]e in the [e]ther, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k, was funda[m]entall[y] in ag[r][ee][m]ent w[i]th th[i]s anxiet[y] of young [S]o[c][r]at[e]s. B[u]t wh[a]t [C]loud would [s]ay in [r]e[s]ponse, [t]o [T]i[f]a, [t]o him[s]el[f], to [S]o[c][r]ates - [w]hat [C]loud [w]ould [s]ay in [r]e[p]ly is exactly what [P]armen[i]d[e]s [s]aid to this young [S]o[c][r]at[e]s him[s]elf, [th]at [th]i[s] anxiet[y] was a[n] a[n]xiet[y] of youth ("[C][I]oud, we're b[a][s]i[c]a[I]I[y] the exa[c]t [s][a]me [a]ge . . ."), [o]ne that [w]ould be ext[i]ngu[i]shed [w]hen sh[e]'d "learned not to despise any of [th][e]se [th]ings." In [sh][or]t, Ti[f]a [sh]ouldn't a[l]low [Sh]in[r]a [m][or]es - or, [f][r]an[k][l]y, i[n][s]titutional [m]ores [f]rom anywhere el[s]e for th[a]t [m][a]tter! - to i[n]ter[f]ere with her own p[r]o[c]e[ss]es. That [w]as all [C][l]oud [w]as [s]aying [r][e]al[l][y]. I[f] [T][i][f]a [w]an[t]ed [t][o] d[o] th[a]t [a]t [S][e]v[e]nth H[e]av[e]n, [th][e]n, sure, [th]at [w]as [fline! [W]ell, T[i][fl[a] [a][p]pr[e]ciated the [k]ind [w]ords, [e]ven [i][f] [i]t was an [a]w[k]ward subject for [C]loud of all [p][e]o[p]le to [b][e] [b]roaching, given the [f][a][c]t th[a]t it was [k]ind of [b][l]atant[l]y obvious [th]at it was [C][l]oud [th]at T[i]fa would [p]ro[b]a[b][l][y] do that with in the [b]ar. [W]hy [w]ould they [k]id [o]ne [a]nother [a][b]out that! [B]ut for [C]loud's [p]art - no he [d]i[d]n't [c]are [o]ne [w]ay or the other - he ju[s]t [th]ought [th]at [w]hen [s]ome[o]ne [s][p]ent a [d]e[c]ent [ch]unk of time in [th][e] [e][th]er [th]at it [ch]anged [th]eir [p]er[s][p]e[c]tive on that [k]ind of shit - what [c]on[c][l]usion, after [a]ll, should they d[r][aw] f[r]om the [c]ontem[p][l]ation of [s]en[s]i[b]le o[b]je[c]ts? If she [w]an[t]ed [t]o [b]end [o]ver in her [o]wn [b]ar, it [w]asn't [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al[l]y [ou]t of [b][ou]nds

to him in the [I]ea[s]t. [L]i[k]e he [s]aid, to [s]ome [e]xtent [e]ros [w]as a g[a]te[w][a]y - they shouldn't view it [s]im[p][l][y] organi[c]al[l][y] or [p]ure[l][y] [s]en[s]i[b][l][y] [e]ven [i]f [i]t was to some [e][x]tent [e][x]istent in[e][x]t[r]ica[b][l][y] w[i]th[i]n those [r]ealms, at [l]ea[s]t their [p]er[s][p][e]ctives in their [b]odies [w]hat[e]ver. A g[a]te[w][a]y to [w]hat though, [T]i[f]a [w]on[d]ered. [T]o a [d]i[f]ferent [t]ype of knowledge [C]loud [c]on[f]irmed. Wasn't he agai[n][s]t [s]e[n]sual empi[r]i[c]ism, Ti[f]a [q]ue[r]ied - [b]ut [C][l]oud [q]ui[c]k[l]y [c]ountered that it was [b][y] am[p]lif[y]ing [s]en[s]o[r]v ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e, by [s][p]eeding it u[p] [th]at [th]e [s]en[s]o[r]y ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e it[s]el[f] t[r]an[s]cended - that was the whole [g][a]tew[a]y [p]art. A[g]ain, [C][l]oud wasn't arguing for any of th[i]s [i]nd[i]s[c]r[i]m[i]nate[l]y! - he was in[s]tead m[a][k]ing the [c][a][s]e [th]at [th]ese ampl[i]f[i][c]ations [c]ouldn't b[e] [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] [c]ut o[f]f! - [th]at i[f] "o[th]er [b][i]tter and [b][i]lious humors wan[d]er a[b]out in the [b]o[d]y and find no [e]xit or esca[p]e, [b]ut are [p]ent u[p] w[i]th[i]n and [m]ingle their own va[p]ors with the [m][o]tions of the [s][ou]|, and are [b]len[d]ed with [th]em, [th]ey [p]ro[d]uce all [s]orts of [d]iseases." That ju[s]t li[k]e [p]arti[c]les of matter [c]ould s[p]ed u[p] to [c][r]e[a]te be anti-[g][r]avit[a]tional w[a]ves, the [s]en[s]o[r]y or[g]ans [c]ould [b]e [s]imi[l]ar[l]v [s][p]ed in order [t]o [t][r]an[s]cend them[s]elves, [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]l[y]. [C][l]oud made a d[e][c]ent [p]oint, [b]ut [h]ad [h]e [h]eard [b]a[c]k from [B]iggs and [W]edge - [w]ere they g[o]ing to ma[k]e it to [th]e little [th]ing Tifa was h[o][s]ting that [S]unday? She ju[s]t [n]eeded to, you k[n]ow, g[e]t a d[e][f]inite h[e]ad [c]ount so she [c]ould k[n]ow how much [f]ood sh[e]'d [n][e]ed. [C]loud [h]adn't [h]eard ba[c]k, and [f][r]an[k]l[y] h[e] was [f]inding it a l[i]ttle [r][i]d[i][c]u[l]ou[s] [a]t th[a]t point - be[c]ause at the ver[y] [1][ea][s]t, to

[C][I]oud, they [c]ould at [I]ea[s]t R[S][V][P] one way or [th]e o[th]er. Sure, of [c]our[s]e, eros was a g[a]tew[a]y there [c]ouldn't be a totally univer[s]al [r]e[s]tri[c]tion op[p]r[e]s[s]ing [e]very [s]ingle mem[b]er of a [s]o[c]iety, [b]ut at the [s]ame time if a [p]er[s]on [c]ouldn't RS[V][P] to [a]n [e]vent they ba[s]i[c]all[y] should [s]tart [ea]ting mud out of t[r]oughs with [p]igs, in C[l]oud's view at [I][ea]st! [P][eo][p]le who [r]efused to RS[V][P] [t]o events in a [t]imely [m]anner [r]eally had no [p][l]a[c]e in [p]o[l]ite [s]o[c]iety! - or, for th[a]t [m][a]tter, in any [s]o[c]iety! That was [C][l]oud's [p]er[s][p]e[c]tive at [l][ea][s]t! And T[i][f]a ag[r][ee]d! [F][r]an[k][l][y], sh[e] was getting a [l]ittle [f][r]u[s]t[r]ated with the whole [p][r]o[c]e[s]s. She was, in her m[i]nd, doing a n[i][c]e [th]ing - [th]rowing an Avalanche [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [S][u]nday [F][u]nd[a]y, but sh[e] ju[s]t [n][e]eded to k[n]ow a head [c]ount [A][S][A][P]. It [w]as alrea[d]y [W]ednes[d]ay [n]ight! [C][l]oud [n]oted [th]at [th]ey'd sent out the invi[t]ations, [l]i[k]e, [t]wo weeks [b][a][c]k, and they [h][a]dn't even [h]eard [b][a][c]k from [h][a]lf of the po[t]ential a[tt]end[e]es, which [a][c]tuall[y] [m]oved [C]loud to [th]ink [th]at [m]ayb[e] T[i]fa should ju[s]t [c][a]n[c]el the whole d[a]mn thing! [B]ut, no, [T]ifa was right - it was [t]oo [l]ate to [c][a]n[c]el, [b]e[c]ause then she'd [l]oo[k] [l]i[k]e the [a][s]shole. [C][l]oud [th]ought [th]at [m]ay[b]e that was [p][r]efe[r]a[b]le! [M]av[b]e that's what [n]ee[d]ed to ha[pp]en! There [n][e]e[d]ed to [b][e] some [r]ules to this shit, [r]ight?

Canto V

Total Echoes: 1,768 Total Syllables: 2,478

Approximate Self-Similarity: .713

[C][I]oud [a][s][k]ed [B][a][r]rett [p]oint [b][I][a]n[k] [r]ight in [S][e]v[e]nth H[ea]v[e]n: [W]hat [w]as [c][a][p]ita[l]ism [b]e[c]ause that's [r]ea[l]ly? -[w]hat he [a][c]tual[l][y] [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al[l][y] o[p]p[o]sed [v]is-a-[v]is Shinra, [n][o]? The [m]a[s]s [p]rodu[c]tion of [m]a[k][o] e[n]ergy - was that [n]ot [f]unda[m]ental[l]y ju[s]t [f]ree [m]ar[k]et [c]a[p]ita[l][i]sm at [i]ts [f]ine[s]t? and there[f]ore wasn't [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [f]unda[m]ental[l][y] a [s]ingu[l]a[r]it[y] of [s]orts, ju[s]t a [c]om[p][l]ete evi[s]ce[r]ation of [m]e[m]o[r][y], to [th]e ex[t]ent [th]at [m]e[m]o[r]y is [th]e [c]on[t]ext in [w]hich [w]e [c]on[s]tru[c]t our[s]elves, our [s]o[c]ieties? [C][l]oud a[s]serted th[a]t [c][a][p]ita[l][i]sm [d][i][d]n't g[i]ve a fu[c]k about th[a]t [a]t all! - sim[p][l]y [b]e[c]ause [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [c]oul[d]n't. [b]e[c]ause if [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [d]i[d]n't [r]uth[l]e[s]s[l]y [p]ur[s]ue [m]axi[m]um [p][r]ofits, then [s]ome[o]ne el[s]e [w]ould. [C][l]oud eventua[l]l[y] [a][s]ked B[a]r[r]]ett if [c][a][p]ita[l]ism [a][c]tual[l][y] [c]on[s]i[s]ted of [m]e[m]o[r][y] [a]t all? [B]ut [B]ar[r]ett [d]i[d]n't [f]u[c]king know. The [f]u[c]k [d]id h[e] [e]ven [c]are - he was a[tt]empting [t]o ma[k]e an a[c]tive [d]ifference [i]n th[i]ngs. No, [i]t [d][[i][d]n't at all, [d][i]d [i]t? [C]a[p]ita[l]ism was the [s]ingu[l]ar fo[c]u[s] [s]ans [m]e[m]ory [p]ar ex[c]e[l]len[c]e - it [s]ought a[n] i[n][c]rea[s]e at whatever the [c]o[s]t, [r]egardl[e][s]s of the [c]ont[e]xt - d[r]iven by [th]e hy[p]o[th]eti[c]al o[th]er, [th]e hy[p]o[th]eti[c]al o[th]er [m]oving [c]a[p]ita[l]ism to [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] ignore [m]e[m]or[y] ho[l]isti[c]a[l]l[y]. The on[l]y [c]ontext [i]n wh[i]ch [c]a[p]ita[l]ism would [e]ven [r]e[m]otel[y] [c]onsider [m]e[m]o[r]y was [i]n [i]ts

[f]uture [f]ore[c]asts, but even those ty[p]es of [r]e[p]orts were [f]unda[m]entally [m]yo[p][i][c] [i]n [c]ha[r]a[c]ter, weren't they? [P]lu[s] "[p]a[s]t [p]er[f]or[m]an[c]e [i]sn't [i]nd[i][c]ative of [f]uture results!" And even a [f]ive year [f]ore[c]ast would [b][a][s]i[c]ally ju[s]t [c]over the [a]ttention [s]pa[n] of [a] [b][e]ta [f]ish in [th]e gra[n]d [s]cheme of [th]ings. No, [C][l]oud [s]aid, [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [c][l]ear[l]y o[p]erated [s][a]ns [m]e[m]o[r][y], [a]s a [s]ingu[l]arit[y] - and there[f]ore was [f]undamental[l]y an [a]gent of de[s]t[a]bi[l]ization [f]rom a [p]o[l]iti[c]al [s]tand[p]oint - h[e] was ag[r][e]eing with [B]a[r]rett! wasn't [s][e]e[k]ing agr[e]ement whe[n] [B]a[r]rett [C][l]oud the[n] a[s]ked if there wasn't al[s]o [s]omethin[g] a[b]uttin[g] divine to that [t]y[p]e of [s]ingu[l]arity - [t]o [C][l]oud it was al[m][o][s]t [l]i[k]e the r[a]di[a]tion [p]oisoning of [p]ure [m]a[k]o it[s]elf and shit, [n][o]? [C]a[p]ita[l]ism as a [s]ingu[l]a[r]ity [c]ontained a [d]ivine e[l]ement, [i]n [i]ts [r]a[d]i[c]al [r]e[j]ection of [m]e[m]o[r][y] [c]apita[l]ism was [c]ertainl[y] [d]ivine-adja[c]ent. It was [l]i[k]e [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [a]s [a]n un[f]][e]ttered [s][e]eking of in[c]r[e]a[s]e of [e]x[p]ansion [w]as [i]n [i]t[s]el[f] [s]omething [w]orthy of [p][r]aise in the [a]b[s]t[r][a][c]t, an [a][c]tual [s]en[s]ible [s]o[c]iety the em[p][l]oy[m]ent of unre[p]entant [c]a[p]ita[l]ism was the [m]o[s]t [d]e[s]tabi[l]izing and [s]elf-[d]e[s]tru[c]tive [p]o[l]iti[c]al [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]y you [c]ould ever [s]ub[s][c]ribe to! [C]a[p]ita[l]ism was m[a]gni[f]i[c]e[n]t the [a]bstr[a][c]t, [b]ut i[f] you [a][c]tually [s]u[b][s][c]ribed to [th]e [th]eo[r]y in [p][r][a][c]ti[c]e [th]en you would almo[s]t [d]ef[i]n[i]te[l][y], in [d]ue [t]ime, [t]otal[l][y] [d]e[s]t[r]oy your[s]elf and eve[r]ything a[r]ound you! Ultimate[l][y], Ba[r]rett [r]eite[r]ated that he [d]i[d]n't [r]eal[l][y] have a [t]on of [t][i]me to [d]i[s][c]u[s]s these [t][y]pes of [d]e[t]ails - [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]i[c]al [d]i[s][c]ussions woul[d]n't, a[f]ter [a][l]l, [f]un[d]a[m]entally [a][l]ter the

[r]apid envi[r]on[m]ental [d]e[s]t[r]u[c]tion that was ongoing at the hands of Shinra! [C]loud [d]i[d]n't [d]i[s]agree! Yet, at the [s]ame [t]ime, weren't [th]e [t]wo [S][e]v[e]ntth H[e]av[e]n of [th]em at [d][r]in[k]ing [f]u[c]king [b]eers? How many [d][r]a[f]t [b]eers h[a]d they [d][r][a]n[k] [a]t th[a]t [p]oint? They weren't gonna slow [d]own Shin[r]a's [d]eg[r]a[d]ation of the [p]lanet via con[s]uming [d][r]aft [b][e]ers [e]ither! Shit, [b]r[o]. It was [l]i[k]e - [C][l]oud [a][c]tual[l]y w[o][k]e up th[a]t [m]or[n]ing thin[k]ing a[b]out [m]e[m]ory - [n]ot [c][a]pita[l]ism, [b]ut [m]e[m]ory at [l][e]a[s]t - [a][b]out [h]ow [h][e] [c]ould [b][e] him[s]el[f] [a][c]ro[s]s multi[p]le [p]lat[f]orms and shit, [b]ut how, with that in [m]ind, [m]e[m]ory [p]erha[p]s wasn't a[t]tached to [B][e]ing it[s]el[f] [e]ither. [C][l]oud [w]as al[w]ays [c]on[c]ur[r]ently multi[p]le ite[r][a]tions of [h]im[s][e]lf, and [h]e [t]o [s]ome [e]xtent [p]ar[t]oo[k] in [B]eing a[c]ross those ite[r][a]tions, [b]ut at the same time - [th]e [th]ought o[cc]urred to [C]loud that [m]e[m]o[r]y wasn't ne[c]e[s]sa[r]ily [a][tt][a]ched [t]o [B][e]ing [a]t all [t]imes [ei]ther? [B][e]ing and [m]e[m]o[r]y - [w]hat [w]as their ex[a][c]t [r]ela[ti]on[sh]ip? [Th]at [th]e soul [c]ould [f]un[d]a[m]entall[y] [b][e] eternal, [b]ut [i]f [i]ts [b][e]ing was [d]i[s]a[s]sociated [f]rom [m]e[m]or[y] as w[e] un[d]er[s]tood it then obviou[s]l[y] it would [k]ind of b[e] di[f]fi[c]ult to ve[r]i[f]y! As we [t]end [t]o [c]on[f]irm expe[r]iences via [m]e[m]o[r]y and shit. [B]arrett gul[p]ed [d]own his eighth [p][i]nt of Midgar [L][i]ght [b]ut that [d]i[d]n't [d]eter [C][l]oud [f]rom [p][r]od[d]ing [f]urther at the [p]oint - [n]ame[l][y], that [f]unda[m]en[t]al[l][y] [c]a[p]ita[l]ism [c]on[t]ained [n]o [m]e[m]or[y], and Being itself [p]erha[p]s on[l][y] [p]a[r]tial[l][y] [p]a[r][t]oo[k] in [m]e[m]or[y]? Was [c]a[p]ita[l]ism a form of [b][e]ing? [N]o, it [c]ouldn't [b][e]! - [n]ot unles[s] they too[k] a [s]t[a]ti[c] v[a]ntage [p]oint on a[n] i[n]f[i]n[i]te urge to i[n][c]rea[s]e and ex[p]and, which, to [s]ome exte[n]t,

wasn't [th]at [th]e [d]rive of the i[n][f][i]n[i]te, [w]hich [w]as [f]un[d]ame[n]tally the transce[n][d]e[n]t, [w]hich [w]as -[n]o [B]eing [c]oul[d]n't [b]e [t]ran[s]cen[d]ent, [n]ot [t]otal[l]y, [r]ight? [C]loud [d]i[d]n't thin[k] [s]o. Ba[r]rett [h]ad [h]ad enou[gh] of thi[s] [f]u[c]king shit! - [a]nd he [s][l][a]mmed his [m]ug of [M]idgar [L]ight on the [c]ounter and [m]oseyed out the [b]ar ([h]e'd [h]eard a[b]out some new "[Q]ueen's [B]lood" [th]ing [th]at was [b]eing introdu[c]ed to [S]e[c]tor [S]even that he wan[t]ed [t]o [t]ry anyway). [T]i[f]a [t]oo[k] the op[p]or[t]unity to as[k] [C][l][ou]d i[f] [h]e'd [h]ad a[n]y e[n][c][ou]nters with - you kn[o]w? - th[o]se [r]uth[l]es[s] ap[p]a[r]itions that [s]e[e]med to b[e] [h]aunting [h]im in[t]er[m]ittently [s]in[c]e re[t]urning [t]o [M]idg[a]r? [W]ell, Cloud [w]as after [a]|| [a] re[m][a]de [m]an - in [m]ore [w][a]ys than [o]ne, but no? [W]hy? Who el[s]e a[r]ound the [s][l]ums had [s][e]en them r[e][c]entl[y]? It [w]as [w]eird to [C][l]oud, a [l]ittle [c]urious, he n[o]ted [t]o [T]ifa, m[o][s]t[l]y be[c]ause it [s][e]emed [l]i[k]e [s]ometimes (a) h[e]'d s[e]e them, yet [s]ometimes (b) [n]o, he wouldn't [n]e[c]e[s]saril[y] [s]e[e] them [b]ut in[t]uit them, [b]ut [th]en o[th]er [t][i]mes - I[i]ke the o[th]er day - (c) the [w]ould be [e]ve[r]y[w]here a[p]pa[r]itions [e]ve[r]v[o]ne to [s][e]e, and h[e]'d whi[p] out his f[u][c]king B[u][s]ter [S]word with [T]i[f]a b[y] his [s][i]de. [T]i[f]a a[s]ked him to ext[r][a][p]olate on the [t][r]iad of a-b-[c], if he [c]ould. Sh[e] [c][l]ear[l][y] wan[t]ed [t]o as[s]i[s]t [C][l]oud in reaching the b[o]ttom [o]f [a]ll [o]f thi[s], [s]o to [s]pea[k]. [W]ell, to [C][l]oud, it [w]as almost [l]i[k]e the E[l]eatics were [c]orre[c]t [a][l]l [a][l]ong - [th]at [th]is [t]ype of phe[n]ome[n]a - where some[t]imes (a) h[e]'d [s][ee] them and sh[e] wouldn't, [s]ometimes ([b]) he wouldn't [e]ven [s][e]e them [b]ut h[e]'d f[e]el them, and [th]en o[th]er times (c) [th]ey'd a[pp]ear to the [p]u[b][l]i[c] at [l]arge, well, phe[n]ome[n]a [l]i[k]e that

[b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly un[d]ermined the [e]nt[i]re [i][d]ea [e]m[p]iri[c]ism v[i]a [s]en[s]e [p]er[c]e[p]tion, no? If [s]en[s]e [p]er[c]e[p]tion was [s]ome[th]ing [th]at [th]ey [c]ould [r]e[l]iably em[p][l]oy as a fir[s]t [p][r]in[c]i[p]le to g[a][th]er d[a]ta [a]nd [th]en a[r]rive at [c]on[c][l]usions [r]egarding the n[a]ture of the [c]or[p]o[r]eal [w]orld - then shit [l]i[k]e [w]hat [C][l]oud ju[s]t [d]e[s]c[r]ibed [c]oul[d]n't [b]e [p]o[s]si[b]le, [r]ight? [C][l]oud a[s]ked how [c]ould it [p]os[s]i[b][l][y]?! There had to [b][e] a [s]e[p]a[r]ate [f]ir[s]t [p][r]in[c]i[p]le they'd n[e]ed to [r]e[f]e[r]en[c]e. Al[s]o, he'd [s]witch to [F]er[n]et iff] that was okay with Ti[f]a? [B]ut the p[r]o[b]lem with this [n][o]tion - [b][o]th h[e] and T[i][f]a ag[r][e]ed (Ti[f]a [r]e[l]uctant[l][y] ag[r][e]ed) - was [th]at (a) [th]ere was no evi[d]en[c]e that he [s]aw [th]em when o[th]ers [d]i[d]n't, and (b) there was no e[v]i[d]en[c]e e[v]en to him[s][e]lf that he [f][e]lt th[e]m wh[e]n he [d]i[d]n't [s]ee them. [C]loud [c]ould [s]ee [th]em and h[e]'d b[e] sure [th]at h[e] saw [th]em [e]ven iff T[i]ffa [d]i[d]n't - [h]e'd [h]ave an em[p]i[r]i[c]al [d]ata [p]oint that he just [c]oul[d]n't [p][r]ove! - [b]ut when [s]im[p][l]y [f][e]lt him[s][e]l[f] to [b]e in [C][l]oud [c]ommunion with [s]omething [f]o[r]mle[s]s and in[c]o[r][p]o[r]eal, then [e]ven h[e] [c]ouldn't [b][e] sure, [f]rom [a]n [e]m[p]i[r]i[c]al [s]tand[p]oint, [w]hat it [w]as he ex[p]e[r]ien[c]ed, [b]e[c]ause his [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]e [l]a[c]ked a [f]orm [e]ntire[l]y - [h]e [d]i[d]n't [h]ave a [s]en[s]e-b[a][s]ed em[p]i[r]i[c]al d[a]ta [p]oint to even [p][r]ove to him[s]el[f] that he ex[p]e[r]ien[c]ed anything! Ti[f]a [p]oured the [F]ernet and [s]aid [s]omething ab[ou]t wanting to be[l]ieve C[l]oud. [A]t th[a]t [p]oint [C][l]oud hear[k]ening [b]a[c]k to the [s]aid. [p]oint [p]r[e]v[i]ou[s][l]y [c]aused [B]ar[r]et to [s]t[o]m[p] [ou]t [o]f the [b]ar, [w]hat [w]as [m]e[m]o[r]y any[w]ay? - [i][f] not th[i][s] ty[p]e of [c]o[m]munion with a [f]orm[l]e[s]s and in[c]o[r][p]o[r]eal ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e [l]ike these [r]uth[l]e[s]s

[a]p[p]a[r]itions? [A][f]ter all, he [r]e[m]em[b]ered a [b][oa]tl[oa]d of sh[i]t that [d][i][d]n't ne[c]e[s]sa[r]il[y] have i[m]ages [a]tt[a]ched! [A] [l]ot of his [m]e[m]o[r][ie]s were in [f][a][c]t [f]orm[l]ess [f]ee[l]ings, but then - [l]i[k]e some of [C][I][ou]d's other en[c][ou]nters - [d]id in[d]eed [c]ontain i[m]ages, but they [f]eatured i[m]ages that on[l]y to [C][l]oud, a[p]peared just [l]i[k]e Ti[f]a's i[m]age-[m]e[m]ories [o]nly a[p]peared to her! S[o] [C]loud was of [th]e [a][c]ute [o][p]inion [th]at [m]e[m]ories [th]em[s]elves were to [s]ome extent [l]ike [th]ese [r]uth[l]es[s] a[p]pa[r]itions he'd ex[p]e[r]ien[c]ing? - yet Tifa [q]ui[c]k[l]y [c]o[r]re[c]ted him, a[p]tly [p]ointing [ou]t that [C][l][ou]d's [m]e[m]ories, to the be[s]t of her k[n]ow[l]edge, had [n]ever [s]warmed H[e]av[e]n [a]round [S][e]v[e]nth and [a]ttacked i[n]no[c]ent [c][i]v[i]lians? [H]e [h][a]d to gr[a]nt th[a]t [a]s [t]rue! - "but you know what I m[ea]n, [T][i]fa." Sh[e] did. C[l]oud's [m]e[m]o[r]ies were [s]i[m]i[l]ar [t]o those [r]uth[l]e[s]s a[p]pa[r][i]t[i]ons [i]n [t]erms of (a) and ([b]), [b]ut not in [t]erms of (c). [C]loud [c]on[t]inued on to [s]ay, [s][i][p]p[i]ng a [f][r]esh [F]ernet, [th]at [th]e [p]oint [m]o[r]e o[r] les[s] [r]e[m]ained, that [w]hile sure [m]e[m]o[r]ies [w]ere [d]i[s]tinct, these a[p]pa[r]itions these un[i][d]enti[f][i]ed [f]I[y]ing a[p]pa[r]itions, they [f]un[d]a[m]ental[l][y] un[d]er[m]ined the uti[l]it[y] of our [s]en[s]e-[p]er[c]e[p]tion, [w]hich [w]as [s]omething, to [C][l]oud's or[i]g[i]nal [p]oint, [th]at [th]e [E][l]eati[c]s a[c]k[n]ow[l]edged real[l]y [e]m[ph]asized. Ti[f]a [C][l]oud's point about [m]e[m]o[r]y - she [d]i[d]n't [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]il[y] [d]i[s]ag[r][e]e w[i]th [i]t [b]e[c]ause [m]e[m]o[r]ies, to the [b]e[s]t of their k[n]ow[l]edge, [n]ever [ph][y]s[i][c]al[l]y mani[f][e][s]ted them[s][e]lves in [c]o[r][p]o[r]eal [f]orms, that it [s]tru[c]k [T]i[f]a as [b]a[s]i[c]al[l]y [t][r]ue that [m]e[m]o[r]y was a [s]i[m]i[l]ar [t]y[p]e of ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e, [s]ome[th]ing [th]at

[th]ey in[t]era[c]ted with [s]ome[t][i]mes v[i]a [a]n [i]mage that wasn't [s]en[s]ible to [a]nyone [e]l[s]e, and [s]omet[i]mes [v][i][a] [a] [v]ague feeling [th]at [th]ey [c]ouldn't even [c]or[r]obo[r]ate them[s]elves! - [e]ven [m]e[m]or[y] to [s]ome e[x]tent [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] un[d]erm[i]ned [th]e [i][d]ea [th]at our [s]en[s]o[r][y] f[a][c]ulties were [r]elia[b]le instruments t[o] [u]se t[o] [c]ome to [a][c]cu[r]ate [c]on[c]|[u]sions a[b]out [w]hat [w]e [p]erc[e]ive to b[e] the [c]o[r][p]o[r]eal [w]orld.

Canto VI

Total Echoes: 1,247 Total Syllables: 1,707

Approximate Self-Similarity: .731

[C][l]oud k[n]ew that of [c]our[s]e Ae[r]ith [s]u[f]fe[r]ing [f][r]om this g[n]awing [i]n[k][i][i]ng that, you k[n]ow, [C][l]oud m[ay] have [g]one and [g]iven aw[ay] the [f][l]ower - or [p]erh[a][p]s th[a]t was a [t]ad [t]oo st[r]ong a [ph][r][a]se - m[ay][b]e [p]assed [a][l]ong was [a] [b]etter w[ay] to [p]ut it, that's what C[l]oud [p]ostu[l]ated at [l]east - [b]ut i[n] a[n]y [c]ase he k[n]ew [th]at Ae[r]ith k[n]ew [th]at he [f]or[w]arded the [f][l]o[w]er, [r]ight? But how did she [c]ome to [p]osse[s]s that k[n]ow[l]edge exa[c]t[l]v? - [c]ould it have [p]o[s]si[b][l]v [b]een via the under [c][i]ty [w]h[i][s][p]er [n]et[w]or[k]? Or [d]id Ae[r]ith [c]ome to [r]ea[l]ize [C][l]oud g[a]ve the shit aw[ay] via [s]ome [s]ort of [d][i]vine [i]ntu[i]t[i]on? Ba[s]i[c]a[l]ly, [C][l]oud was a[t]tem[p]ting [a][s]cer[t]ain the [s][our][c]e [or][i]g[i]n of [A]e[r]ith's know[l]edge - was it o[p]i[n]ion or i[n]tu[i]t[i]on - [w]hereas Aerith [w]as ch[ie][f][l][y] [c]on[c]erned with im[p][l]i[c]ations of [th]e know[l]edge it[s]el[f]. a[c]tua[l]ly made it [q]uite [c][l]ear that [sh]e wasn't [s]ure

if [C][I]oud's [p][r]eva[r]i[c]ations were [r]ea[I]ly the [p]oint she was a[tt]em[p]ting [t]o ma[k]e when she b[r]ought the whole [f][l]ower [r]e-gi[f]ting u[p] to [C][l]oud - [th]at [th]e issue [a]t h[a]nd wasn't, [p]erha[p]s, how she ob[t]ained [p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar k[n]ow[l]edge, thi[s] but in[s]t[ea]d wh[e]ther or [n]ot [C][l]oud g[a]ve the [f][l]o[w]er a[w][ay], [w]hich to [b]e [f]air she [w]asn't, [l]i[k]e, o[f]fended [b]y -Ae[r]ith was just a [l]ittle [c]u[r]ious? Who'd [C][l]oud "[f]or[w]ard" it [t]o any[w]ay? [T]i[f]a, [r]ight? Of [c]ourse it [w]as [T]i[f]a - [w]hich [w]as [t]otal[l][y] [f]ine! They [w]ere a[c]tua[l]l[y] [f]riends! [B]ut [C][l]oud, i[f] [p]os[s]ible, wan[t]ed [t]o [s]tay on this [p][r]ior [p]oint - this e[p]i[s]temo[l]ogi[c]al [p]oint - [b]e[c]ause he [th]ought [th]ere was a [p][r]etty im[p]ortant d[i]s[t][i]n[c]tion [t]o [b]e [f]ound there, [b]etween knowing [s]omething via o[p]inion - [b]e[c]ause, [f]or [i]n[s]t[a]n[c]e, [s]ome [S]e[c]tor [S][i]x d[i][p]sh[i]t was ya[p]ping his f[u][c]king g[u]ms in the [s]l[u]m - or [b]y [c]ontr[a]st [b]e[c]oming [f]a[m]iliar in a [m]ore [p]ure [f][a]shion. [Th]ere was [p]ure knowledge of [th]ings - and [th]en [th]ere was [b]ull[sh]it you h[ear]d th[ir]d hand from dou[ch]e[b]ags in the [S]e[c]tor [S]ix [S][I]ums. [C][I]oud [f]elt [I]i[k]e Ae[r]ith p[r]o[b]a[b][l]y knew via [th]e [f]ormer me[th]od - [c]ould she [c]on[f]irm though? Instead Ae[r]ith ch[o]se to [p][o]sit the [r]adi[c]al n[o]tion that may[b]e it [c]ould have [b]een [b][o]th? Sure, [C]loud [th]ought [th]at was [p][o]ssi[b]le (he guessed . . .) - [b]ut he [d]i[d]n't [th]in[k][s]o - it was [p]o[s]si[b]le yet not [p]ro[b]a[b]le - in [f]a[c]t, [C][l]oud [f]elt [l]i[k]e he k[n]ew that Aerith k[n]ew, [n]o, [n]ot via [s]ome [w]hi[s][p]er [n]et[w]ork, [n]o, [n]ot [b]y o[p]inion at all, [b]ut i[n][s]t[ea]d [b]y dir[e]ct i[n]tuition. And it just [s]o h[a]p[p]ened th[a]t it was [b]y his own [i]ntu[i]t[i]ve [c]a[p]a[b][i][l][i]ties th[a]t [C][l]oud k[n]ew [th]at Ae[r]ith k[n]ew [th]at he g[a]ve [th]at [v]e[r]y [f]u[c]king [f][l]ower [a]w[ay] [v]i[a] her own intu[i]t[i]on,

[n]ot by a[n]y [l]u[r]id [r]u[m]or [m]onger [f][r]o[l]i[c]king shame[l]e[s]s[l]y in the [s][l]ums. Were there any [r]u[m]or [m]ongers [f][r]o[l]i[c]king sh[a]me[l]e[s]s[l]y in though? the [s][l]ums [S][p][r]ea[d]ing [d]i[s]in[f]or[m][a]tion [a]b[ou]t [C]l[ou]d [g]iving [a]w[ay] [f][l][ow]ers to a [p][l]etho[r]a of wo[m]en [i]n [M][i]d[g]ar! [N]o, that [w]asn't the [w]ay [A]erith [h][a]d [a][c]ce[s]sed [h]er k[n]owledge - [n]ot at all. [A][n]yw[ay], [A]erith [th]ought [ma]ybe [C]loud should [c]on[s]ider [th]in[k]ing t[w]i[c]e be[f]ore [g]iving [a][w]ay [f]lo[w]ers [a][g]ain. That [a]II. [N]ot that she was [p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar[l]y [p]e[r][t]u[r]bed. [N]ot in the [l][e]ast a[c]tua[l][[v]! [B]ut may[b][e] [C][l]oud [c]ould just - hy[p]otheti[c]a[l]l[y] - if a [g]irl [l]i[k]e h[er] w[er]e to [g][i]ve h[i]m a [b]eauti[f]ul ye[l]low [f][l]ower in the [m][i]ddle of [M][i]dgar, [m]ay[b]e [h]e should [h]old onto [th]e [th]ing! Or at the ver[y] I[ea]st don't [g]o and [g]ive it to some other [f]u[c]king chi[ck]! Was it real[l][y] that d[i][f]f[i][c]ult to just [c]ontinual[l][y] [k]ee[p] a [s]ingle [f][l]ower on your [p]er[s]on? [N]ot that it was [A]erith's [b]usiness [a][n]y[w]ay, [b]e[c]ause [c][l]ear[l]y [i][f] [C][l]oud [w]an[t]ed [t]o g[i][f]t the [f][l]ower [t]o [T]ifa - sure that was [f]ine, it was totally his [o]pt[io]n if that's [h]ow [h]e w[a]n[t][e]d [t]o go a[b][ou]t it, [b]ut [d][i][d]n't C[l][ou]d th[i]nk [i]t was just a [l][i]ttle rude? [N][o], in[s]tead he [th]ought [th]at [th]ere was a [n][o]ta[b]le [d]i[s]tinction [b]e[t]ween the [t]wo [t]ypes of k[n]owledge - [b]ut if Ae[r]ith [d]id [s]o [h]appen to [h]ear [i]t [i]n the [s]t[r][ee]t, then [w]ould sh[e] b[e] [w]illing [t]o [t]ell C[l]oud who was f[l]a[p]ping their [l]i[p]s? [W]as any[o]ne out in the [s][l]ums [s][p]e[c]ifi[c]a[l]ly [l]oo[k]ing to [r]at his [s][p]i[k]y a[s]s out? I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, of all that, [r]egard[l]e[s]s [C][l]oud [t]ota[l]ly under[s][t]ood wh[er]e A[er]ith was [c]oming [f]rom, and [h]e gue[s]sed [h]e ju[s]t wasn't [r][e]ally th[i]n[k][i]ng at the [t]ime, when h[e] [r][e]-g[i][f]t[e]d the [f][l]ower - [T]ifa

[t]oo[k] n[o]te of the [f][l]ower, and he [d]i[d]n't wan[t] [t]o go in[t]o the wh[o]le fl[o]wer girl a[n]ecd[o]te, s[o] he figured it m[i]ght be [k][i]nd of [n][i]ce to, you k[n]ow, [p]ass a[l]ong the [l]ove? Ae[r]ith [r]e[p]eated the [ph]r[a]se [p]ass a[l]ong the [l]ove in [a] w[ay] that, [q]uite [a]m[a]zing[l][y], wasn't [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [f][i]lled to the br[i]m with [c]ons[t]ern[a]tion and [c]on[t]em[p]t. [T]o [C][l]oud there was something ine[f]fa[b][l]y [t][r]ue a[b]out [c]ontemp[l][a]ting the [f]em[a]le [f]orm, [i]n [i]ts [b][l]unt [ph][y]s[i][c]al [i]te[r][a]tion - there was no [l]u[r]id o[p]inion [p][r]esent w[i]th[i]n [i]t, although C[l]oud [d]i[d]n't e[x][p][l][i][c][i]t[l]y e[x][p]re[s]s thi[s] [i][d]ea to [A]e[r]ith [a]t the t[i]me, given her [r]eti[c]en[c]e to e[n]gage i[n] the op[i]n[i]on [v]er[s]us [i][n][t]u[i]t[i]on di[c]hotomy he [s]tarted the [c]onver[s]ation with - yet he was [s]till [o]bviou[s][l]y [c][o]n[t]em[p][l]ating her [f][or]m [f][or]th [a]s this b[a][c]k [a]nd o[c]curred. [t][y][p][i][c]al [ph][i][l]o[s]o[ph][i][c]al d[i][s][p]os[i]t[i]on when it [c]ame to [l]ove triangles [w]as [w]aning just [s][l]ight[l]y - this [l]ittle [f][l]ower [i]n[c][i]dent [s]eemed to [a]l[m][o]st [r]ile her up e[m][o]tionally, [a]lthough it was [c][l]ear to [C][l]oud when she [r]e[p]eated the [ph][r]ase [p]ass a[l]ong the [l]ove that she wasn't ent[i]rely r[i]led u[p]. Not yet at [l]east. Aerith [f]ina[l]ly [c]on[f]irmed [f]or [C][l]oud that, yes, it was v[i]a [p]ure [i]ntu[i]t[i]on she'd [s]urm[i]sed her f[l]ower no [l]onger [r]es[i]ded on his [p][er][s]on, and [s]ure [sh]e ag[r]eed [th]at [th]ere was a [c][e]rtain di[s]tin[c]tion be[t]ween the [t]wo [t]ypes of kn[ow][l]edge. [C][l][ou]d then [a][s]ked [A]erith [w]hat she [th][ou]ght [w]as [th]e [c][au]se of each [t]y[p]e - well, [o][p]inion [c]on[s][i]sted [o]bvious[l]y of [l][i]teral [s]aid, from [w]h[i][s][p]er [n]et[w]orks, she what [p]eo[p]le [s]aw [a]nd heard [a]nd [a]ll that. [a][I]I[ow]ed [C][I]oud to note that wasn't eve[r]ything Shin[r]a [w]as [w]or[k]ing on - e[s][p]ecial[l][v] H[o]i[o] -

was that [n]ot [b]a[s]i[c]al[l][y] a[n]other [w]hi[s][p]er [n]et[w]ork, that H[o]i[o], de[s][p]ite [b]eing [s][o]-[c]alled [s]cientist, [w]as [s]im[p]ly [w]or[k]ing [o]ff [o]f [w]hat [h]e and [h]is a[s]so[c]iates heard and [s]aw? was [t]em[p][t]ed [t]o Ae[r]ith [s][ay] H[o]i[o]'s o[p]e[r][a]tion was a [m]ore [s]yste[m][a]tic version of th[a]t, yes, [b]ut in[s]tead a[b]r[u][p]tly [c][u]t her[s]el[f] offlf, [b]e[c]ause when she [c]on[s]i[d]ered it [f]urther she [c]on[c][l]u[d]ed the un[d]er [c][i]t[y] [w]h[i][s][p]er net[w][or][k]s [w][er]e a[c]tual[l]y [q]uite [c]om[p][l]ex them[s]elves! [S]o in[s]tead she a[c]cused [C][l]oud of changing the [s]ubi[e]ct, th[e]n she noted th[a]t, [a][c]tua[l]ly, [sh]e wan[t]ed [t]o [sh]ift t[o]pi[c]s, but [n][o]t to the [s]o-[c]alled [w]hisper [n]et[w]or[k]s of H[o]i[o] versus the [w]ell-k[n]own [w]h[i][s]per [n]et[w]or[k]s of the [S]e[c]tor [S][i]x [S][l]ums, [n]o! [N]o, [C][l][ou]d under[s]tood. [E]ven [h]e [d]i[d]n't [e]ven r[ea]lly want [t]o [t]al[k] ab[ou]t H[o]j[o]! Maybe he was obfus[c]ating. C[l]oud a[p]o[l]ogized, but Ae[r]ith [s]aid it wasn't [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]y, there was [n]o [s]o[r]ry [n][ee]ded [r][ea][l][y] - they [p]ro[b]a[b][l][y] shouldn't [b][ea]t a [d]ead [h]orse, [s]o to [s][p][ea]k. [B][u]t, [u]gh - what a [h]o[r]ren[d]ous [t]urn of ph[r]ase. No, [C][l]oud ag[r][ee]d - it was a [t]e[r]ri[b]le [s][ay]ing, a [s][c]um[b]ag [s][ay]ing, [r][ea][l]ly - H[o]i[o] p[r]o[b]a[b][l]y would [d]o it though, [b]eat a [d]ead horse? - a[n]d the[n] [f]u[c]king, [l]i[k]e, [i]nje[c]t [i]t w[i]th [m]a[k][o] or [s]ome shit, [m]a[k]e it a [m]utant [s]teed! G[r][o][s]s! [F]u[c]king loser!

Canto VII

Total Echoes: 1,227 Total Syllables: 1,738

Approximate Self-Similarity: .706

[C][l]oud just [a]t th[a]t [m]o[m]ent had begun to [r]e[c]apitu[l]ate, [th]is [t]ime [t]o [th]e [t]wo of [th]em -[A]e[r]ith [a]nd [T]ifa - how it wasn't a[c]tually the [c]ase that h[e]'d s[ee]n the [b][e]ing, no, there wasn't i[n] [f][a][c]t a[n] [a][c]tual [ph][y]s[i][c]al [b]eing i[n] that se[n]se of the [ph]rase - it wasn't [l]i[k]e the me[n] i[n] the [b][l]a[c]k [c][l]oa[k]s they'd [b]e [f]o[ll]owing in Re[b]]irth (were ei[th]er of [th]em [f]amiliar with [th]at [p][l]ot[l]ine yet?). He'd just [b]egan to ex[p][l]ain [th]is to [th]e [b]oth of [th]em, and [C][l]oud [d]i[d]n't [f]eel a[n]y [d]i[f]fe[r]ent a[b]out it [n]e[c]e[[s]sa[r]i[l]y - the [f][a][c]t t[h]at he was [t]elling [th]e [b]oth of [th]em - [T]i[f]a was [b]e[h]ind the [b]ar [a]nd [A]erith just [h]appened to [b]e there. It was [fline. [W]ere they [flamiliar [w]ith [R]e[b]irth yet? [P][r]o[b]a[b][l]y [n]ot, [r]ight? [B]ut [n][o], in thi[s] [c]a[s]e [C][l]oud had [b]een fu[c]king, you k[n][o]w, just [s]itting on this [c]ar[p]et in Wu[t][ai] at the [t][i]me - he [s]at on [c]ar[p]et [c]ros[s]-[l]egged and [s]u[d]den[l][y] in[t]uited a [p]ure[l][y] [d]ivi[n]e b[e]ing [e]man[a]ting in the [t]riangle head [e]nca[p][s]u[l][a]ted in the [p]erfe[c]t[l][y] [s][q]uare [d]es[i]qn that [r]e[p][e]ated [e]nd[l]e[s]s[l]y th[r]oughout the [e]n[t][i]re [c]ar[p]et. This [t][r][i]angle head [w]as [w]hat [C][i]oud [c]ould on[i]y des[c]ribe [a]s [a] "[l][a]ughing [A][l]lah". That's how it [s]tru[c]k him. There wasn't [r]ea[l]ly [a] [q]uestion [a]bout [i]t [i]n [C][l]oud's mind and it was a[c]tua[l]ly beauti[f]ul. Yes, [a] "[l]au[gh]ing [A][l]lah" [w]as the on[l]y [w]ay he [c]ould [d]e[s][c][r]ibe the [d]ivine being. [c]ertain[l]y [c]ommuni[c]ated with him [a]s he [s][a]t [c][r]os[s]-[l]egged in [W]utai in a [s]ome[w]hat

[m]y[s]ti[c]al [m]a[n]ner, al[b]eit not [q]uite ver[b]all[y], [b]ut the [b][e]ing [c]ertain[l][y] [c]o[m]mu[n]i[c][a]ted in a w[ay] that [c]aused [C][l]oud to [s][m]ile. [C][l]oud, s[m]ile?! The [t]wo wo[m]en [f]ound that [t]otal[l]y hi[l]arious! [T]i[f]a n[ea]r[l]y [f]u[c]ked u[p] the b[ee]r sh[e] was [p]ou[r]ing she was [s]o [s]ur[p][r]ised to h[ea]r [C][I]oud of [a]II [p]eo[p]le [t][a]I[k]ing [a][b]out him[s]el[f] [s]mi[l]ing. [B]ut [n][ei]ther [T][i][f]a [n]or [A]erith [f]ound this [a][n]e[c][d]ote of [C]loud's to [b]e [d]i[s]i[n]genuous i[n] a[n]y way - i[n] [f]a[c]t they [b]oth [f]u[l]ly [s]uppo[r]ted [C][l]oud's [c]on[f]essions and mo[r]e o[f]ten than not [e]ven [f]ound them [l]egitimate[l][y] intr[i]guing ([b]ut there were, of [c]our[s]e, [s]ome ex[c]eptions!), al[b]eit they gene[r]al[l]y [f]ound the ane[c]dotes i[n]t[r]iguing [i]n a [o]ne-on-[o]ne [s]etting, as [o][p]posed to thi[s] [F][F]M [a]rrangement. [B]ut that was c[l]ear[l]y [f]ine! It just [s][o] h[a][p]pened [A]e[r]ith was a[r]ound and she [p]o[p]ped in the [b][a]r. N[o] [b]ig deal at [a]II! Yet, [c]ontem[p][l]ating [w]hether or [n]ot a[n]other [M]os[c]ow [M]ule was ad[v]isable or [n]ot, [C]loud ex[p][r]e[s]sed [q]uite [v]igo[r]ou[s]ly that he wan[t]ed [t]o [r]e[l][ay] a [s]ub[s]e[q]uent ane[c]d[o]te that he [v]iewed a[p]r[o][p][o]s of the [c]ar[p]et en[c]ounter, if that was o[k][ay]? Of [c]ourse! Well, [s][p]ec[i]f[i][c]al[l]y it [w]as that [w]hen he [p]o[pp]ed in[t]o his [l][o][c]al [c][o]-[o][p] g[r][o][c]e[r]y [s][t]ore that [m]or[n]ing, [f]or just a [f]ew [m][i][n]or [i]tems, a [c]ou[p]le h[a]nd [f][r]uits [r]eally, [a]nd the new [c][a]shier [a]sked him - [r]ight as [h]e sh[i][f]ted [h][i]s [h]ead[ph]ones [u]p o[f]f [o]f his ears to [s][t]art the [f]ormalized [s]ales [t][r]ans[a][c]tion - [i][f] h[i]s b[r]other "or [s]omething" went there [s]ome[t]imes? - [t]o the g[r]o[c]e[r]y [s]to[r]e? Did [C][l]oud have a [b][r]other [b]y a[n]y chance? [B]e[c]ause she, the [n]ew [c]ashier, felt [l]i[k]e sh[e]'d s[e]en him [b]efo[r]e? Well, [C]loud [s]aid to the [c]ashier, thin[k]ing a[b]out it [f]or a

[s]e[c]ond he [f]ound it [q]uite [p]o[s]si[b]le [th]at [th]is a[l]leged do[p]pelganger was a[c]tual[l]y [f]u[c]king just him! - [C][l]oud him[s]el[f]! - [th]at the [c][a]shier was in [th]at [p]arti[c]u[l]ar in[s]tan[c]e [c]on[f]using [C][l]oud for his a[c]tual [s]el[f], [th]at [th]is [c]ashier on[l][y] bel[ie]ved sh[e]'d [s][ee]n [s][o]me[o]ne who [l]oo[k]ed just [l]i[k]e [C][l]oud [b]efore [b]e[c]ause sh[e]'d, in [f]a[c]t, s[ee]n [C][l]oud [b]e[f]ore. He [w]alked a[w]ay [m]o[m]en[t]a[r]ily, he [t]old [T]ifa [a]nd [A]e[r]ith, just [t]o [t]o[s]s his [b][a][s][k]et [b][a][c]k in[t]o the [s]t[a][c]k of [b][a][s][k]ets [b]ehind the auto[m][a]ti[c] d[oor]s. Yeah, he'd [t]a[k]e one [m][or]e [M]ule, pl[e]ase [T][i]fa? The new [c]ashier was [c]hu[c]k[l]ing when [C][l]oud a[r]rived b[a][c]k [a]t the [c]he[c]kout [c]ounter [r]eady to [p]ay for his [sh]it - [sh]e was in the [p][r]ocess of ente[r]ing the item num[b]er for his [r]ed [q]uinoa, [c]hu[c]k[l]ing a[l]one - "it [c]ould've [b]een you" she [r]e[p]eated, chuc[k][l]ing, [b]ut then, [C][l]oud [r]e[l]ayed [t]o [T]ifa and Ae[r]ith, she a[c]tua[l]ly [c]ame a[r][ou]nd to [C][l][ou]d's [p]arti[c]u[l]ar hy[p]othesis. The new [c][a]shier, [a]fter thin[k]ing [a]bout it, [c]ame to [a]gree with [C][l]oud, th[a]t she [a][c]tua[l]l[y] p[r]o[b]a[b][l][v] had [s]een him in the g[r][o][c]e[r][v] [b]ef[or]e. and that she'd iust [s]t[or]e er[r][o][n]eously [f]igured [h]e [h]ad a [b]rother, when in [f][a][c]t this hypo[th]eti[c]al [b][r]o[th]er was [a][c]tual[l]y just [C][l]oud himsel[f]. [T]i[f]a [c]on[s]i[d]ered, [a][f]ter she'd inge[s][t]ed the [f]ull [a]ne[c][d]ote and [s]erved [C][l]oud his [r]e[f][r]eshed [M]o[s][c]ow [M]ule, that it was [s]omewhat [l]i[k]e[l]y [th]at [th]e [c]ashier wan[t]ed [t]o [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [s]u[c]k his [c]o[c]k, and [C][l]oud [d]i[d]n't [n]e[c]e[s]sa[r]i[l][y] [d]i[s]ag[r][e]e with [n]otion! - he [c]ertain[l][y] [c]on[s]idered it [p]o[s]si[b]le, [th]at [th]is [c]ashier [m]ay have [b]een a[m]ena[b]le to some[th]ing I[i][k]e [th]at, but [th]at wasn't [q]u[i]te the [p]oint! There [w]as a t[y][p]e of [w]isdom [l][a]tent in the

exch[a]nge, [w]asn't there? - regard[l]ess of [w]hether or not the [c]ashier [w]anted to per[f]orm [f]el[l]atio on [C][l]oud? Ae[r]ith, by [c]on[t][r]ast, [t]oo[k] a more [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]i[c]al [a]ngle to her [a]nal[y][s][i]s of the en[c]ounter, [b]e[c]ause sh[e] agr[e]ed with [C]loud [th]e [c][a]shier exh[i][b][i]ted а [s][p]i[r]itual in[s]ight, even [i][f] [i]t was in[a]dvertent. [A]erith, [f]or her [p]art, [d]i[d]n't [p]ut much of a[n]y sto[c]k i[n][t]o the [c]ashier's i[n][t]entions, whether or [n]ot they were [s]or[d]id, be[n]ign, or [s]im[p][l]y in[d]i[f]ferent. U[p]on [a][c]k[n]ow[l]edging this Ti[f]a [n]oted that she [r]e[c]oq[n]ized [A]e[r]ith's [p]oint of [v]iew as [v][a]lid, th[a]t it was [p][r]o[b]a[b][l][v] the "[r]ight way [t]o [t]ake [i]t [i]n," [e]ven i[f] sh[e], [T][i][f]a, wasn't [p]er[s]onal[l][y] at the [p]oint of [p]arti[c]i[p]ating in [q]uite that [l]evel of obje[c]t[i]v[i]ty (i[f] [th]ey [c]ould, in [f][a][c]t, [c]all it [th][a]t). [C]loud m[en]tioned [th][a]t, [a]t [th]e [en]d of the [d]ay, [h]e [c]oul[d]n't [h]el[p] [i]t [i]f a [c][er]t[ai]n [p][er][s][o]n ex[p]erien[c]ed an [ur]ge to [s]u[ck] his [c][o][ck] - that [w]hether or [n]ot [s][o]me[o]ne [wa]n[t]ed [s]u[c]k any[o]ne's k[n]ob [w]as [s]omething [t]o [u]|[t]imately [u]nk[n]owable, that [C][l]oud [c]ouldn't [s]im[p][l][y] [t]os[s] [p]o[t]ential [s][p]iritual en[c]ounters to the way[s]ide [p]ure[l][y] be[c]ause of a [p]ur[p]orted [s]ordid [s]ub[t]ext or in[t]ention. Both [w]omen ag[r]eed [w][i]th th[i]s, yet [p]erh[a][p]s Ae[r][i]th just a [t][a]d more than [T]i[f]a? - not to [s]ay [T]i[f]a was [s]omehow [b]e[s]ide her[s]el[f] with jealou[s]y i[n] a[n]y ma[t]erial way - no, th[is] d[is][t]inction [b]e[t]w[ee]n [T][i]fa [a]nd [A]e[r]ith was p[r]o[b]a[b]ly [r]ooted more [s]o in Ae[r]ith's a[b][s][ur]d [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]ly [a][b]i[l]it[y] to [r]e[m]ain [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]ically undet[er]red [a][b]out other [w]o[m]en [w]hile s[t][ee]ped i[n] a[n] obvious [l]ove [t]riangle. Did sh[e] [e]ven [l]i[k]e [C][l]oud, r[e]al[l][y]? [B]e[c]ause it was [r]ea[l]ly [g]uite [e]vident that [C][l]oud, [T]ifa, and

Ae[r]ith were [c]o[l]le[c]tive[l]y [e][n][t]w[i]ned i[n] a sort of [l]ove [t][r]iangle, [b]ut Ae[r]ith, for her [m][ai]nt[ai]ned [q]uite the uni[q]ue [a][b]i[l]it[y] to [r]e[m][ai]n es[s]entia[l]l[y] [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al [a][b]out it [a]|| - she [d]i[d]n't [s][ee]m to [a][||]ow f[ee][|]ings of jea[l]ou[s][y] to over[c]ome her in the [l][ea][s]t when [C][l]oud re[l]ayed ane[c]dotes a[b]out [c][a]shiers th[a]t, if [th]e [th]r[ee] [w]ere [b][e]ing h[on]est, [c][l][ea]r[l]y [w][an]ted to [w]hip the guy's [c]o[ck] out and [s]u[ck] [on] it for an ex[t]e[n][d]ed i[n][t]erval of [t]ime. [D]id she [e]ven r[ea]I[I][y] [I]i[k]e [C][I]oud? H[i]s [i]n[d][i]v[i]dual f[ee][l]ings on the situ[a]tion were a [l][i]ttle am[b][i]quous. even when he was [a]II [a][I]one. [C][I]oud was of in[c][a]pa[b]le of as[s]es[s]ing his [c]our[s]e own [f][ee]lings [f]or [s]omewhat obv[i]ous r[ea]sons.

Koreatown Bok Choy: Diagrams Mode: >.667

# of Macrotones (Blocks): 13 [echoes] / syllables = >.667 Total: 11,083:14,489 .765

1.1 A[r][a]q[i] t[o]ld J[o] Yu-[r][i], as they [s][a]t in the [s]m[all] h[all][w]ay [w]ide Ud[o]n Lab [o]n [W][e][s]t Thirty [S][e]cond, [r]ight [n][e]xt to the Marti[n][i]que, [h]ow [h][e] [h]ad no [r]e[c]oll[e][c]tion of [r][e]-[r][e]ading [R]ings of [S]aturn what[s]o[e]ver, in fa[c]t the onl[y] [r][ea]s[o]n A[r]a[q]i [e]v[e]n [r][ea]lized h[e]'d [s]tarted [r][e]-[r][ea]ding [R]ings of [S][a]turn [a]t [a]ll was [a] [s]ole b[l]ue pen [u]n[d]er[l][i]ne [s]t[r][i]ke [u]n[d][er] the w[or]d [R]umelia, [r][i]ght [o]n t[o][p] of [p]age [n][i]nety [n][i]ne that, [n]ow [r][e]-[r][ea]ding it yet [a]gain, [A][r]agi k[n][ew] all t[oo] [w]ell [h]e [w]ould [h]ave [n]ever made [w]hen he [i]n[i]t[i]ally [r]ead [R][i]ngs of [S]aturn, [b]e[c]ause [a]t th[a]t time A[r]a[q]i [b]are[l]y knew what [R]ume[l]ia [r]efe[r]enced, [b]ut u[p]on [a] [s]econd [r]eading, [a][s]suming [s][ai]d [s][e]cond [r]eading [t]ook [p]lace when [A][r]aq[i] [b]e[l][ie]ved it [d]id, h[e] was [t]otal[l][y] [b]alls [d][ee]p in [R]ume[l]ia [l][or]e. F[or] all of th[e]se [r][ea]sons A[r]aq[i] [b]e[l][ie]ved h[e]'d on[l][y] [b]eg[a]n his [s]econd [r]eading of [R]ings of [S][a]turn when he [p]i[c]ked u[p] the [b]oo[k] again just [th]e [o][th]er [a]fternoon, [b][u]t in [a][c]tu[a][l]ity, a[c]cording to th[i]s [p]art[i][c]u[l]ar b[l]ue under[l][i]ne on the [n][i]nety-[n][i]nth [p]age of the [n]ovel, it [s][ee]med [l]i[k]e h[e]'d [a][c]tual[l][y], in f[a][c]t, [r][e][c]ent[l][y] [s]tarted a third [r][e]ading, [n]ot a [s]econd. [B][u]t w[a]sn't [i]t а [b][i]t [b]efud[d]ling, [d]i[s][c]on[c][er]t[i]ng [p]erh[a][p]s th[a]t a [p][er][s][o]n [c]ould h[a]ve [a]bso[l]ute[l]v n[o] [r]e[c]o[l]]e[c]tion of

[r]eading a wh[o]le f[u][c]king h[u]ndred [p]ages [o]f [a] n[o]vel less than f[i]ve years [p]r[i]or, A[r]agi thought, a [s][e]ntim[e]nt he [e]xp[r][e][s]sed to Jo Yu-[r][i], and sh[e] ag[r][e]ed that [i]t d[i]d [s][e]em eg[r][e]gious, [b]ut al[s]o [p]er[p]lexing and may[b][e] [e]ven, [n]ot to [b][e] hy[p]er[b]ol[i]c, [b]ut a [b][i]t om[i][n][ou]s? [B]ut all [th]is, [th]e en[t]irety of the [p]air's [s][p]e[c][i]f[i]c [s][t]ream [o]f dial[o]gue w[a]s ab[r][u][p]tly inter[r][u][p]ted when J[o] Yu-[r][i] [n][o]ted A[r]aq[i]'s v[i]s[i]bl[y] [c]on[c]ate[n][a]ting f[r]ust[r][a]tion as th[ey] were sudden[l][y], vio[l]ent[l][y] up[s]tr[ea]med at the [b]ar [b]y [s]ome gr[e]a[s][y] fu[ck] in a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer jersey - the [f][a]ct of the m[a]tter was the two [f]riends only [p][o][p]ped in the [s][p][o]t to beg[i]n w[i]th [t]o [t]a[k]e a [q]u[i][c]k l[i][s]t[e]n to a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar xy[l]oph[o]ne [j]azz t[r]i[o] A[r]a[q]i and [J][o] Yu-[R]i heard [p][l]aying [f]rom the [f]oyer as they [w]alked [p]ast on [W][e][s]t Thirty [S][e][c]ond, A[r]a[q]i [b][e]ing in[t][r][i]gued [b]y a [t][r][i][o] [l]ed b[y] x[y][l]oph[o]ne, [b][u]t [o]nce in line at the [b]ar they [b][o]th s[l][o]w[l]y rea[l]ized how [l][o][q]uacious this [b]artender [w]as [w]ith each [c][u]stomer, A[r]a[q]i's f[r][u][s]t[r][a]tion [c]on[c]aten[a]ting with [e]ach [s]e[c]ond h[e] [c]ontinued to w[ai]t for a [b]eer, and now, this [c]u[s]tomer in a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer jersey, [p]o[p]ped [u][p] out [o]f [s][ee]mingly thin air to [u][p][s]tr[ea]m [th]em, [th]is [c][u][s]tomer, who'd, for [h]is [h]ad a[p]pa[r]ent[l][y] been [r]e[p]eated[l][y] [s][c]orned in his [q]u[e][s]t to get a [s][e][c]ond [b]eer him[s][e]If, [b]y none o[th]er [th]an [th]is lo[q]u[a]c[i]ous [b]ar[t]ender, who [k]ept [c]on[t]inuing on che[c]king the [p]ipes in the [b][a]sem[e]nt, and now this [c]u[s]tomer in the [c][o][b]alt [b][l]ue [s]o[c]cer shirt au[d]acious[l]y [c]ut them [b][o]th in [l]ine to [r]uth[l]ess[l]y expe[d]ite his [s]ub[s][e][q]uent [b][e]ve[r]age. [A][r]a[q]i was [a][b]utting an [a]u[d]i[b]le [c]omp[l][ai]nt [b]ut

[r]em[ai]ned [u]nwil[l]ing to [a][b]an[d]on ju[s]t-[d]i[s][c]overed ex[c]itement [f]or this xylo[ph][o]ne [j]azz as [J][o] Yu-r[i] n[o]ted [th]at [th]ere was a Vietnam[e]se [f]ood truck out[s][i]de, r[i]ght on the [c]orner of [S]ixth and [Th]irty [S]e[c]ond, [th]at she [c]ould [g][o] [g]et a [f]ew egg [r][o]lls i[f] they [w]anted? A[r]a[q][i] [w]asn't [r][ea]ll[y] in the mood, but this [d][i][d]n't [d][e]ter Jo Yu-r[i] from amb[l]ing out[s]ide to [s][e]e "[w]h[a]t [w][a]s [u]p [w]ith their [d][u]m[p][l]ings", [r]ight as the bar[t][e]n[d]er finally [a][t]t[e]n[d]ed [t]o [p][e]n[d]ing [r]e[q]uest for [A][r]a[q]i's [o]ver[p][r][i][c]ed [g]u[o]te-un[g]u[o]te [[t]alian [s]t[v]le beer, wh[i]ch [d][i][d]n't [t]aste like Peroni [a]t all, [a]nd b[y] the [t][i]me the [t][wo] got [t][o] a s[ea]t the jazz [t]r[i]o [f][i]n[i]shed [i]ts [f]irst [s][e]t and [b]egan its [b][r]eak, lighting [c]iga[r][e]ttes and wal[k]ing [b]a[c]k to the [b]ar [f]or their [r]e[s]pe[c]tive, [A][r]a[q]i [a][s]sumed, [f][r][e]e [r][e][f]ills.

## η/ω 713:927 .769

1.12 Of [c]our[s]e it was the [c][a][s]e that A[r]a[q]i, de[s]pite his [a]git[a]tion [a]t the f[a][c]t h[e] and [J]o Yu-[R][i] [e]n[t]ered this [e]s[t]ab[l]ishment w[i]th the [e]xpl[i][c][i]t [i]n[t]ent of [l][i][s]tening th[i][s] xy[l]oph[o]ne [j]azz tri[o], [o]n[l]y to get s[t]iffed [b]y a preva[r]i[c]ating [b]artender, [b]y a m[y][s][t][e][r]ious [sh][i]t [s][t]ain w[ea][r]ing a [c]o[b]alt [b]lue [s]o[c]cer [sh]irt, to [th]e ex[t]ent [th]at [b][y] [th]e [t][i]me [th]ey [w]ere seated [w]ith an over[p]riced [b]eer [a]nd a h[a]nd[f]ul of sub[p]ar Vietnamese egg [r][o]lls, the t[r]i[o] [f]ucking it[s]el[f] [s]to[p]ped [p]ounding xy[l]o[ph][o]nes and [c]eased [p][l]aying jazz, A[r][a][q]i h[a]d other more [p][r]e[s]sing and [d]ire to[p]i[c]s of [d]i[s][c]ussion, [d]e[s][p]ite the [s]u[d]den

[s][i]lence in the [c]o[r]ri[d]or w[i]de [r]e[s]tau[r]ant, [s][p]e[c][i]f[i][c]al[l][y] about Jo [Y]u-[R][i]'s [s]o-[c]alled [e]mp[l]o[y][e]e, [P][r]ia[p]us, [b]e[c][au]se the [f][u][c]king guy had [b]een tal[k]ing his ear o[f]f a[b]out S[o]ju for [l]i[k]e the wh[o]le [l]ast w[ee][k]. J[o] Yu-R[i] n[o]dd[e]d at the [c][o]mm[e]nt without ev[en] [an] [in][k]l[i]ng of a h[i]nt of sh[o][c]k in her [g]aze, she wasn't [c][au]ght [o]ff [g]u[a]rd at [a]ll, [a]s A[r][a][g]i [c]on[t]inued [t]o [r]e[c]apitu[l]ate the guy's m[o]n[o][l][o]gues, ab[ou]t [h]ow this [c]ountry, [i]f th[i]s [n]ation h[a]d any ch[a]nce what[s][o][e]ver, th[e]n it [n][ee][d]ed [a]t imm[e][d][i]atel[v] a[d]opt [S][o]ju [a]s its [n][a]tional [d]rink, [th]at [th]ere was [n]o [o]ther [o][p]tion but to [a][d]o[p]t [a]II ite[r][a]t[i]ons of Soju, of [K]o[r]ean [R]ice the W[i]ne as [p][r]o[p]er [B]ud [L][i]ght [r]e[p][l][a]cem[e]nt, to [c]o-o[p]t this [K]o[r][e]an wine and [r][e][b][r][a]nd it [a]s e[s]sentially fu[c]king [A]me[r]i[c]an, [A][r]a[q]i [s]aid. [Th]at [th]e J[o]e [R][o]gans of the in[t]er[n]et [s][ph]ere had [p][r]e[s][c]ribed the Do[n]ald [T][r]um[p]s of the [ph][y]s[i][c]al world as the [p]a[n][a][c][e][a] this [c]ountr[y] [n][ee]ded, via [r][e][a]ctiona[r][y] ch[a][nn]els [p]o[s]ted on a [p]lat[f]orm that i[r]o[n]i[c]ally e[n][ou]gh [s]tarted as a [C]IA [f][r][o]nt, yet the [r]eality w[a]s the t[r]ue [c]o[r]r[e][c]t[i]ve [c]ould [n][e]v[e]r be [f]ound in a Do[n]ald T[r][u]mp, [n][o], [o]nl[y] in [K]o[r][e]an [r][i]ce w[i]ne, a[c]cording to [P][r]ia[p]us, [p][eo][p]le n[ee]ded to start dr[i]n[k][i]ng [i]t [b]ars and [r]e[s]tau[r]ants in [p][l]a[c]e [c]ar[b]o[n]ated [l]ight [b]eers! A[r]a[q][i] and J[o] Yu-[R][i] [b][o]th [n][o]ted [th]at [th]ey [r][e]s[p]e[c]ted the [p]assion of [P][r]ia[p]us, [a]nd th[a]t he was [e][s]s[e]ntially [c]o[r]r[e][c]t [i]n h[i]s as[s][e][s]s[m][e]nt that nothing was [m]ore A[m]e[r]i[c]an than stealing the do[m][e][s]ti[c] [c][u]Iture of [o]thers [a]nd [r]eb[r][a]nding it [a]s our [o]wn - and S[o]ju was in [f][a][c]t, [a][f]ter all, an o[p]timal bar

[d]rink, as it was [s][p]e[c][i][f][i][c]ally [d]es[i]gned to [p]rov[i]de more [o]f [a] [b][u]zz than [b]eer, [b]ut not qu[i]te the ill-[a]d[v][i]sed lift of the [a][v]erage [ei]ghty p[r]oof g[r][ai]n [a]l[c]ohol. Yet, [a][c]cording to [A][r]a[q][i], [P][r][i]a[p]us was [d]ub[i]ous [th]at [th]e [c]ountry [c]ould a[c]tually [a][d]opt [S]oju, [p][r]ima[r]ily be[c]ause of [p][e]o[p]le, h[e] [s]aid, li[k]e the m[e]d[i]an [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin, [p][eo][p]le who would b[e] [r]eti[c]ent to dr[i]n[k] [s]omething [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [K]o[r][e]an on the [r]egu[l]ar, [p][e]o[p]le who [c][l]ung to be[l]i[e]fs that [p][e]o[p]le [l]i[k]e Ted [C]ruz [a][c]tual[l]y h[a]d [d][e][c]ent i[d][e]as about the w[or]ld, that any p[er][s]on who [f]ound [T]ed [C]ruz to b[e] [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al[l][y] in[t][r][i]guing would obv[i]ous[l][y] [b][e] a [l]ittle [r]eti[c]ent a[b]out im[b]i[b]ing [S]oju, [w]hen it [w]as obviously the [c]ase th[a]t, in f[a][c]t, [T]ed [C][r]uz [w]as [p][r]o[b]a[b][l]y [o]ne of the [t]op [t]en most des[p]i[c]a[b]le [p]eo[p]le on the [p][l]a[n]et, [P][r]ia[p]us [n]oted [C][r]uz's [p][r]eva[r]i[c][a]tions when [a]sked [g]uestions li[k]e '[D]oes [AI][C][A]P ever [i]nte[r][a][c]t w[i]th [I]s[r]ael.' [s][ay]ing how it once again [d]emon[s]tr[a]ted the i[nn][a]tely [d]e[s][p]i[c]a[b]le [b][a]se[l]ine his [p]er[s]o[n]a[l]ity. But [p][e]o[p]le li[k]e the [m][e]d[i]an [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins [o]f [A][m]e[r]i[c]a would a[c]tually p[r]efer to [d]i[s][c]uss Ted [C][r]uz with a [m]o[d]i[c]um of n[i][c]et[y] than just imb[i]be [K]o[r][e]an [r][i][c]e w[i]ne as [d]efault [d][r]in[k] of choice, [w]hich [w]hy this [c][l]ear[l]y [c]ount[r]y [w]as [p][r]e[c][i][p][i][c]e of an i[r]rever[s]ible de[c]line, [i]f not [i]n the m[i]dst of [i]t al[r]ead[y]! This [c]ount[r][y] was [c][l]ear[l][y] [f]u[c]king [f][i]n[i]shed, [P][r]ia[p]us said, and it was [s]olely be[c]ause of thi[s] in[t]er[s][e]ction of [T][e]d [C]r[u]z, [S]oi[u], and the [c]on[c]eptual [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin of [c]our[s]e, A[r]a[q][i] [r]ep[ea]t[e]d, [s][l]ow[l][y] alm[o]st [b]e[l][ie]v[i]ng what [P][r]ia[p]us had

[r]e[p][ea]t[e]d into his [p]oor ear[d]rums [d]ay [a]fter [d]ay th[a]t [w]eek. It [w]as [c][l]ear to [P]ria[p]us at [l]ea[s]t [th]at [th]e [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin w[a]s [a] to[p]i[c] they mu[s]t a[c]tua[l]ly [l]egi[s][l]ate [a]gainst, [n]o, [n]ot ju[s]t [p]ont[i]f[i]c]ate [a][b]out, [b]e[c]ause these [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins, they wouldn't ju[s]t re[s]cind [o]f [s][e][c]ond [c]ousins own [a][c]cord, [i]n[s]t[ea]d [i]nd[i]cat[i]ve [o]f a [s]t[r][u]ctu[r]al [r][o]t, [P][r]ia[p]us [th][ou]ght [th]at h[e] Jo Yu-[R][i] and A[r]a[q][i] should all [m][o]ve to [c]o[mm][u]ni[c][a]te with their New York [s]t[a]te [r]e[p][r]esentat[i]ves to [s]ee [i][f] they [c]ould [b]eg[i]n drafflting a [b][i]ll o[p]posing the [c]on[c]e[p]t of the [s]e[c]ond [c][ou]sin [i]n th[i]s [c][ou]ntry, was that [d]oa[b]le, [d]id [th]ey [th]in[k]? [A][r]a[q]i took [a] [b]ite of [a]n [e]gg [r]oll that was [s]ome[h]ow [s]till [s][c]orching [h]ot five minutes a[f]ter Jo Yu-Ri [p]ut the [p][l][a]stic [p][l][a]te [d]own on the t[a]ble. The [f][a]ct it [f]elt a h[u]n[d][r]ed [f][u]cking [d]eg[r]ees [ou]t in Midt[ow]n [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [d]i[d]n't hel[p].

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1.13 Jo Yu-R[i], wi[p]ing her [p]et[i]te [f]ingers on a [s]mea[r]ing thri[c]e [f]olded na[p][k]in, [s][e]l[e]ct [r][e]mnants of t[r]u[c]k [c][oo][k]ed egg [r]oll g[r]ease onto the [p]ure white [p]a[p]er, sh[oo][k] [h]er [h]ead [s][i]de to [s][i]de and [sh]owed A[r]a[q]i the [p]age of the [b]ook [sh]e'd just o[p]ened u[p], A[sh][b]e[r][y]'s [S]elf-[P]ort[r]ait in a [C]onvex [M]i[rr]or and [m]uttered [l]oo[k] at all th[i][s] [s][c][r][i][b]b[l]ing! in [r]efe[r]ence to the i[n]ane [n][o]tes the [p][r][e]v[i]ous [o]wner of the [p]a[p]er[b][a]ck h[a]d [s]trewn all over the first [p]age in [p]en[c]il. Ar[a][q]i [a][s]ked her what [c]ond[i]t[i]on she'd [b]ought the [b]oo[k] in ex[a][c]tly, [w]as she a[w]are of that [l]evel of s[c][r]ib[b][l]ing [p][r][i]or to [b][uy][i]ng [i]t, no, she [r]e[p][l][i]ed, [b]ut to [b]e [f]air n[ea]r[l][y] [e]ve[r][y] other [p]age of the [b]ook was [e]n[t]ire[l][y] [c][l][ea]n, un[t]il of [c]ourse this [f]inal [p]oem, the [s]el[f]-[t]itled [e]n[t]r[y] of the [c]ol[l][e][c]tion obvious[I][y] [s]ome n[i]tw[i]t w[h]o [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [h]ad to w[r][i]te, l[i]ke, a term [p]a[p]er [a][b]out it, [A][r]a[q]i [s]ugge[s]ted, [s]ome [k]ind of [d]i[s]sertation, and Jo Yu-[R][i] [a]g[r][e]ed, head bowed in [d]ef[ea]t. [A][r]aqi [a]lleged it [r]emained [r][ea]dable [e]ven if, s[u]re, the in[c][e][s]sant [p][e]n[c]il [s][c]r[i]bb[l][i]ngs w[er]e a [l][i]ttle di[s]t[r]a[c]ting, [c]ertain[l]y off-[p]utting, he [c]ould [t]otal[l]y re[l]ate [t]o th[a]t! The f[a][c]t of the m[a]tter [w]as it [w]as in[c][r]ea[s]ingly [d][i]ff[i][c]ult to [p]ay [d[]]i[s][c]ounted [p][r]i[c]es for used boo[k]s these [d]ays, without [s]ome [i]n[c]e[s]sant and/or [i][n][a]ne [s]cribb[l]ing [d]o[m]i[n][a]ting the [m]argins of [s]e[l]ect sh[i]pp[i]ng p[a]ges, without de[l][a]ys [i]n [b][e]nt [c][o]vers or un[e]xp[e][c]t[e]dl[y] s[u]b[p]ar [p]a[p]er[b]a[c]k [b]indings, alth[ou]gh J[o] Yu-Ri did n[o]te of all the [f]ine [p][o]ems the [c]olle[c]tion [c]on[s]i[s]ted of she [f]ound the [t]itle [p]oem [t]o b[e] the I[e]ast e[s]sential, [s]o if one [p]articular [p]oem had to [b]e [r]uined [b]y [s]aid [s]c[r]ibb[l]ing sh[e] was at [l][ea][s]t g[l][a]d it [w]as th[a]t one. [B]oo[k]s, [A]r[a][q]i [a][s]serted, were [a][c]tually [b]e[c]oming [s][l]ow[l]v im[p]o[ss]i[b]le to a[c]quire, as [p][r]o[d]u[c]tion volumes [d][r]o[p]ped [d][ue] t[o] the [i]n[c][r]ea[s]ing [i]l[l]ite[r]a[c]y [a]|| [a]|r]ound them - it was [b]|[a]|s]i[c]al[l]y a [c]|a]|s]e of when [b]e[f]ore a [f]unctional em[b]argo would [t]a[k]e hold in [t]erms of [a][c]qui[r]ing [d]e[c]ent [b]oo[k]s at [a]ffor[d]a[b]le [p][r]i[c]es, they were [r][a][p]id[l]y [r]everting [b][a][c]k to the Middle [A]ges or something, [l]i[b][r]a[r]ies with [r]are g[a]ted aw[a]v [a][f]i[c]ion[a]dos [i][i]zz[i]ng them[s]elves over [s][i]m[p]le

a[c]cess to [p]r[i]nt[e]d [p]a[p]er. [J]o Yu-Ri [th]ought [th]e e[m]ergence of the [P]DF [b]l[a]c[k] [m]ar[k]et [r][a]n [c]ounter to A[r]a[q]i's hy[p]er[b]o[l]i[c] [c][l]aims [b]ut of [c]our[s]e she [p][r]e[f]erred to [p]e[r]use [ph][y]s[i]cal [c]opies as w[e]|| [s]o she [f][e]|t the ove[r]all [p]ull of his [B]ut J[o] Y[u]-Ri then a[b]ru[p]t[l]v [c]on[t]in[u]ed on [t]o n[o]te [i]n a [m]ore v[i]go[r]ous f[a]shion her [a]g[r]ee[m]ent with [A][r][a]gi [r]egarding [P]ria[p][u]s, [d]id he kn[o]w [th]at i[u]st [th]e [o][th]er [d]ay, [w]hile [w]at[er]ing h[er] bok choy p[l][a]nts w[i]th h[i]s m[a][s]s[i]ve ph[a][l][u]s, he [t]old [a] s[t]o[r]y [a]bout with [a]n [r]en[d]ezvousing [e]xotic [d]an[c]er? [P][r]ia[p]us [s][ai]d he'd m[e]t the [s]t[r]i[pp]er just [a] [c][ou][p]le w[ee][k]s [p]r[e]v[i]ous and th[a]t sh[e]'d [a]sked to m[ee]t w[i]th h[i]m, which he [s]aid to Jo Yu-R[i] h[e] a[s]sumed m[ea]nt she [i]n[t][e]nded [t]o b[i]lk him out of s[o]me [c][a]sh [a]t her [c]|[u]b in [A][s]toria, [b]ut [a][p]parently, to h[er] s[ur][p][r]ise, [P][r]i[a][p]us wasn't [a][b]ove that, [s]o h[e] actual[l][y] showed [u]p to the [c][l][u]b, J[o] Yu-[R]i t[o]ld A[r]a[q]i, [b]ut [th]en, [th]e d[a]ncer, h[a]lf in the [b][a]g [a]c[c]ording to [P]ri[a][p][u]s, t[o]ld him she [a][c]tual[l][y] [m]eant to [m][ee]t out[s]ide the [c][l]ub, [s]o as her shift en[d]ed he too[k] the [d]an[c]er [d]own the [s]treet to [s]ome hoo[k]ah [s][p]ot, [s]m[o][k]ed [sh]i[sh]a then, a[c]cording to [P][r]ia[p][u]s, [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [r]ailed [h]er in [h]er [S]U[V] on a [s]ide [s]t[r][ee]t after she m[o]ved her [k]id's [c]ar[s][ea]t the [s]ide. Jo Y[u]-R[i]was а [s][l]ight[l]y f[l][a]bberg[a]sted [a]t the [a][n]ecd[o]te, which [P]ria[p][u]s [c]ontinued, [n][o]ting [h]ow the chi[c]k [h]ad [s]ome [i]ssues w[i]th [s]u[i][c][i][d]al [i][d]e[a]tion, but to Jo Yu-[R]i, she [r]e[l][ay]ed to [A][r]a[q]i, it was [a] [l]ittle [c]on[c]er[n]ing, [n]o? j[u]st [b]e[c][au]se she'd h[i]red the g[uy] [b]e[c]ause his [ph][a][ll]us w[a]s [s][u][pp]osed to [b]e [b]ene[f][i]c[i]al [f]or [p][l][a]nt growth, and [w]hile

[c][l][ea]r[l]y that [w]as id[ea]l for bo[k] choy [c]ul[t]ivation in [M]id[t]own [M]anhattan she wasn't [s]o [c]ertain she'd get the [m]axi[m]um v[a][l]ue of his [ph][a][ll]us if he was - [p][l]owing [s][l]uts in [S]U[V]s on [s]ide [s]t[r][ee]ts [n]ext to [sh]i[sh]a e[s]t[a]bli[sh]ments, A[r][a]qi [f][i][n][i]shed?

η/ω 751:997 .753

1.14 [N][o], A[r]a[q]i [n][o]ted, it was [c]ertainly un[c]outh that [P][r]ia[p][u]s was, you k[n][o]w, [p]otentially having [s]ex w[i]th [s]tr[i][pp]ers out[s]ide [sh][i][sh]a [s][p]ots in Quieelns, but [s]t[i]ll wii]th that [s]aid [h]e [h]ad [c]ome to [q]uestion Jo Yu-[R]i's a[r]ith[m]etic just [s][l]ight[l][y], [m]o[s]t[l][y] [b]e[c]ause while he under[s]tood the pha[II]us of [P]ria[p]us was [b]eing em[p]I[oy]ed for [b]o[k] ch[oy] [c]ultiv[a]t[i]on [a]nd [e]ng[a]g[i]ng [i]n [i]ll[i][c][i]t [a]ct[i]v[i]ties, [a]nd th[a]t th[a]t [p]ar[t]i[c]ular [a]dd[i]t[i]on [s]eemed to [p][or][t]end [p]o[or] out[c]omes. But th[r]ee [p]lus f[our], A[r]a[q]i [s]aid, [d]i[d]n't [e][q]ual [s]even, not exa[c]t[l][y], be[c]ause tru[l][y] it [e][q]ualed [s]e[v]en [p]lus the [F]orm [s]e[v]en, [b]e[c]ause [s]ans the [F]orm [s]e[v]en it would [b]e [b]a[s]i[c]ally impo[s]si[b]le [f]or them to [e][v]en [c]on[c][ei]ve of [s]e[v]en. [B]ut, A[r]a[q]i [n]oted, Form [s]e[v]en [b]y its [v]e[r]y [n]ature [d]i[d]n't e[n]g[a]ge i[n] the [s][a]me unitary [m][i]x[i]ng [th]at [th]e [m][a]them[a]ti[c]al [s]even did, [w]hat Ara[q]i [w]as [s]aying, h[e] [r][e]ite[r]ated to Jo Yu-[R]i, [w]as that it [w]as [p]o[s]si[b]le [P][r]ia[p]us , [b][e]ing a divine [b][e]ing (of [s]orts!), was [p]r[o][b]a[b]ly n[o]t [t]ethered [t]o the [s]ame [r]u[b][r]i[c]s of a[r]ithmeti[c] as o[th]ers, [th]at [P][r]ia[p][u]s was ve[r]y [p]o[s]sib[l]y [c]l[o][s]er to the Form [s]e[v]en [th]an [th]e [m][a]the[m][a]ti[c]al [s]e[v]en. [i]n [w]h[i]ch ca[s]e, [w]hile [s]oi[our]ns with [c][er]tain [A][s]to[r]i[a] [s]t[r]i[p]pers was

in [p][oor] taste, it might not [a][c]tually h[a]ve a [p][a]l[p]a[b]le effe[c]t on Jo Yu-Ri's [b]o[k] choy?

 $\eta/\omega$  250:336 .744

1.15 Jo Yu-[R][i] [f][[a]shed [b][a]ck [b][r][ie]fl[y] to a [b][u]l[b][ou]s [p]enis that was [s][p][r]ayed [g][r]a[ff][i]t[i] onto the [f]oun[d][a]tion of a home on B[r]id[g]ham th[a]t she [p][a][s]sed [w]hile [w]alking to a [F]ami[I]y [D]o[II]ar [th]e o[th]er [d][ay], it was [I]ike [e]ver [s]in[c]e she [e]m[p][l]oyed this [P][r]ia[p]us she'd [b]een [s]u[r]rounded on all [s][i]des [b][v] un[r]e[p]entant [p]en[is], which [p][r]o[b]a[b][l]y, she [r]e[f][l]ected, [s][er]ved h[er] [r]ight [f]or going into [b]usin[ess] with a H[e]I[I][e]n[i]c [e]nt[i]t[y] ([e][s]p[e]c[i]a[I]I[y] a [s]o-[c]alled d[e][i]t[y]). At the [s]ame [t]ime [g][r]owing f[r]esh [b]o[k] choy [i]n M[i]d[t][ow]n [g]ave her a [c]ompet[i]t[i]ve [a]dv[a]ntage no one else h[a]d in [K]orea[t][ow]n, so was it [a]|| [p]o[s]sibl[y] worth it? As [A][r]a[q][i] [r]e[c]eived the [t][a]b ([a]fter [d][r][i]n[k][i]ng h[i]s [s]e[c]ond sh[i]tty p[s]eu[d]o [l][t]alian [p][i]lsner), at four [t]wenty [p]m (as op[p][o]sed to J[o] Yu-[R][i]'s [r]e[c][ei]pt b[e]ing [r]e[c][ei]ved at th[r][ee] [t]welve [p]m) he w[r]ote out the [t]i[p] and, when I[ay]ing the [p][a][p]er down on the [t][a][b]le next [t]o Jo Y[u]-[R][i]'s the [t][wo] [r][ea][l]ized [b]oth [t][a]bs [c][a]me to ex[a][c]t[l]y [t]wenty-nine [ei]ghty-four a p[ie]ce, with [ea]ch [t][a]b ex[a][c]tly [c]on[s][i][s]ting of a [t]went[y] thr[ee] b[u][c]k s[u]b[t]otal with a dollar eighty [flour [t]ax a[ss]e[ss]ment and [flive even [t][i]p, [w]h[i]ch [w]as a b[i]t of a [c]oin[c]iden[c]e, al[m]ost like a ch[a]nce event th[a]t h[a]d [s]ome [s]ort of [c]os[m][i][c] [s][i]gn[i]f[i][c]an[c]e? The [t]wo [s]tared [a]t the [t]wo [t][a]bs in [s]ilence [a]s [a] chu[bb]y [w]h[i]te g[uy] hammering [a][w][ay] on his xy[l]o[ph][o]ne [s][l][o]w[l]v [f][a]ded to [b][l]ack.

2.1 Ha[k]im Al[l]ah a[c]tual[l]y [d]esperate[l][y] n[ee][d]ed a wai[f]u in [C]air[o], [l]i[k]e [s][o] [b]ad, [b]ut he al[s][o] [f]elt a [c]ertain [l]onging [f]or [s][u]mmer, [f]or the [s][u]n heat [a]nd [a]nd [th]e [th]e [a][cc]ompa[n]ying [i]rres[i][s]t[i]ble urge to [i]ndulge [i]n [a] [n][i][c]e [c]old w[i]ne, [b]eing [b]orn after all in the [p]eak [s]u[m]mer [m]onth of [Au]g[u]st [i]n N[i]ne Eighty F[i]ve and [a]ll. [S]ome would [s]ugge[s]t there was [p]o[s]sib[l][y] [e]ven a [m][y][s]tical [e][l][e][m]ent [t]o it, [th]e [th]ir[t]eenth d[ay] of the [ei]ghth [m]onth, [p]erha[p]s an arithmetic [c]al[c]u[l][a]tion or [s]omething of the [s]ort, the [v]io[l]ent [v]a[c]i[l][a]tions h[e] expe[r][i]en[c]ed [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ica[ll][y]? Weren't [th]ose in [th]emselves a [r]esi[d]ue of an [i]n[d][i]v[i]s[i][b]le Oneness, [v]io[l]ent[l]y [v]a[c]il[l]ating [b]etween [s]tri[c]t [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al [s][c]hools that [v][e]hementl[v] [d]is[a]gr[ee]d [w]ith [o]ne [a]nother? [W]asn't [v]a[c]i[ll]ating bet[w]een [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ical [p]oles, [v]io[l][e]nt[l]y, in a [s][e]nse, a real [d]i[ss][e]mb[l]ing of the [p]ern[i]c[i]ous [d]ua[l]it[ie]s and multi[p][l][i]c[i]t[ie]s we [e]ncounter [e]very [d]amn [d][ay]? A [m]iddle-[a]ged [m]an was a[d]orned in [d]a[pp]er [c]loth [s][i]tt[i]ng on the [p]atio [s]mo[k]ing a th[i]n [c][i]ga[r]ette and Ha[k]im, who [d]i[d]n't [s]mo[k]e [r]egu[l]ar[l][y], [s]ud[d]en[l][y] f[e]lt [a]n [i]n[t][e]nse urge [t]o [i]n[d]ulge in i[u]st [o]ne [c]iga[r]ette, [r]e[f][l]e[c]ting [b][a][c]k to [p][a]st [m][o][m]ents, on e[q]uiva[l]ent [p][a]ti[o]s where h[e]'d [m]ay[b][e] [p]u[ff]ed a cigarette or two, [w]here [e][v]ents [w]ere in[e][v]itab[l]y [f][e]lt, [f][e]It in the way that [f][ee][l]ings [m]ust in[e]vitab[l][y] [d]isgusting [e]xtend. [m]u[dd]ied and [r]e[c]o[II][e][c]tion and tho[r]ough[l]y in[c]omp[r]eh[e]nsible in [m]ate[r]ial ways. Ulti[m]ate[l][y],

[w]as [o]n[l][y] [w]hen you [w]ere [s][m][o][k]ing [c]igar[e]ttes that you a[c]tua[l]l[y] [f][e]lt things, and [f]ee[l][i]ng th[i]ngs was usual[l]y [a] [k]ind [c]om[p]osite [ph]e[n][o]me[n][a]. Ha[k]im [p]ulled out a [s][i]ngle d[i][n]ar [a]nd [a]sked the [g]uy for the [g][r]eat [p][r]ivilege [o]f b[u]mming a [s][i]ngle [c][i]ga[r]ette, [s][m]o[k]ing it next to the [m]an who was [o]bviously a high [r]an[k]ing [c]ourt [o]ffi[c]er [o]f the [m]o[s]t [r]e[s][p]e[c]ta[b]le order, to which the [m]an [b][l]unt[l]y [r]e[p][l]ied so[r]ry [l]ast one [b]ut there's [a] [c]amel sh[o][p] [a][c][r][o][s]s the [s]t[r]eet that [s][e]lls th[e]m. In no w[ay], sh[a]pe, or [f]orm was this [m]an [s][m]oking the last [r]e[m]ai[n][i]ng u[n][i]t [f][r]om his [p]ack of [c]iga[r]ettes. It would have [b]een [f]air[l]y c[l]ear to any [p]erson with even halff of a [f]unctioning [b][r][ai]n [th]at [th]is [m][a]n h[a]d [m]any [m]ore [c]iga[r][e]ttes [i]n h[i]s p[a][c]k, [th]at while [th]e [r][e][m][ai]ning p[r]e[c]ise a[m]ount of [c]iga[r]ettes the [m][a]n h[a]d [r]e[m]aining was un[c]ertain it was [a]|[s]o [a]bundant[l][v] [c][l]ear [th]at [th]at [a][m]ount [c]ertain[l][y] [e][q]ualed [m]ore than [o]ne. It [w]as [u]tter[l]y ab[s]urd t[o] [a][ss][u]me this [m][a]n was [s][m]oking his [l][a]st [c]igarette on the p[a]tio. W[i]th th[i]s [i]n mind, [p]urely [o]ut [o]f s[p]ite, Ha[k]im, a[f]ter waiting а [f]ew [m]o[m]ents in dee[p] [clontem[p][l][a]t[i]on, [c][r]o[s]sed the [s][t][r]eet and [s][t]ood in [p][l][a][c]e at the [c]amel [s][t][a]t[i]on, where th[r][ee] [p][eo][p]le were al[r]eady im[p][a]tiently w[ai]ting in f[r]ont of a hand-w[r][i]tt[e]n sign that [r]ead [B][r]ea[k] [B]e [B][a][c]k [B][a]th[r]oom [i]n M[i]n[u]tes. There was no o[p]tion [b]ut for Ha[k]im to [b]uy [a]n [e]ntire [p]a[c]k of [c]igarettes [p]ure[l]y [o]ut [o]f [s][p][i]te, a [s][p][i]teful [l][u]st to j[u]st [s][m]oke one [c]igar[e]tte. A h[ea]vy [s][e]t [p][a][s]ty [m]i[dd]le [a]ged [l][a][d]y wearing a b[l][a][c]k n[a]ps[a][c]k w[i]th

th[i]nn[i]ng [l][i]ght [h]air [o]n the t[o]p of [h]er [h]ead was first in [I][i]ne, and would [r]e[m]ain [I]onger [th]an [th]e [r][o][l][y] p[o][l][y] [f]air-[s]kinned [m]an with the [m]acho a[cc]ent, or the [r]un of the [m]ill d[ay] [l]a[b]orer - yet, [flueled [b]y th[i]s [m][i]xture of [n]on[s]en[s]ical [l]ust and [i]rra[ti]o[n]a[l]ly [i]n[s]a[ti]able [s]pite, [H]akim [w]ould [w]ait n[ea]rl[y] [a]n [e]n[t]ire [h]alf hour for the a[tt]endant re[t][ur]n to [p][ur]ch[a]se th[i]s [p]a[c]k [t]o over[p][r]i[c]ed [c]iga[r]ettes to [s][m]o[k]e a [s][m]all [p]er[c]entage [o]f [o]n the [p]ati[o]. He out[l]asted not [o]n[l]y the [h][ea]vy [s][e]t [p][a][s]ty fem[a]le and [h]er [i]n[i]t[i]al com[p]anions b[u]t even s[u]b[s]e[q]uent [o]thers who a[pp][r][o]ached the [w]ind[o]w then [q]ui[c]k[l]y [l]eft exa[s][p]e[r][a]ted at the [r][i]d[i][c]u[l]ous [w][ai]t, [a]t the [a]b[s]urd [c][l][ai]m on this [c]ardboard [s]ign. Yet on[c]e thi[s] e[s][c]a[p][a]de was [c]om[p][l][e]ted Ha[k][i]m re[t]urned [t]o the [p]atio [t]o, to his [s]urp[r][i]se, f[i]nd the [s]ame [m]an [s]till [s][m]o[k]ing [c]iga[r]ette, а wh[i]ch Ha[k]im [q]u[i][c]k[l]y [c]al[c]u[l]ated, m[u]st have been a [s][u]b[s]e[q]uent [c]igarette or, even worse, [a] [s][u]b[s]e[q]uent to [a] [s][u]b[s]e[q]u[e]nt [c]igar[e]tte, and the [s]ame h[ea]vy [s][e]t [w]oman [w]ith the b[l][a][c]k n[a]p[s][a][c]k and thin [l]ight hair, now al[s][o] [s][m][o]king a [c]igarette, de[s][p]ite the [f][a][c]t she le[f]t the [c]a[m]el [s]t[a]tion [b]e[f]ore [b]eing [a][b]le to [b]uy a [p][a][c]k, wh[i]ch Ha[k]im [q]u[i][ck][l]y [c]al[c]u[l]ated, [m]ust have al[s]o [b]een [s]upp[l][i]ed [b][y] the [m]an in the h[i]gh [c][l]a[s]s [c][l]oth. The [m]an just [m][o][m]ents [a]g[o] was [a][ll]eged[l]y [s]m[o][k]ing his [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [l]a[s]t [c]igarette on the pati[o]. The [m]an in the [h]igh [c][l]ass [c][l]oth [m]ust [h]ave g[i]ft[e]d the [h][ea]vy [s][e]t p[a][s]ty fem[a]le her [c]igarette, be[c]ause [H]a[k]im [w]as just [w]ith [h]er, [a]t the [c][a]mel [s]tation, and she h[a]d n[o] [c]iga[r]ettes, the [o]n[y] [r][ea]s[o]n sh[e] was

[e]v[e]n at the [s]tat[i]on was [t]o ob[t][ai]n a[d]d[i]t[i]on[a]l [c][i]garettes. [S]0 it was [b][a][s]i[c]ally [c]o[rr]o[b]o[r][a]ted [th]at [th]e man [a][d]orned in the [r]oyal [a]ttire, at the ve[r][y] l[ea]st, at the bare [m][i]n[i][m]um, had two a[d]d[i]t[i]onal c[i]ga[r]ettes, if not th[r]ee a[d]d[i]t[i]onal [c][i]ga[r]ettes, [i]n h[i]s pa[c]k when [r]uth[l]ess[l][y] t[o]ld [H]a[k][i]m [h][e] [s]m[o][k]ing his [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [l]ast [o]ne, [w]hich of [c]our[s]e [w][a]s [u]n[s]urprising, yet, [l][i]ke all imp[l][i]ed [l][i]es, it [s]tung Ha[k]im more [w]hen [v]o[c]i[f]erou[s][l][y] it [w]as [f]ina[l]|[y] [b]eyond a reasona[b]le doubt. [c]on[f]irmed [o]b[v]ious [l][i]es are more [b]en[i]gn when [s]t[i]ll ex[i][s]t[i]ng [i]n an un[p]roven [s]tate, [d]e[s][p]ite [b][e]ing obv[i]ous, [b]ecause an [b][l]atant [l]ie, once [p]r[o]ven, [d]e[s][p]ite the [f]act it[s] e[s]sen[c]e was [a][s]s[u]med [f][i]ct[i]t[i]ous, [a]l[r]eady [d]e[s]pite [a]l[r]eady having [a]ttained [a] [c]ertain [r]ea[l]ity as [a] [l]ie, [s]t[i]ngs [w][i]th a [c][er]tain vig[or] [w]hen [f]ina[l]ly [c]on[f]irmed as a b[l]atant di[s][t]ortion of the [t]ruth. All [t]ruth is ul[t]imatel[y] [d]i[s][t]orted [t]o [s]ome [d]egr[ee], and we know th[i][s] [i]mp[l][i][c][i]t[l][y], yet [w]ithout [f]ail [m]onu[m]ental[l][y] [d]ejected [c]on[f][ir][m][i]ng [c][er]t[ai]n [d]i[s][t]ortions of the [t]ruth. W[e] [b]el[ie]ve the obv[i]ous [l]ie to [b][e] [f][i]ct[i]t[i]ous, ha[v]ing [b]een ob[v]ious, that [i]t [w][i]ll mean [n]othing [o]nce confirmed as [a] f[a]l[s]it[y], [a]s [n]othing h[a]s e[ss]entiall[y] [b]een [a]ltered, [w]hat [w]e [a]lread[y] t[r][ea]ted as a [p][r]o[b]a[b]le [l]ie [s]im[p][l]y [b]e[c]omes an a[c]tual [l]ie, yet when the [o]bvious [l]ie shi[f]ts [f]rom [i]t t[0] p[r][o]ven, [i][rr][a]tiona[ll]y [a]ss[u]med [c]on[c][a]tenates [a]nd be[c]omes [a]n [e]ven [m]ore [e]g[r][e]gious [l]ie. [H]a[k][i]m [h]ad sh[a]me[l]ess[l]y [b]etr[ay]ed [b]y a [m]an who owed him [l]ess [th]an nothing in [th]e [w]orld, yet [w]asn't it

[p]erha[p]s [th]e [c]a[s]e [th]at by the [s][o]le a[c]t of [s]m[o][k]ing [c]igar[e]ttes, to [s]ome [e]xt[ent, the man [e]n[t]ered in[t]o [s]ocial [c]ontr[a][c]t of а b[e]n[e]vo[l][e]nt[l]y [a][c]qui[e][s]cing [a] [r][e][q]u[e][s]t for [a] [s][i]ngle [c][i]ga[r][e]tte at shitty [d]ive [b]ars. To [s]moke a [c]iga[r]ette at a [d]ive [b]ar is in[t][o] vo[l]un[t]a[r]i[l]y en[t]er а [c]o[mm][u]ne I[i][k]e-m[i]nded [c][i]t[i]zens bu[mm][i]ng [c][i]garettes [o]ff each [o]ther [o]n [o][c]c[a]s[i]on, [a]nd, with th[a]t in [c][l][ai]m[i]ng mind. wasn't [f]alse[l]y toba[cc][o] [p][o]verty in [s]uch [a] [s]etting [a] [f][aux] [p][a]s of the [h]ighest order? [H]a[k]im [c]ame [a]round to the ide[a] it he [s]m[o][k]ed t[wo] [b][r]and was as [c]iga[r]ettes on the [p]ati[o] f[r]om his [b][r]and [n]ew [o]ver[p][r]iced [p][a][c]k, [a][f]ter [s]omewhat [s]ar[c][a]sti[c]ally o[ff]e[r]ing the m[a]n in the [r]oyal attire [a]n [a]dd[i]t[i]onal [c][i]ga[r]ette [a][f]ter h[i]s [s]o-called I[a]st [o]ne w[a]s [d][o]ne, [a]s he [d][r][a]nk f[r]om the [w]h[i]te [w][i]ne the bartender was [n][i]ce e[n]ough to [k]eep on [i]ce for him [w]hile he [w][ai]t[e]d [a]t the [c][a]mel [s]t[a]t[i]on [f]or [u][p]wards [o]f [a] hal[f] an hour, [p]urely [o]ut [o]f [s][p]ite.

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2.12 At [th]e age of [th]irty five, [w]h[i]ch [i]s, [w]e k[n][o]w, [o]n[l][y] tru[l][y] d[i]v[i]s[i][b]le [b]y [n]um[b]ers se[v]en and f[i]ve, [i]t's [a]lm[o]st [i]ne[v]ita[b]le to [a][rr][i]ve at the [r]ea[l][i]zation [th]at [th]e [s]k[y] [i]t[s]elf [i]s [l][i]ttle more than a t[i]n roof, Ha[k]im [c]on[s]i[d]ered [a]s he [s][a]t on the p[a]tio [ey]eing the [d]ouche [b][a]g in the ro[y]al att[i]re [w]al[k] a[w][av]. [th]at [b]e[y]ond [th]e [s][k]y our [s]en[s]es mi[r]ages [r]e[l][ay] to us on[l][y] and [l]u[r]id [f]al[s][i][f][i]cations, pure[l][y] [o]ut of habit, [w][i]th n[o]

[i]|| [i]ntent [w]hat[s][o]e[v][er]. It's ne[v][er] been w[i]th [i]|| [i]nt[e]nt that our [s][e]n[s]es have utter[l][y] [l][e]t us down in [n][ea]rl[y] [e]ve[r][y] [r]egard, [i]t's [s][i]mply the [i]ntr[i]n[s][i][c] [n]ature of things that [c]ause our [s]en[s]es to [r]e[l]ay [l]u[r][i]d fal[s][i]ties. [S][a]ns [m]e[m]ory there [c][a]n't be [t][i]me. At the [t]ender age of [th]irty [f][i]ve all of [th][i]s w[i]thout [f]ail be[c]omes [c]lear to you, [th]at every[th][i]ng [i]s ae[s][th][e]t[i]cs [i]n a [c]ertain [s][e]nse, [th]at [th]e [s][k]y [i]t[s]elf [i]s ju[s]t a t[i]n roof, [a]nd Ha[k]im went [b][a]ck in[t]o the [b]ar [t]o [a]sk the aged [b]ar[t]ender, who it [t]urned out was [o]nly a [c]ou[p]le [y]ears [o]lder than him, for just [o]ne [m]ore [w]ine, [w]here a [y]ounger [m][a]n and his [w]i[f]e a[b]out [b]eing [c]om[p][l]ained [b][a]nned [f]r[o]m [s][o]me [l]o[c]al e[s]ta[b][l]ish[m]ent. The young [m][a]n [c][a]l[c]u[l]ated how [m][u]ch [m][o]ney he spent [a]t this | establishment, how [m][u]ch [m][o]ney they were [f]or[s][a][k][i]ng [b]y [s]o un[f]airly [b][a][nn]ing him, [n]ever t[a][k][i]ng [a] [s]e[c]ond to [a][n]alyze whe[th]er [th]e [a][m]ount of [m]oney he [w]as [s][p]en[d]ing at [o]ne [b]ar [w]as e[v]en ad[v]isa[b]le to [d]i[s][c][l]ose in [p][u][b][l][i]c, w[i]th [c][o]m[p][l]ete [s]tr[a]ngers. There was a [c][r]i[m]inal [e][l][e][m]ent to th[i]s b[a]n[i]sh[m]ent [i]n [th]e eyes of [th]is young [m]an, [a]s th[i]s was a [s]itu[a]tion where he was [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] [s][a]ns fault, where this e[s]t[a]blishment had [a][c]ted [e][rr]o[n]eous[l][y], to the [e]xt[e]nt the [e][rr]or was [a][c]tual[l][y] [c][r][i]m[i][n]al. He'd [n]e[v]er [b]e [a][b]le to go [b][a][c]k to th[a]t [b]ar again. [B]ut would they [s]ur[v]ive e[c]o[n]omi[c]ally [s]ans his [p][a]tro[n]age? [W]h[e]n Ha[k][i]m [w][e]nt down the [r]oad, [l][ea][v]ing the [r]i[v]eting [c]on[v]ers[a]tion [o]f the v[ou]ng man behind him, to h[i]s [d][i]s[m][a]y he [d][i][d]n't [f]ind a [s][i]ngle wai[f]u [m][a][r]au[d]ing [a][r]ound the [c][i]ty, the [c]it[y] was [c]omp[l][e]te[l][y] void of [a]n[y] [a]nd all

waif[u]s. No, just [s]ome mi[dd]le-aged [d][u]des [d]i[s][c]u[ss]ing the [c]u[rr]ent [s]tate of the [F]at[i][m][i]d [m][i]l[i]ta[r]y. How [t]o [t][r]an[s]cend the [t]in [r][oo][f] [w]as al[w]ays a matter of g[r]eat [d]i[s]p[u]te, and a [r]e[c]u[rr]ing voice [w]ould [w]hi[s][p]er to [H]a[k][i]m [i]n [h][i]s [s]l[ee][p] that very [n]ight [th]at [th]ere was [b]eauti[f]ul in [th]e [s]t[r][ee]ts [n]othing [a][f]ter[n]oon for a [s][p]e[c][i][f][i]c [r][ea]son, [b]e[c]ause the [d]igestion of [b]eauty at [c][er]t[ai]n times [c]an make a [p][er][s][o]n [e]x[c][e][p]t[i]onally [d]y[s][p][e][p]t[i]c, this [p][r]ot[e][c]t[i]on. H[a][k][i]m [a]g[r][ee]d, [s]t[i]|l ta[s]ting the [s][i]x [f]ala[f]els he [s][c]ar[f]ed down on his way home even a[f]ter br[u]shing his [t]eeth m[u]l[t]iple [t]imes, [v]io[l]ent[l]y [v]a[c]i[l][a]ting [i]n h[i]s own w[ay] [e]ven as h[e] r[e]-en[t]ered in[t]o a [c]alm, [d][ee][p] s[l][ee][p] where [h][e]'d [h]ave a [r]e[c]u[rr]ent [d][r][ea]m h[i]m[s]elf to [c][l]eanse h[i]m[s]elf. of [k][i][ll][i]ng [H]a[k]im would [k][i]ll [h][i]m[s]elf [i]n h[i]s d[r]eam, yet a[f]terward he'd [s][u]b[s][i][s]t [i]n a [s][u][p]e[r]ior [f]orm, [p]o[s]t [s]u[cc]e[ss][f]ully [k][i]ll[i]ng h[i]m[s]elf, [v]oid of the [m]e[m]o[r]ies that [h]aunted [h]im, de[p]ri[v]ing him of a [p]ea[c]e[f]ul [s]lumber. He [q]u[e]stioned th[e]se [v]oices h[e] [f][r][e][q]u[e]ntly [h]eard [i]n h[i]s [h]ead, their o[r][i]g[i]n, the ones [c]on[s]tant[l]y [c]a[ll][i]ng h[i]m un[t][i]l, [f]inally able to a[ss]ert [c]on[t][r]ol of his envi[r]on[m]ent. he [s][c][r][ea]med A[ll]ah is One [r]ep[ea]ted[l][y], un[t]il the [c]on[t]ain[m]ent of his [d][r][ea]m was [c][l][ea]nsed by his y[e][ll]ing. With Ha[k][i]m in a [s]t[a]te of g[r][ea]t [d]i[s]t[r]e[ss] and only hal[f]-awa[k]e, [P][r]o[ph]et The [M]uha[mm]ed a[pp]eared b[r][ie][f][l][y], as a [m]i[rr]or [i][m][a]ge of and [u]ttered n[o]thing he h[i]ms[e]l[f], [c]ould [r]e[c]o[l][e][c]t.

 $\eta/\omega$  704:866 .813

3.1 Enz[o] t[o]ld Daria [h]ow [h]e was [c]on[s]i[d]ering that it [w]as [p]erh[a]ps [w]ith а tyr[a][n]ni[c]al ex[a][c]t[n]ess th[a]t h[e] [p]ro[c][ee][d]ed about his l[i][f]e, [r][i]ght up th[r]ough [h]is w[ee]kl[y] [h][i]gh [f][a]des, that he [c]on[s]idered a l[a]tent geome[t][r]i[c]al [t]y[r]anny to [b][e] [p]o[s]si[b][l][y] [r]uth[l]e[s]s[l][y] gu[i]ding his l[i]fe as he [t]oo[k] [q]ui[c]k note of a [q]u[i]te [s][i]zeable [p]o[s]terior in [l][i]ght b[l]ue jeans that [w][a]s [w][a]l[k]ing [r][i]ght [p][ast him [a]s he a[p]proached the large [b]r[i][c]k [b]u[i][d]ing that [c]ontained the [D]e[p]art[m]ent [flor E[c]ono[m]i[c] [D]evelo[p][m]ent on [F]ri[d]ay [a][f]ternoon [a]t [f]our [p]m on the [d][o]t. [D][a]ria knew Enzo wal[k]ed there [t]o [t]ry and [s][l][i]p the [c][l]er[k] a [q]u[i][c]k [s]o-[c]alled [b][u]sin[e]ss [r]egist[r]ation [f][or]m [b]ut [b]e[f][or]e she [c]ould [c]on[f][ir]m what she already k[n]ew [f]or a [f]act Enz[o] went on [t]o [n][o]te that it [t][ur]ned out the [c]ity [c][l]erks' o[f]fi[c]es [c][l][o]sed hal[f] an ho[ur] [ear][l]y [f]or their [s][o]-[c]alled [s]ummer hours, wh[i]ch as [i]t [s][o] h[a]ppened [w]as right [a]t [f]our pm. Enz[o] m[u]ttered [w]h[a]t the [f][u][c]k be[f]ore [c]on[t]inuing on [t]o [n][o]te that he [w]as [w]earing his [n]ew [t]an [W]al[m]art [m]esh [b]as[k]et[b]all shorts [w][i]th h[i]s [w]hite [v][a]ns [a]s the [v]oluptuous [w]oman [w]al[k]ed p[a]st him, by [c]ont[r][a]st, [w]ea[r]ing [w]ire [r]immed gl[a]sses on the t[i]p of her th[i]n nose, [s]u[r]rounded on th[r]ee [s][i]des [b][y] [c]ur[l]y [b][l]a[c]k [l]o[c]ks. A[c]cording Enzo [s]ometimes it w[a]s i[u]st to p[r]e[f]e[r]a[b]le to [s]it on a [r]oo[f] with your shirt o[f]f and think a[b]out [f][u][c]k[ing] [n][o]th[ing] [f]or a l[i]ttle b[i]t [e]ven [i][f] [i]t was [f][i]ve [f]i[f]t[ee]n on a [F]r[i]day a[f]ter[n]oon, there was, [a]fter all, [r]e[p]etition and [n]um[b]er, he said to [D]a[r]ia, [b][u]t [d]id [n][u]m[b]ers [a]ctuall[y] [r]e[p][ea]t? [D]a[r]ia [n][o]ted

she'd [b]een [n][o]ti[c]ing a[n] i[n][s]ane amount of [f][i]ve [f][i]ves and [t][wo] [t]wenty [t][wo]s p[l]us [e][I][e]ven [e][I][e][v]ens and e[v]en one [e][I][e]vens of [l][a]te but to d[a]te she'd [r]e[f][r][ai]ned [f][r]om any a[tt]empt [t][o] g[oo]gle an explan[a]tion. B[u]t w[a]sn't it the [c][a]se, Enzo in[t]erje[c]ted, [s]in[c]e they'd g[o]tten [o]nto the [t][o][p]i[c] of [s]e[q]uen[c]es of in[t]egers any[w][ay], [w]asn't it the [c][a]se [th]at [th]e [s]e[c]ond [clousin as а [c]on[c]eptual art[i][f][i]ce was [c]o[ll]e[c]tive[l][y] a[cc]e[l]e[r]ating the down[f]all of their [c]ount[r][y], I mean, Enzo [s][ai]d, [s][e][c]ond [c][ou]sins [a]re in a[gg]re[g]ate [a]ll b[a][s]i[c]ally [c][u]nts, r[i]ght? In Enzo's m[i]nd it was the [c][i]ear[i]y the [c][a]se [th]at [th]e [c]ousin [s]e[c]ond was [b]a[s]i[c]al[l]y obje[c]tiona[b]le, a p[i]t[i]ful [c][l][i]ng[i]ng to a [s]o-[c]alled b[l]ood[l]ine that [w]as, even [w]hen more potent, [s]till am[b][i]guous [s][o]mewh[a]t [i]f [n][o]t [n][o]n[s]en[s]i[c]al. [W]hat [w]as [b]lood any[w]ay? [D][ar]ia, for her [p][ar]t, [d]i[d]n't have a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l]y [s]trong o[p]inion on the [c]on[c]e[p]t of the [s]e[c]ond [c][ou]sin [o]ne [w]ay or [th]e [o][th]er, [b]ut she adm[i]tt[e]d that she [d][i][d][n]'t have as [b][i]g [o]f [a] f[a]mily [a]s Enzo, which [p]erha[p]s [p]layed a [p]art [i]n her [q]u[i]zz[i][c]al n[o]nch[a]l[a]nce? N[o], Enz[o] went w[a]s on, the [s]e[c]ond [c][ou]sin [s]omething [i]nd[i][c]at[i]ve of a [s]tru[c]tu[r]al [r]ot, in f[a]ct it was [s]omething th[a]t [p]ro[b]a[b][l][y] n[ee]ded [a]ctual [l]egis[l]ation to [b][e] [p]ro[p]er[l][y] [c]om[b][a]tted, [b]e[c]ause these [s]e[c]ond [c]ousins - they wouldn't just [r]e[s]cind of their [o]wn a[cc]ord. [N][o], Enz[o] and Da[r]i[a] [b][o]th, they [n]eeded to [s]tart [p]et[i]t[i]on[i]ng [r]e[p][r]esenta[t]ives [t]o l[o][c]al [a][b][o]l[i]sh this [c][o]n[c][e]pt of the [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin.

 $\eta/\omega$  568:760 .747

3.12 It was [a]b[u]ndant[l]y [c][l]ear to Enz[o] [th]at [th]ere was a [r]e[c]u[rr][ing] s[p][l]itt[ing] [i]n[t][o] [t][wo] that was [p]erh[a][p]s the m[o]st ne[f]arious [a]ct of all, [th][a]t [th]e [f]irst of [th]is or [th]at in[e]vita[b]ly would [b]e[c]ome [e]x[t]ended [t]o the [s]o-[c]alled [s]e[c]ond of the [s][a]me [s][u]b[s]tr[a]te, [b][u]t why? It was th[i]s counting, th[i]s [l]ur[i]d [l][i]near [e]xt[e]nsion that [p]erha[p]s off[e]nd[e]d [E]nz[o] the m[o]st, to which [D]a[r]ia, th[i]nk[i][ng] a[b]out her [b]ok choy with [a]n un[e]r[r]i[ng] s[e]nse of [d][r][ea]d, was on[l][y] [p]artial[l][y] [p]aying a[tt]ention [t]o. They'd [f]undamentally [f]orgotten [s][o]mething a[b]out n[u]m[b]er, Enzo [s]aid, they'd be[c][o]me [a]nd a[d]di[c]ted to [d]ivi[d]i[ng] [a][dd]i[ng], ex[t]en[d]i[ng] [a]nd sub[t]r[a][c]ti[ng], in[s]tead fo[c]u[s]ing on [c]on[c]e[p]ts more [s]t[ee][p]ed [p]urit[y]. [E]nz[o] f[e]lt as [th][ou]gh [th]ey were meant to [r]ecall [s]omething e[s]sential a[b]out [n][u]m[b]er, [b][u]t [n][ow], [s]omeh[ow], that was im[p]os[s]i[b]le [f]or [th]em, [th]at [th]ey'd [f][or]gotten [f][or] good [a]n [e][s]s[e]ntial a[s]pect of num[b]er, which [m][a]de [e]very [s]itu[a]tion [e]ncountered i[m]m[e]asura[b][l][y] [b][l][ea]k. The [s][e][c]ond [c]ousin it[s][e]If was nothing beyond a [s][y]mptom of a much greater [s][i][c]k[n]ess, the [c]o[mm]on [c]old of [c]ounting [n]um[b]ers, [o]f [b]e[c]o[m]ing u[n]i[t]a[r][v] un[t]il thev [r][ea]ched [i]nf[i][n][i]ty. [N]othing was [m]ore [i]nf[i]n[i]te [th]an [th]e u[n]i[t]a[r]y, [y]et the [u]ni[t]ary bec[o][m]ing [i]nf[i]n[i]te was [u]tt[er]ly [a]b[s][ur]d! Eve[r]ything was [s][p]l[i]t [i]n[t][o] [t][wo], or [s][p]l[i]t [i]nto th[r]ee, [a]ll [a][r]ound them were [d]o[p]pelg[a]ngers [a]nd [t]r[i]n[i]ti[e]s of [w]h[a]t [w][a]s [w]h[a]t. Mul[t]ipl[i]c[i]t[y] [c]oul[d]n't ex[i][s]t th[i][s] way! Enzo [c]on[t]inued as [D]a[r]ia [s]imul[t]aneou[s]ly [c]on[s][i][d]ered b[r][i]ng[i]ng up a few [c]on[c]erns she h[a]d with [a]n [e]m[p]loyee she'd

[c]on[t]r[a][c]ted [s][p]e[c][i]f[i][c]ally in a bo[t][a][n]i[c]al m[a][n]ner, but who, g[i]v[e]n h[i]s unorthodox methods, had [s]tarted to [c]on[c][er]n h[er] given [s]ome of his [m]ore li[c]entious ha[b]its. Of [c]our[s]e [b][o]tan[y] and [p]er[s]onal [m]atters were [p][r]o[b]a[b]l[y], in [m]ost [c]a[s]es, [c]on[s]idered [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [s]e[p]ar[a]te [i]ssues, but [d][ue] t[o] the [s][p]e[c][i]f[i]c nat[ur]e of th[i]s [p]ar[t][i]cul[ar] job it had [b]egun to [b]other [D]aria just [s][l]ight[l]y. Enzo, for his [p][a]rt, had [a]n [e]n[t]ire [p]ack of [c]iga[r]ettes [i]n h[i]s [d][r][awer], he [s]aid to [D]a[r]ia, [b]e[c]ause he'd [b]ought a whole [p]a[c]k [th]e o[th]er [d]ay, ju[s]t [p]urely out of [s][p]ite. [D]id she [w]ant [t]o go [o]ut [o]n[t]o the [d]e[c]k and [w]ha[c]k a puff or [t]wo f[r][o]m [o]ne? Was she [d][r][u]n[k] en[ou]gh yet? To [s]mo[k]e a [q]u[i][ck] c[i]g? Be[c]ause she [c][l]ear[l]v wasn't [l]i[s]te[n]ing to a[n]y of the fu[ck][i]ng sh[i]t he was [s]aying a[b]out int[e]gers or [s][e][c]ond [c]ousins, a[b]out the non[s][e]n[s]i[c]al d[i]v[i]s[i]on of [e]ve[r]ything [a]|| [a][r]ound them! No Daria [w]as, she [w]as I[i]st[e]ning ([k]ind of ...), it was [j]ust th[a]t she was [j]ust a t[a]d [p]r[e]o[cc]u[p]ied, [e]ven [b]efore [c]oming [b]y she'd [b]een wal[k]ing through a [s]mall [c]ourtyard [i]n the [c][i]ty, [t]a[k]ing [n][o]te of the [b][i]g [t][r]ees g[r][o]wing [n]ext to the large [b][r][i][c]k [c]ondo [b]u[i]ldings, [c]ont[e]mpl[a]ting [c]o[nn][e][c]ting [n][a]ture, but also w[i]th [i][n]a[n][i]mate obi[e]cts as [w][e]II? It [w]as [o]ne thing to [c]o[nn]e[c]t with [n]ature and trees [a]nd [p][l][a]nts, th[a]t was almost [c][l]iche, [b]ut what a[b]out [c]o[nn]e[c]ting w[i]th [i][n]a[n][i][m]ate objects [m][a]de of [p][l]a[s]tic by w[a]ge [s][l][a]ves in East [A]sia? Sh[e]'d r[e]centl[y] a[tt]ended d[i]v[i]ne I[i]turgy [f]or the [f]irst [t][i]me in ages, she [t][o]ld Enz[o], and while o[cc]asionally [s]ta[r]ing u[p] at the [s]e[r]ies of i[c]ons [p]eo[p]le would have [i]nd[i][s][c]r[i]m[i]nately [k][i]lled [p]eo[p]le [f][or] w[or][sh]i[pp]ing just [a] [f]ew

[sh][or]t [c]enturies [a]go, she [c]ould have [s][w]orn a [s]et of voi[c]es [w]ere [s]pea[k]ing to her, [s][o]lely in her [m][i]nd, [c]om[f][or]ting [h]er but al[s][o] in[f][or][m]ing [h]er [th]at [th]ere would be an u[p][c]oming t[i]me [th]at [th]ey'd [s][n]a[p] their [f]ingers and she'd [f]i[n]al[l][y] re[t]urn [t]o them, [a]s if th[a]t [w]as [w]here she [a]ctual[l][y] be[l]onged, [i]n th[i]s [p][l]ane she [c]ould [h]ard[l]y [c]om[p]re[h]end, yet [c]o[mm]uni[c][a]ted to her with no [p]r[o][b]l[e]m. She [e]xited her [b][o]d[y] just [m]o[m]enta[r]i[l][y], f[i]lled w[i]th [p]ure [r]e[l]ief, [th]en [th]e b[e]ings [r][e]ite[r]ated [a] [t][i]me would [a][rr][i]ve [w]hen they [w]ould s[n]ap their [f]ingers and she'd [r]e[t]urn, [f]i[n]ally, [t]o them. [P]erh[a][p]s she'd h[a]ve [d]i[s][c][ou]nted the en[c][ou]nter if she h[a]dn't, on a whim, she [t][o]ld Enz[o], [d]e[c]i[d]ed to g[o] up [t]o [t]a[k]e [c]ommunion with her [d]ad, [a]nd [a]s her turn f[i]nally a[r]r[i]ved to im[b][i]be the [b]lood of [C]h[r][i][s]t Him[s]elf, she [n]ot[i][c]ed [s][i]tt[i]ng [c]alm[l]y to the [l]e[f]t of the p[r]iest [w]as a [W]ind Tun[n]el b[r][a]nd [f][l]oor [f][a]n. The [e]x[a]ct same [f]loor [f][a]n she'd, [a][f]ter [t]a[k]ing [e]n[t]irel[y] [t]oo [m]an[y] [m][u]shrooms [o]ne par[t]i[c]ular [e]vening [e]ons ago, [e]ng[a]ged [i]n [a]n [e]xten[d]ed [c]onvers[a]tion w[i]th [r]egar[d]ing the t[r]ue n[a]ture of things, [d]u[r]ing which a [c]ertain [d]e[s]cen[d]ed [c][l]a[r]it[y] [u][p]on her, [u]n[d]er[s]tan[d]ing, with the [u]t[m]ost [p]u[r]ity, her [t][r]ue o[r][i]g[i]n and, [i]n [t]urn, the [p][r]i[m]al [s]our[c]e of all things.

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4.1 Ultimatel[y], whe[th]er [th]e [c]ults of Aph[r]odit[e] eng[a]ged in [s][a][c][r]ed p[r]o[s][t]itution or n[o]t is [s][o]mething [s][c]h[o][l]ars of h[i][s]to[r][y] are [s]t[i]ll [b][i]tter[l][y] [t]orn [a][b]out, [b]ut there ex[i]st [p]erha[p]s

[l]eg[i]t[i]mate [r][ea]sons to [a]g[r][ee] with [ei]ther c[a]m[p]. On the one h[a]nd, if the Greeks engaged in, what [c]ertain [p]art[i][c][i][p][a]nts of the [S][y]m[p]osium at [l][ea][s]t [b]e[l][ie]ved to [b][e], an a[b]utting [s]a[c][r]ed [florm of [p][e][d]e[r][a]st[y], th[e]n [i]s [i]t [r][ea]|l[y] th[a]t [f]ar[f][e]tched to [s]ugg[e]st [d]udes [i]n [C][or][i]nth were [b]anging wh[or]es in [a]n [A][ph][r]o[d]ite tem[p]le, [b][u]t i[u][s]t [i]n an [i]nten[s]e[l]y [r][i]tua[l][i][s]t[i]c way? [l]sn't [i]t [p]o[s]si[b]le A[ph][r]od[i]te w[a]s, in [s][o]me [s]en[s]e, a [p][r]e-wa[i][f][u]? The t[r][u]e o[r][i]g[i]n of the [w]aifu as [w]e k[n][o]w it. L[a]ter that [n]ight, at I[t][ae]won P[o][c]hu in [K]ore[a][t]own, [A]ra[q][i] was [s]urre[p][t]itious[[y] [s]aving [h]en[t]ai j[p]egs on[t]o [h]is [c]ame[r]a [r]oll as they [s][a]t [a]t the [s]mall window table over[l]oo[k]ing W[e][s]t Thirty [S][e][c]ond, [s][p][l][i]tt[i]ng [a][pp]etizer with [J][o] Yu-[R]i, who [a]fter [a] [c][o]u[p]le [S][o][j]u, [s]udden[l][y] shots was f[or]th[c]o[m]ing than sh[e]'d been [p][r][e]v[i]ous[l][y]. [U]n[a][w]are of yet [a]l[s]o [u]n[c]on[c]erned [w]ith [A][r]a[q]i [s]aving [h]en[t]ai jpegs [i]n[t]o [h][i]s [ph][o]ne's [c]ame[r]a [r][o]ll, J[o] Yu-[R]i [f]ound her[s]el[f] more [c]om[f]ortable with, you kn[o]w, shar[ing] her [f]eel[ing]s [a][f]ter [a][b]out h[a][f] [a] dozen sh[o]ts [o]f [S]oju. Was she her[s]elf [p]o[ss]i[b]ly e[n]g[a]ged i[n] a[n] ... of ite[r][a]tion [s][a][c]red [p][r]o[s]titution? No! Em[p][l][ovling some [G][r]ee[k] demi[g][o]d to [r]ub his [c][o][c]k on your b[o][k] ch[oy] [p][l]ants [w]asn't - [w]ell, she [d]i[d]n't know [w]h[a]t it [w][a]s ex[a][c]tl[y], she m[u]ttered to [A]r[a][q][i]. May[b]e [a]vant-g[a]rde [b][o]tan[y]? [B]ut [i]n [a]ny [c]a[s]e def[i][n][i]tel[y] [n][o]t [p][r][o][s]titution! A[r]a[q][i] [n]oted that: [p][o][s]sible th[a]t [s]ome thing or [s]ome one [h][a]d [s]ome [s]ort of, you kn[o]w, [h][o]ld on [P]ria[p][u]s? That mayb[e] the [d]ude just n[ee][d]ed help, [s]ome a[s]s[i][s]t[a]n[c]e, that all th[i]s [sh][i]t [sh]e was [s]o

con[c]erned about, [v]is-a-[v][i]s his [r][e]cent whore [m][o]nge[r][ing] was the [r]esult of [s][o]meth[ing] [h]a[v]ing a [v]i[c]e g[r]ip [h]old on [h]im? [W]ell, [c][l][ea]r[l][y] he [w]as a [l]ittle off-[k]ilter! she said, [th]at m[u]ch [th]ey [c]ould [b]oth agree on! [B][u]t the e[ss]en[c]e of that [c]ond[i]t[i]on, the [c]ond[i]t[i]on of [b]eing h[y]p[n]otized [i]n [a]n a[b]utting [m][y][s]t[i][c]al [m]a[nn]er, [w]as she the m[o]st a[p]p[r][o][p][r]iate [o]ne to [s]ay, or was it [p]o[s]sible she [d]i[d]n't [a][c]tually [c]are, [th]at [th]is was [e]x[c][l]u[s]ive[l]y an [c][a][p]ita[l]i[s]t [e]n[d]eavor, [th]at her [r][o]le in [th]e wh[o]le m[a]tter was s[o]le[l]y [r][a]tiona[l]ist, th[a]t [a]s [l]ong as her bo[k] choy im[p]arted a [c]om[p]et[i]t[i]ve leg u[p] in the h[ea]t of [K]or[e]atown she [d]i[d]n't [c]are [o]ne [w]ay or [th]e o[th]er. And, [b]y [th]e [w][ay], [th]e [b]ok choy at I[t][ae][w]on [w][a]s [a][t]r[o]cious, she n[o]ted, [s][o] [a]t least th[a]t was good! The f[a][c]t of the m[a]tter was Jo Yu-[R][i] [c]ould d[e]f[i]n[i]tel[y] [q]u[e]stion how she [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te a[rr]ived here, [s]o to [s]peak. [b]udding. [b]arely а [s]e[m]i-[s]u[c]ce[s]sful, [r]e[s]tau[r]aun[t]eur [i]n [M][i]d[t]own, a J[o]hn[s]on and [W]hales [d]r[o]pout and Food Net[w]or[k] jun[k][ie], hel[p][l]ess[l][y] [p]e[r]using [C][r][ai]g's [L]i[s]t ads, [d][e][s][p]e[r]ate for a [l][e]g u[p] in the [m]o[s]t v[i]c[i]ously [c]om[p][e]t[i]t[i]ve [r][e][s]tau[r]ant [m][e]t[r]o[p]o[l]is [p]erh[a][p]s on the [p][l][a]net, when she [s]t[u]m[b]led [u][p]on [P]ria[p]us's [p]l[i]ght, [d]e[c][i][d]ing [t]o [t]a[k]e it on [b]o[t][a]ni[c]al [a]dv[a]ntage. [P]eo[p]le would [a]lways note in [a]we [h]ow [h]er blue eyes [d]i[s][p][l]ayed a [c]ertain re[dd][i]sh gold t[i]nt a[b]out them, [p]o[s]si[b][l]y [s]ome [f]aint [S][p]a[n]ish [b][l]ood on her [F]i[l]i[p]i[n]o [s][ee]med mother's [s]ide? Ιt her [K]o[r][ea]n-A[m]e[r]i[c]an i[d]entity [w]as al[w]ays [s][l][i]ght[l]y un[d]er[m][i]ned b[y] th[i]s [C]atho[l][i][c][i]sm

of her a[d]o[l][e][s]c[e]n[c]e. [C]atho[l][i][c][i]sm has a [t][e]n[d][e]n[c]y of [m]a[k]ing [e]ve[r]y[o]ne [a] fourth gene[r]ation I[t]alian-A[m]e[r]i[c]an, and Jo Yu-Ri f[e]lt this [t]ugging [a]t [t]imes [a]s w[e]ll, [b]ut then again, it wasn't [q]u[i]te [l][i]ke the g[uy] ne[c]e[ss]ari[l]y owed her a[n]ything, [b]e[c][au]se there w[a]s [n]othing in their [n]on-ex[i][s]t[e]nt) [c]ontra[c]t ([w]hich [w]as [s][t][i][p]ulated [h]ow [h][e] should [s][p]end his f[r][ee] [t]ime. Yet, [A][r]a[q]i in[t]erje[c]ted, [i]s there [n]ot an [i]m[p]l[i][c][i]t [a]g[r]eement i[n] a[n]y [b]usi[n]ess [r]e[l]a[ti]on[sh]i[p] to, you know, [l]ike, he [s][ai]d, wh[e]n George [C]o[s]t[a]nza [b]e[c]ame a h[a]nd [m]odel in [S]ein[f]eld - he wasn't [t]rave[l]ing a[r]ound [l]aying [b][r][i][c]ks and d[i]pp[i]ng his [t]oes [i]n[t]o a[m]ateur [b]oxing [i]n h[i]s [f]ree [t]ime! Ye[s], the Co[s]t[a]nz[a] [a]n[a]logy was an [a]pt [o]ne here, yet again there [w]as the [q]u[e]stion of the [e][s]s[e]n[c]e of [P]ria[p]us [h]im[s][e]lf, [h]ow [h]e [i]n[t]er[a]cted, or [w]as [i]n[t]er[a]cted [w][i]th, [i]n the [c][or][p][or]eal [s]phere, which be[c]ame [a]n [i]n[c][r][ea]sing[l][y] [l]atent issue as the two [r]e[q]u[e][s]ted a [s][e][c]ond [b][o]ttle of [S][o][j]u. It was p[o][s]si[b]le, [J][o] Yu-Ri [c]on[s]idered, that his [c][o][c]k wasn't ex[i]st[e]nt [i]n the w[ay] she m[ay] have [i]n[i]t[i]ally th[ou]ght.

 $\eta/\omega$  869:1111 .782

5.1 Of [c]ourse Ha[k]im [e]n[t]ered the [e]s[t]ab[l]ishment [l]oo[k]ing sole[l][y] for [A]m[i]n[a], [a]s [a]t the time h[e] was [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [c]a[p]tivated [b]y her [b]eauty, unw[i]ll[i]ng to [p][ar]t w[i]th th[i]s [p][ar]t[i][c]ular [i]m[a]ge of her [f]orm that [r]e[l]ent[l]ess[l]y [r]i[c]ocheted w[i]th[i]n the [c]on[f][i]nes of his m[i]nd, [c]a[p]tivated, not like he'd [b]een once [b]e[f]ore, [b]y the [c]om[p]a[r]ative witch[c][r]a[f]t of [c]le[v]er [c]on[v]er[s][a]t[i]on. [N]o,

in[s]tead [H]akim [f]ound [h]im[s]elf [h]yp[n]otized [b]y the [p]ure [f]orm of her [b]eauty, with [e]d[i][f][i][c][a]t[i]on or [e]xt[r]a[p]o[l][a]t[i]on, with [n]o [c]a[p]itu[l][a]t[i]on to [r][ea]son - or [e]v[e]n to [f][ee]l[i]ng [f]or th[a]t m[a]tter! It was [s]im[p][l]y the [c]a[s]e [th]at [th]ere was [n]o in[t]er[l][o][c]utor, [n][o]t even a[n]y [r]em[o]te [c]on[t]em[p][l]ation of this ve[r]y [f]orm that s[o] [c][l][ea]r[l][y] [h][a]d w[a][f]ted [H]a[k][i]m [th]rough [th]e [d]ouble [d]oors th[a]t [e]vening, tr[y]ing to [f][i]nd what [c]ould [p]erha[p]s b[e] d[ee]med a wai[f]u. Now of there's [c]om[p]lex hei[r]archy [c]ourse а [r]e[f][r][a][c]tion to [m][a]tters li[k]e th[e]se, of which [H]a[k][i]m, [h]aving [a] [d]e[c]ent [a][m]ount [ph]ilo[s]o[ph]i[c]al e[d]u[c]ation, [w][a]sn't un[a][w]are of [p]er [s]e, ho[w]ev[er], [wh]eth[er] or n[o]t it [w]as at the [t][o][p] of his [m][i]nd at the [t][i]me is a [s]e[p]arate [m]atter en[t][i]rely (it wasn't!). There are [l]ong [r][a]nge co[r]re[l][a]tions - did a [f]e[m]ale [l]oo[k] [l]i[k]e s[o]me[o]ne [f]a[m]il[ia]r, [f]rom [y]ears ago, [p]erh[a][p]s ex[a][c]tly the [s]ame? [l]n f[a][c]t, [i]t was [p]os[s]ible Ha[k][i]m [a][c]tua[l]l[y] m[i]s[t]oo[k] th[i]s [p]ar[t]i[c]u[l]ar wai[f]u [f]or another [p][er][s]on en[t]ire[l]y at [f][ir][s]t, ba[c]k [f]rom his [s]e[c]on[d]ary [s][c]hool [d]ays. He wasn't even c[er]ta[i]n [i]t was h[er] when he [f][ir][s]t [s]t[u]mbled [u]pon her [f]orm. [H]e en[c]ountered [f]orm but [r]e[c]alled [c]o-ed he [h]er а [w]as [a][c]quainted [w]ith [f][r][o]m [s][o]me years [a]go, [a][ss]u[m]ing in[c]or[r]e[c]tly [A][m]ina was in [f]a[c]t an old [f][r]iend. She in[f]ormed Ha[k][i]m so[f]tly her [n]ame Am[i][n]a, as if [p][eo][p]le were [p]o[ss]ib[l]y was [l][i]stening [i]n to each [s][y][ll]able [u]ttered fr[o]m her [p]ro[p]ortioned exqu[i]s[i]te[l]y [l][i]ps, as [i][f] [s][p]e[c][i][f][i][c] [c]ourt jesters [w]ere [w]aiting [i]n the [w][i]ng [t]o [t]ran[s][c]ribe their [c]onver[s][a]t[i]on to [l][a]t[e]nt go[s]s[i]p [c]o[l]umn[i][s]ts. [S][c]ho[l]ars, [f]or their [p]art, would ultimate[l][y] [r]et[r]oa[c]tive[l][y] [t]wo [c]on[f][l]ate [p]o[ss]ible A[m]inas as [m]i[m]i[ck][i]ng un[i]n[t]entionall[y] their own [s]our[c]e of [s]tud[y]. The f[a][c]t th[a]t Ami[n]a was, [t]e[c]h[n]i[c]all[y] [s]pea[k]ing, you k[n]ow, an or[ph][a]n [i]n a [h]arem [d]i[d]n't [f]aze [H]ak[i]m in the l[ea]st, be[c]ause [a]ll [o]f the [p][r]ophets [p][r][e]v[i]ou[s]l[y] hi[s]to[r]i[c]al[l][y] were, if [n]ot [p]u[r]e who[r]e-monge[r]s, then at [l]ea[s]t [s]ym[p]a[th]eti[c] to [th]e [p][l]ight of [th]e [p]ro[s]titute, the [p]ro[s]titute [s][i]m[p]ly ex[i][s]t[i]ng as of the [e]x[t][e]nsion [d][e][s]ti[t]ute and [a]n [d]own[t]ro[d]den as a wh[o]le. Hak[i]m [s]aw n[o] [r][ea]son to [d]iverge f[r]om his [p][r]e[d]e[c]e[ss]ors [i]n th[i]s [r]egard. There's a [c]ertain i[d][e]a [th]at [th]e [d][ee][p]est [r]ela[ti]on[sh]ips are the ones b[a]sed on [c]onver[s][a]tion. [s]o-[c]alled illumi[n][a]ting [p]redi[c][a]ted u[p]on getting to [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te k[n][o]w each other, [y]et [y]ou [c]ould [c]ounter [th]at [th]ere's a[c]tual[l][y] [n]othing to k[n]ow of us [r]eal[l][y] [a]t all, th[a]t we're [p]urely [r]e[f][r]a[c]tions of a [s]our[c]e [i]n[f][i]n[i]te[l]y [s][i]m[p][l]er than w[e] [s][ee]m to [b][e], that con[v]olutions are [b]y th[eir] [v][er]y nature [f][i][c]t[i]onal [s]tee[p]ed in [h][y][p]o[c]r[i][s]y. and [H]a[v]ing a gr[ea]t [c]on[v]ers[a]tion is the a[c]ute of [h]um[a]nit[y], [b]e[l]ie[v]ing [f][a][ll]a[c][y] di[s]co[v]ered [s]ome eternal [b]ond with [a]nother [p][er][s]on is [p][er]ha[p]s an [a][ff]ront to [A]llah [H]im[s]elf. [H][a]kim and [A]mina [d][i][d]n't [d][i][s]cuss them[s]elves at [f]ir[s]t, and when [th]ey did [th]ey st[r]uggled to [r]e[c]all who they even [w]ere, [w]hich [w]as a[p]p[r]o[p][r]iate. [H]a[k]im's [m]ad[n]ess, [h][i]s [i]n[d][i][s][c]r[i][m][i][n][a]te [k][i]ll[i]ng [o]f [o]thers was based [i]n th[i]s i[d]ea. There was an i[m]m[e]d[i]acy to their [c]o[m][i]ng [i]n[t]o [c]on[t]act [w]ith [o]ne another. Ha[k]im, [a]gain, [d]i[d]n't [c]ontem[p]late [A]mina's

[b]eaut[y], [s]im[p]l[y] [b]e[c][au]se it w[a]s [i]m[p]o[s]si[b]le a[c]t. [M]e[m]o[r]y was [s]omething they [b]oth [s]t[r]uggled to inte[r]a[c]t with. [A][m]ina's beauty [s][k]ill. Her out[l]ine was [a] [m]otor re[c]o[ll][e][c]tion [s][o]me[o]ne would n[e]ver be[c][o]me [c][o]nscious of, a [l][ur]id [m]e[m]ory a [p][er]son [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] forg[o]t a[b]out [b]ut [s]till [s]tayed hugging their [b][o]dy li[k]e a shar[k] jaw. It was the i[mm][e]d[i]acy of A[m][i]na's [b]eaut[y] that [s][l][o]w[l][y] [b]egan to er[o]de Ha[k][i]m's [s][an]it[y]. [P]ossession [s][an]s [c]ontem[p]lation [c][an] [b]e [c]on[f]using [f]or [s]ome, Ha[k]im n[o]t ex[c]lu[d]ed, [b]e[c]ause we [o]ften [c]on[s]i[d]er [p]ossession a[k]in to gr[o]wing [o]ld and [d]e[c]aying with [s][o]me[o]ne, [r][e]p[e]ating [v]ows in[t]o an o[p]en air that, if [r][e]a[r]ranged just s[l]ight[l]y, would [b]e[c]ome hea[v]y as [b][r]i[c]ks. At the [t]ime he [p]a[s]sed [th]rough [th]e [d]ou[b]le [d]oors to [p]l[a][c]e an eye on [h]er, [H]a[k]im in[c]orre[c]tly [a][s]sumed [A]mina's [b]eauty to [b]e of [a] de[c][ay]ing n[a]ture, [b][a][s]i[c]a[l]y that he [c]ould [p]oss[e][s]s her in a [c]ont[e]m[p][l]ative [s][e]n[s]e. Ha[k]im [m]ade a [p]oor a[tt][e]m[p]t [t]o seem [l]i[k]e he wasn't [l]oo[k]ing for [A][m]ina as he wal[k]ed [th]rough [th]e [d]ou[b]le [d]oors, her [b]eauty [a]lready [w][i]th[i]n h[i]m [b]ut in a [w]ay that [e]schewed [c]on[t]emp[l]ation [e]n[t]ire[l]y. [l]u[s][t]ed for de[c]ay, to [p]oss[e]s[s] [b]eauty in a [c]ont[e]m[p][l]ative [s][e]n[s]e, to [r]e[c]ite vows in air [p]o[c]kets of [b][r]i[c]k, [a]nd [A]mi[n]a d[a]nced [a]round his [a]m[b][i]t[i]ons, to [b]e ho[n]est, [f]air[l][y] e[ff]ort[l]ess[l][y]. [H]ad [H]a[k]im [b]een [a][b]le to [p]ro[p]er[l]y [c]ontem[p][l][a]te this ve[r]y [r][ea]l i[m]m[e]d[i]a[c][y] of A[m][i]na, then [p]erh[a][p]s his [s][a]nity wouldn't h[a]ve [s][l][o]w[l][y] er[o]ded in the m[a]nner [i]t ultim[a]te[l][y] d[i]d. When he exe[c]uted th[o]se [c][l][o]sest to h[im] on а wh[im], [i]n

[i]n[c]rea[s]ing[l]y vio[l]ent [a]nd [d]r[a]stic ways. [s][l]i[c]ing off [h]eads and [s][l][i]tt[i]ng th[r]oats by the [h]]un[d][r]eds, it was on[l][y] [b]e[c]ause Ha[k]im [m][i]s[i]n[t]er[p]reted funda[m]en[t]a[ll][y] the i[m]m[e]d[i]a[c][y] of A[m][i]na's [b]eauty. [H]ad [h]e [b]een a[b]le [p]er[c]eive her [b]eauty [i]n [i]ts [a][c]tual o[pp]osed [t][o] r[u]th[l]ess[l]y [s]en[s]e [a]s [t]o a[tt][e]m[p][t]ing [t][e]ther it [t]o his [c]on[t][e]m[p][l]ation, then he p[r]o[b]a[b]ly wouldn't have gone [b]atshit [c][r]azy! [C]ourt offi[c]ers would [b]e [b]eheaded [b]e[c]ause [A][m]ina's [b]eauty was [a] [m]otor [s][k]ill to Ha[k][i]m, wh[e]n he in[c]orr[e][c]t[l][v] [b]e[l]i[e]ved it to [b][e] a [r]o[m]an [à] [c][l]ef. Y[e]t isn't an [e][r]oded [s]anit[y] ne[c]e[s]sa[r][y]? [C]ould we [p]o[s]sibly [s]uggest that? When [H]amza i[b]n A[l][i] [p]ro[c][1]]aimed [H]a[k][i]m to [b]e divine in[c]arnate, was it [p]o[s]si[b]ly [b]e[c]ause [H]a[k]im [h]ad [s][a][c]rifi[c]ed his own [s][a][n]ity to [m]a[k]e A[m]i[n]a's [b][eau]t[y], [w]hich [w]as of a [p][u]rel[y] [w][ai]fu var[i]ety, [d]e[c]ay? Ha[k]im would [d]i[s]a[pp][ear] y[ear]s [l]ater, in [f][a][c]t [n]ot [l]ong [a][f]ter [t]wo [d]i[s]torted [A]mi[n]as [a][pp]eared [t]o h[i]m [i]n [d][r]eam, one [d]ark, [th]e o[th]er of a l[i]ght [v]a[r][i]ety, yet [s]till e[v][en] th[en] he [r]em[ai]ned un[a]ble to [d]i[s]entangle [w]hat it [w]as he [s]aw. Y[e]t in [a]ny [c][a]se, all th[a]t's [p]erh[a][p]s a [b]etter topic for a l[a]ter [d][a]te, [b]e[c]ause [w]hen Ha[k]im [w]al[k]ed [th]rough [th]ose [d]ou[b]le [d]oors [h]is [s][a]nity [h][a]d alrea[d]y [s]tarted to [d]e[c]ay, his men[t]al [f]a[c]ul[t]ies were [a]l[r]ea[d]y in a [s]t[a]te of [d]i[s][a][r]r[ay]. As Ha[k]im [f]o[c]used his e[n]ergies on th[i]s [f]al[s]e [i][m]age of [d]e[c]aying with A[m]i[n]a his [s]a[n]ity it[s]el[f] [b]e[c][a]me [d]i[l]a[p]i[d][a]ted. H[a]mza ibn [A][I]i [c]alled him H[a][k]im [A][II]ah. It wasn't ne[c]e[ss]a[r]ily the [ph][r]ases Amina [r]e[p][ea]ted that [r][ea]ched Ha[k][i]m, but [m]ore [s][o] the [m][o]de [i]n

wh[i]ch she [s][ai]d th[e]m. She'd whi[s][p]ered [p]ure [n]on[s]ense to Ha[k]im that was [n][o]thing if [n][o]t t[o]tal[l]y [l]ogi[c]al [o]n[l]y a [f]ew years be[f]ore his [f]riend H[a]mz[a] would d[ee]m [h]im [H][a][k][i]m [A]II[a]h. Ha[k]im would [s][p]end his nights and w[ee][k]ends [l]oc[k]ed [i]n h[i]s th[r][ee] hun[d][r]ed s[q]uare foot [l][i]v[i]ng [s][p]a[c]e, [a]n [a][s]ceti[c] [d]e[c][i]s[i]on of his own [a][c]cord, and m[e][d]i[t]ate [e]x[t][e]nsivel[y] on the beaut[y] of [A]min[a], its [t][r]ue n[a]ture, [r][e]c[r][e][a]ting her g[e]o[m]e[t][r]y [i]n h[i]s with [s][p][ea][k]ing A[m]i[n]a [i]n [m]ind, [i][m]agi[n][a]t[i]on, [c][r]e[a]t[i]ng an in[t]er[p]er[s]o[n]al [b][r]and of [b]eauty [b][a][s]ed en[t]irely [c][on][t]em[p]l[a]tion, [o]ne [w]here they [w]ould de[c][ay] [t]ogether in[t]o old [a]ge, a human sh[a][p]e that f[a]des with [t]ime, exi[s]ting [s]ole[l][y] [t]em[p]oral[l][y], [n]ever [a][n]ywhere [e]xc[e]pt [e][m]a[n]ating into [m][e][m]o[r]ies and [ph]otog[r]a[ph]s wh[i]ch [d][i][s]tort and [f]al[s]i[f]y [e]ve[r][y]thing worth[y] of [ou]r [a]we. This was [h]ow [H]akim's sanity [e][r]oded. H[i]s a[s]ceti[c][i]sm [p][l][ay]ed at [l]ea[s]t a [p]art [i]n h[i]s own [d]ec[ay], [b]ut mo[s]t[l]y [b]e[c]ause he [e]mp[l]oved a[s]c[e]ti[c]ism to [c]reate [i][m][a]ges [i]n h[i]s [m]ind, [t]o d[e]Ive in[t]o his [m][e][m]ories as i[m]ages as if th[ey] [c]on[t][ai]ned [a]n [e]ss[e]nce [m]ore i[mm][e]d[i]ate than A[m][i]na's beauty. They [d][i][d]n't! [l]t's the [p][r]o[l]i[f]e[r]ation of the [i][m]ag[i]ned [i][m][a]ge that ul[t]i[m][a]tely [d][r]ives us [a]ll [b]a[s]i[c]ally in[s]ane [a]ll the [t]ime without [f]ail, [b]e[c]ause of the [d]i[s]tan[c]e we [p][l]ace [b]e[t]ween our[s]elves and the image, [b]y ne[c]e[s]sity of [c]ourse! [B]eing [d]eprived of the i[mm][e][d][i]ate [b]eauty of [A][m][i]n[a], Ha[k]im ch[o]se to [a][sc]eti[c]ally [a][tt]empt [t]o [r][e][c][r][e]ate it via his [o]wn [i][m]ag[i]ned [i][m][a]ges, [e]x[i]st[i]ng al[m][o]st [e]x[c][l]usive[l]y w[i]th[i]n the [c][on]fines of his [o]wn

[c][on]templative [s]tates, but where[a]s his ([s]ee[m]ing[l]y sh[a][ll]ow) in[t]e[r][a][c]tions with A[m]i[n]a [r]e[q]uired [n]othing, they [m]erged in[t]o each o[th]er [s]ans [c]onscious [th]ought, his [i][m]ag[i]ned [i][m][a]ges [w]ere f[l][ee]ting, al[w][ay]s [d]e[c][ay]ed i[mm][e][d][i]ate[l][y] [p]ost-[c]on[s]tru[c]tion. At [f][i]ve thirty [f][i]ve [p]m one a[f]ternoon [th]e [th]ought o[cc]urred to Ha[k]im [th]at he'd been [f][or]ty [f][or] his ent[i]re l[i]fe, [d]e[s][p]ite the [f]a[c]t he'd [d]i[s]a[pp]ear [f][or]ever at ju[s]t thirty [f][i]ve. He was [s]t[i]|| ob[s]e[ss]ed w[i]th [d][i][s]tan[c]e. [N][o], it [p]re[c]i[s]el[y] the [n][o]tion of [d]i[s]tan[c]e that [d]rove his [s]a[n]it[y] o[ff] the [f]u[ck]ing [c]li[ff]. Ha[k]im's g[r][ea]t[e]st c[r]e[a]t[i]on was [p]erha[p]s [D]ar al-Ilm, or it [c]ould have [p]o[ss]i[b]ly [b]een his own [i]nter[a][c]tion w[i]th h[i]s [s][a]nity, [b]e[c]ause [p]erha[p]s [b]y d[ea]ling [A]m[i][n]a's [b]eauty in[c]o[rr]e[c]t[l][y] Ha[k]im ulti[m]ate[l][y] [a][rr]ived at the t[r]ue [n]otion of [b]eauty, [r]ather than [m]o[d]e[r]ate[l]y [d]e[l]u[d]ing himsel[f] and [d]ecaying with [p]a[l]ata[b]le [f]i[b]. h[e] а [s]t[a]m[p][e][d]ed [f]ull [f]or[c]e in[t]o [d]e[l]usion. He [l]ost [t]r[a][c]k of his [s][a]nity [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [b]e[c]ause of it, in а [s][e]nse a[cc]urately [a][ss][e][ss]ing the false [n]otion of [A]mi[n]a's [b]eauty [i]tem you [c]ould de[c]ay [b]es[i]de. as [s][a][c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]titute [i]s [i]n[c][a][p]able of de[c][ay], there's in f[a][c]t [a]b[s]o[l]ute[l]y nothing more [a]b[s]urd than g[r][o]wing [o]ld with a [s][o]-[c]alled [s]a[c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]titute. How [c][ou]Id y[ou]?! In [T]en [T][w]enty [O]ne, Ha[k]im [w]ould [d]r[ea]m of [t]wo [d][is]torted Am[i]nas and then he [t]oo would [d][is]a[pp]ear, not as [a] of [a] [p]ala[c]e in[t][r]igue, result [s]u[r]re[p][t][i]t[i]ous m[ur][d][er], or [a]ge and [d]ec[ay], be[c]ause [e][v]en if those e[v]ents [s][ee]med to o[cc]ur, we should [s]tr[ess] [th]at [th]ey're no [l][ess] [v]eil-[l]i[k]e

[th]e [v][ei]ls Ha[k]im wit[n][ess]ed [a]round [A]mi[n]a's [b]eauty. No, to [b]e [c][l][ea]r, it's fair[l]y evid[e]nt [H]a[k]im [h]im[s][e]l[f] be[c]ame a wai[f]u [i]n [f]i[f]th [w]hich h[i]s thirty year, [w]as [a]p[p][r]o[p][r]iate. [D]i[s][a][pp]ear is [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly the in[c]o[rr]e[c]t word to [d]e[s][c][r]i[b]e it! [b]e[c]ause Ha[k]im g[a]ve a[w][ay] his [s]anity in a ve[r]y [r]eal [w][ay] the [s]e[c]ond he [w]al[k]ed [th][r]ough [th]ose [d]ou[b]le [d]oors to g[r][ee]t Am[i]na [i]n h[i]s own esta[b]lishment, the [e][s]ta[b][l]ishment where he [s]aw him[s][e]If [e]n[c][l]osed, [l]i[k]e in a [l]arge [b]ox [l]i[k]e [c]on[t][ai]ner, one [S]pring af[t]ernoon, the [s][a]me [p][I][a][c]e he con[t]em[p][I][a]ted the ide[a] that [A][II][a]h is the ve[r]y mi[rr]or [i]n wh[i]ch you [s]ee your[s]elf, [th]at you're [th]e mirror [i]n [w]h[i]ch [H]e [w][i]t[n]e[ss]es [H]is [N][a]mes. [W][e] [s][ee][k] to [c][l][ai]m [b]eauty in a [s]ub[i]ect-ob[i]ect re[l][a][ti]on[sh]ip [b][e]cause [c]ertain [b][e]ings have m[a]de them[s]elves [s][ee]m to [b][e] that w[ay], not [t]o [t]ri[c]k us ne[c]es[sa]rily b[u]t i[u]st to [i]nno[c]ently [c]ause us to g[o] a[pp][r][o][p][r]iately in[s]ane, and vi[a] that [a][pp][r]o[p][r]i[a]te [i]nsanity f[i]nally [a][rr][i]ving at the [p][r]o[p]er [n][a]ture of b[eau]ty. [A][m]i[n]a in her cu[rr]ent st[a]te enjoyed the f[a][c]t th[a]t [H]a[k]im [h][a]d [h][a]l[f] of his [r]obe o[ff] [i]n the [m][i]ddle of the ven[ue], his fa[c]e bl[ee][d][i]ng, [t]o[ss]ing d[i]nars [i]n[t]o the air [s]cr[ea][m][i]ng at [m]en [t]w[i]ce his [s][i]ze th[a]t [h]e [h][a]d [m]o[n]ey! [D]i[d]n't [th]ey k[n]ow [th]is? He'd fu[c]k[i]ng [k][i]ll them all, then he'd e[l][i][m][i][n]ate their fa[m]i[l]ies, then [a][ss][a][ss]in[a]te the a[cq]u[ai]ntan[c][e]s of their [s][e][c]ond [c]ousins! But [s]a[c][r]ed [p][r]o[s]ti[t]utes are of [c]ourse inv[e]t[e][r]atel[y] [d][r]awn [t]o this exact [t]y[p]e of in[s]a[n]it[y], a [s]ort of [D][i]o[n][y][s]ian [l]osing of the [s]elf. Years [l]ater Ha[k][i]m would dr[ea]m of [k][i]ll[i]ng h[i]mself [r]e[p]eatedly as a m[e]th[o]d of

c[i][ea]ns[i]ng him[s][e]lf, a [r]e[l]ated [p][r]o[c]ess. It's p[r]o[b]a[b]ly in[t]e[r]acting with the a[t][r]o[c]ities of [b]eauty where the g[r]eatest [i]e[ss]ons are [i]earned, [b]ut [c][er]tainly [n]ot [i]n [a]n [i]n[t]er[p][er][s]onal and [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [d]ee[p] [c]on[v]er[s][a]tion [d]ri[v]en w[ay]. No, it's [v][i][a] [a] [d]i[v][i]ne imm[e][d][i]acy that e[v]e[r][y]thing be[c]omes i[d][i]otic and your [r]ational self is f[i][n]ally [r]e[c]og[n][i]zed am[o]ng eve[r]y[o]ne as an [u]nwel[c][o]me inter[i]o[c]utor, [u]na[b]le to w[r]a[p] [h]is [p]ea[b][r]ained [h]ead a[r]ound [w]hy you're not [c]u[rr]ent[i]y [w]ea[r]ing [a] shirt in [a] [p]ub[i]i[c] [p][i]ace.

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5.12 [W]alking [th]rough [th]e, in [r]et[r]o[s]pect s[o]me[w]h[a]t ominous, [d]ouble [d]oors Ha[k]im [t]oo[k] note of the [s]ame [t]in [r]oof that [c]om[p][r][i]sed the [s][k][y] on [d][i]ve [b]ar [p]atios as A[m]i[n]a [m]ade it [c]lear she had [b]usi[n]ess [t]o [t]a[k]e [c]are of, [sh]e was afflter [a]ll on [sh]ifflt, but [th]at it [w]as [a]lso im[p]ortant [th]at [H]akim [w]ait for [h]er, [p][l][ea]se! [D]on't [l][ea]ve! Just wait а [m]i[n]ute! [f][u]n[d]a[m]entally there was [n]othing [f]or the [t][wo] [t][o] [d]is[c]uss [b]eyond A[m]i[n]a [s]taring [s]i[l]ent[l]y into Ha[k]im's [ey]es for ex[t]ended in[t]ervals of [t][i]me. When she fi[n]a[ll][y] m[o]seyed [o][v]er [t]oward [h]im as [h]e [s][t]ood [n]er[v]ou[s][l][y], [s]till [n]ear the [d]ouble [d]oors, [h]e told [h]er [h]e wan[t]ed [t]o [t]a[k]e her [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [o]ut [o]f this place, m[a]yb[e] [e]ven, h[e] [d]i[d]n't k[n]ow, t[a]ke her out to [d]i[nn]er? [a]nd she [l][a]ughed in a way that [s][p]oke to the [s]eeming [i]m[p]o[ss][i]b[i][l][i]ty of the i[d]ea, and, in turn, Ha[k]im [c]on[s]i[d]ered the [f]al[s]e [d]ua[l]ity of the [ph][y]s[i][c]al and the [P][I]atoni[c], [c]on[s]i[d]ering th[a]t, [a][c]tual[l]y, the [p]r[o][p]er [d][i]v[i]s[i]on of [k]ind when it [c]ame to

[l][o]ve w[a]sn't ph[y]s[i]cal and [s]p[i]r[i]tual but [i]n[s]tead [th]e [d]e[l]ayed and [th]e imm[e][d][i]ate. There was [n]o [d]ia[l][e][c]t[i]c pr[e]s[e]nt here, [n]o [I]ong [c]onversations on the ph[o]ne, [n][o] getting to k[n][o]w one a[n]other's [s][o]-[c]alled [s]e[c][r]ets and [i]n[d]ulg[i]ng [i]n [th]e [th][r][i]ll[i]ng [i][d]io[c]y of what's h[i][dd][e]n, of the a[m]use[m]ent par[k] of tiny l[i]ttle [s]e[c]rets. There i[n]evitab[l][y] would [c]ome [a] [t]ime when [A][m][i][n]a [a][c]tual[l][y] [a]sked Ha[k][i]m [t]o [t]ell a l[i]ttle [m]ore about h[i]m[s]elf, that it [s][ee]med [l]i[k]e, [n]ow [th]at sh[e] [th]ought a[b]out it, she [b]arel[y] [e]ven k[n]ew him! [t]o which Ha[k]im [c]ons[i]dered h[i]s own [t]rauma, [w]hich of [c]ourse [w]asn't exa[c]t[l]y [r]eal, he [c]on[t]emp[l]ated his youth with a [r]are [m]o[m]en[t]a[r]y f[er]v[or] and w[i]tn[e]ssed [th]at all [th][e]se [m]e[m]o[r][ie]s be[c]ame [m][a][s]s-[p][r]oduced [a][c]tion [fligures [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] [m]el[t]ed in[t]o a stri[p] of [p]ave[m]ent [i]n the un[f]org[i]v[i]ng[l]y b[l][i][s]te[r][i]ng [C]ai[r]o [s]un, [a]nd [a]s he [t]urned [t]o his [l]eft, [s]o[l]e[l]y to e[s]c[a]pe Amina's [e]v[e]r int[e]n[s]ifying g[a]ze, [h]e [c]oul[d]n't [h]el[p] [b]ut n[o]te a [S]an[d]ra [B]ullock [p][o][s]ter for a [m]ovie [c]alled [M]iss [S]e[c]r[e]t [A]g[e]nt h[u]ng [u]p adj[a][c][e]nt. [R]epeating the title [a]gain to [h]im[s]elf [H]a[k]im [s][l]ow[l]y [a][rr][i]ved at the dis[q]u[i]eting [c]on[c][l]usion [th]at [th]ere [p]erha[p]s [e]xi[s]ted [a]n [e]ntire [S]and[r]a [B]u[ll]o[c]k [e][c]onomy [a]ll [a]round him, that [e]ntire of [s]wathes the f[i]lm [i]n[d]u[s]t[r][y] were [i]n[d][i]s[c][r][i]m[i]natel[y] [d]e[d]i[c]ated t[o] the [r][u]th[l]ess [p][r]o[d]uction of a[dd][i]t[i]onal [S]an[d]ra Bu[II]o[c]k [c]ontent, ex[c][I]u[s]ive[I]y [c]on[s]t[r]u[c]ted for a [r][a]venous [S][a]nd[r]a [B]u[l]lo[c]k f[a]n [b]ase. [Pleo[plle. [n]ot at all in ob[s][c]ure [n]um[b]ers, [a]b[s]o[l]ute[l]y [a][d]ored [S][a]n[d]ra [B]ullo[c]k. [a][p]parentl[y]! [B]ut how [c]ould this [b][e]? [th]at [th]ese

shit [s]t[ai]ns i[u]st [c]oul[d]n't get en[ou]gh [o]f [S]an[d]ra [B]ullo[c]k, [c]ould th[ey]? to the [e]xte[n]t a[n] [e]ntire i[n][d]u[s]t[r]y had developed to [g]uench [th]e [[th]irst for [th][is] [S]an[d][r]a Bullo[c]k [c][on]tent. Oh no! M[iss] [C][on]ge[n]iality wasn't [n][ea]r[l][y] e[n]ou[gh] [S]and[r]a Bu[ll]ock [f]or these [l]u[r]id m[a][ss]es of [S][a]ndra [B]u[II]ock shit [s]tains! H[o]pe [F][I][oa]ts was [b]are[I]y [s]cratching the [s]ur[f]ace of [w]h[a]t [w][a]s [c][l]ear[l]y [a] Ma[r]i[a]n[a] t[r]ench-[l]i[k]e itch [f]or the p[r]o[d]u[c]tion [u]n[a][d]ulte[r]ated of [S]an[d][r]a Bu[ll]o[c]k [f]ilms. [S][p]eed and [D]e[m]o[l][i]t[i]on [M][a]n [a]nd The [P][r]o[p][o]sal - n[o]! these in[s][a]tiable zealots [d]e[m]an[d]ed [M]iss [S]e[c]ret [A]gent as w[e]ll! [M]iss [C]onge[n]ia[l]ity the [S][e][c]ond: Armed [a]nd [F][a]bu[l]ous, [n]ot e[v]en that a[c]ute[l]y [c]ock[s]u[c]king [f]ilm [c]ould [s]u[ff]i[c]e [f]or these [c]o[c]k[s]u[c]king [C][r]u[s][a][d]ers of e[v]e[r]ything [S]an[d][r]a Bullo[c]k. To H[a][k]im's [a][m][a]ze[m][e]nt, [M]iss [S]e[c][r]et [A]g[e]nt was [s]till [s]omehow ne[c]e[ss]a[r]y! [B]ird [B]ox, Ocean's [Ei]ght - this end[l]e[s]s [l][i][s]t of [i]n[s][i]p[i]d [f][i]lms, [c]ould there [e]ver [b]e [e]nou[gh] [B]ullo[c]k? Ha[k]im thought, [a]voiding [A]min[a]'s gaze, [r]ea[l][i]zing his en[t][i]re ch[i]ldhood was a b[l]ob of [p][l]astic [m][e]l[t]ed in[t]o a [C]ai[r]o [p]ave[m][e]nt. There [e]xis[t]ed [a]n [e]n[t]ire [s][u]b-[p]o[p]u[l]ation that [s][u]b[s]i[s]ted [s]eeming[l]y [s]ole[l]y on [S]andra Bu[ll]ock films? H[a]kim asked [A]m[i]n[a] if sh[e]'d [s][ee]n that [m]ovie p[o][s]ted [o]ver there, [M]iss [S][e][c][r]et Agent? With [S]and[r]]a Bu[II]o[c]k? Was that, [I]i[k]e, a [s]e[q]uel to Miss [C]onge[n]ialit[y] by a[n][y] chance? A[m]i[n]a [n]oted ex[c]ited[l][y] that sh[e]'d a[c]tua[l]l[y] [s][ee]n the [s][e][q]uel to [M]iss [C]ong[e]n[i]a[l]it[y], that it was [c]alled Armed [a]nd F[a]bu[l]ous, [s]o she [c]ast doubt u[p]on whether [p]arti[c]u[l]ar film [c]ould [b][e] its

[p]ro[p]er [s][e][q]uel, [b]ut th[e]n [s]ugg[e][s]ted that it was [p]o[ss]i[b][i][y] [p]art of a t[r]i[i]og[y]? This [S]an[d][r]a [B]u[i]lo[c]k in[d]u[s]t[r][y] had [b]een a[li]owed to [p][r]o[i]ife[r]ate, [s]eeming[i][y] in[c]e[ss]ant[i][y], and now Ha[k][i]m r[ea][i]ized, once and for all, that h[e] and A[m][i][n]a ba[s]i[c]a[i]ly [i][i]ved [d]e[r][i]vative [i]ives in [w]hat [w]as fun[c]tional[i][y] a [S]an[d][r]a Bu[il]o[c]k [d][r]iven e[c]o[n]o[m][y].

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5.13 [A]II [a][r]ound [h]im, [h]is w[h]ole [l]ife, he'd [b]een un[r]epentant[l]y [s]u[rr]oun[d]ed [b]y [S]an[d][r]a [B]ullo[c]k's [f]il[m]og[r]a[ph][y], [b]ut [o]nl[y] in this [m][o][m]ent [d][i]d th[i]s un[f]ai[l]ing[l]y [d]e[p][r]essing [f]a[c]t [b]e[c]ome [a]p[p]a[r]ent to him. In [f][a][c]t, [A]mina [c]ontinued, gl[a]n[c]ing [a]t the [p]o[s]ter [a]gain, Miss Se[c]ret [A]gent was [a]ctual[l][y] just a[n]other [n][a]me for [M]iss [C]ongeni[a][l]it[y], the [f]irst [f]ilm, [n]ot Armed [a]nd [F][a]bu[l]ous, [h][a]d [H]a[k][i]m s[ee]n [i]t? It was [a][c]tually [p]retty d[e]c[e]nt! Bu[l]lo[c]k [p][l][ay]s а [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te [t]ou[gh] [t]om[b]oyish [F][B]I [a]gent in the [A][c]tion [s]I[a]sh [C]omedy, it was a film th[a]t [c]ontained [a][c]t[i]on yet also [c]om[e]dic re[l][ie]f, as [B]u[ll]o[c]k was, [d]espite [b][e]ing tr[a][d][i]t[i]onally [a]ttr[a]ct[i]ve, a [t]ough [b]ut also [t]om[b][oy]ish [d]e[t]e[c]tive, which challenged [t]ra[d][i]t[i]onal gen[d]er [n]orms. One [a][s][p]]e[c]t [A]mi[n][a] eni[oy]ed [a][b]out the film was [b]a[l][a]nce of [a][c]tion with [s][p]urts of [c]om[e]dic [r]e[l][ie]f! She [l]oved [s][p]urts of [c]omi[c] [r]e[l]ief! This would [c]ontrast with Bu[ll]o[c]k's [l]ater wor[k] [i]n a f[i]lm [l]i[k]e [B]ird [B]o[x], where she'd [t]a[k]e a [m]uch [m]ore serious [t][ur]n in h[er] [a][c]ting [c]areer. H[a][k][i]m [a]d[m]itted to [A][m][i]na th[a]t, [a]ctual[l][y],

[b]e[l][ie]ved [S]andra [B]u[ll]o[c]k, well, that [s]u[c]ked. [N]o, [n]ot that she [w]as the [w][or]st p[er] [s]e, no there were obvious[l]y [m]ore at[r]ocious a[c]t[r]e[ss]es th[a]n [S][a]ndra [B]u[ll]o[c]k. [B]ut how [m]any ex[a][c]t[l]y? [B]e[c]ause San[d]ra [B]u[l]lo[c]k, a[cc]or[d]ing to Ha[k]im, was a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l][y] [n]auseating [p]erso[n]a[l]it[y]. He just found her, he [d]i[d]n't k[n][o]w, [a] [b]it of an [a][n]noying im[b]ecile? While, [n][o], [h]e [h]adn't [s][ee]n ma[n]y of her [f][ea]ture [f]ilms [s]tart to [f][i][n][i]sh he [d]i[d]n't [f]eel like h[e] [n][ee]ded [t]o [t]o [b]e [a][b]le [t][o] [a]rrive at [a] [f]airly [c][o]n[f]i[d]ent [c]on[c][l][u]sion that she was [b][a][s]i[c]a[l]ly v[o]mit in[d][u][c]ing. She [c]ertain[l]y [w]asn't a pi[ll]ar of [c][r]eative [b][r]i[ll]ian[c]e! The [w]orld, in Ha[k]im's m[i]nd at [l]ea[s]t, [d]i[d]n't re[q]u[i]re any [f][ur]th[er] [S]andra [B]u[ll]ock [f]ilms! This i[d]ea, Ha[k]im [s]aid, th[a]t [S][a]n[d]ra [B]u[ll]o[c]k should have [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]l[y] an entire in[d]u[s]t[r][y] [b]uilt a[r]ound her, [flor the [s]ole [p]ur[p]ose of [p]ro[d]u[c]ing [m]ore and [m]ore [S]an[d][r]a Bu[ll]o[ck] [f]ilms, it [s][ee]ms [c]om[p][l][e]te[l][y] ab[s]urd to me! [S]an[d][r]a Bullock? If there's a [s]ingle [d]ata [p]oint we [c]an [r]efe[r][e]n[c]e to [s]ugg[e][s]t that our [s]o[c][i]et[y] [i]s [i]n [d][i]re n[ee]d of [r]e[f]orm I th[i]nk [i]t's the [p]u[t][r]id [f][a]ct th[a]t a [m][o]vie was [p][r]o[d][u]ced and [r]e[l]eased un[d]er the [t]itle [M]iss Congenia[I]ity [T]wo: Armed F[a]bu[l]ous! [Th]e [f][a][c]t [th][a]t, not only was th[a]t [a][c]tually [p]ro[d]u[c]ed, [b]ut [f]ilm this [S]an[d]ra [B]u[l]lo[c]k in[d]u[s]try [c]on[t]inues o[p]e[r][a]te and [p][r]o[l]i[f]e[r][a]te, even to this [d][a]y? how [c]an you [n]ot [b]e just a [l]ittle o[ff]en[d]ed [b]y that, Ami[n]a? It's [a] [i] just [a] [t]ad [g][r]o[t] esque you have to ad[m]it! Well I dis[a][g][r][ee]! [A][m]ina [r]e[t]orted, I like her [m][o]v[ie]s, Ha[k]im! I think she's [a][m][u]s[ing], [b]ut [a]lso [b]razen in a way [l] f[i]nd en[d]ea[r][ing].

En[d][ea][r]ing, Ha[k][i]m [r]e[p][ea]ted [e][q]uall[y] in [d][is]gu[s]t and [d][is][b]el[ie]f, en[d][ea][r]ing? [N][o], I w[a]tched [B]ird [B][o]x, and I'll [s]im[p][l]y [n][o]te that my [l]e[f]t [n]ut [a][f]ter a h[a]l[f] an hour [r]un is [m]ore endea[r]ing [th]an [th]at [m]ov[ie], A[m][i][n]a! And [S][p][ee]d with [K][e]a[n]u [R][ee]ves? [C]'[m]on! [O]h, and d[o]n't even [s]tart with H[o]pe [F]l[o]ats! the [f]act there [e]xists [a]n [e]ntire [s]ub-[p]o[p]ulation of [E]g[y][p]t[i]ans [d]e[d]i[c]ated to, what? the [c]o[ll]e[c]ted [B]u[ll]o[c]k [f]ilmog[r]a[ph][y]? is just [S]and[r]a ab[s]o[l]ute[l][y] [m]ind [b]ogg[l]ing to [m][e]! - it's [a]ctual[l][v] [a]n [a]ffront to [g]ood taste [A][m][i]na, it's [a][c]tually the be[s]t [C]hri[s]tma[s] [g]ift [o]f [a]|| time to utter ab[s]urdity, it's [s]omething w[e] n[ee]d to em[p][l]oy teams of our finest [s][c]ho[l]ars [t]o [s]tu[d]y [t][o] [p][r]o[d][u]ce [r]igo[r]ous [c][a][s]e [s]tu[d]ies [d]e[t]ailing [e]x[t][e]n[d]ed [h]y[p]othe[s]es as to [h]ow this [s]t[a]te of [a]ffairs was [a]llowed to o[c]cur!

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