

Assorted Ramblings of a Different Young Adult

Santtu Pesonen

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Preface

Hello.

Before I start explaining what this literary work that you've somehow stumbled upon is all about, allow me to introduce myself. I am Santtu Pesonen, a 23-year-old Finnish student, at least at the time of writing this preface. I'm currently studying music in a vocational school, but I spent two years studying English in university prior to ending up studying music. How I ended up from university to studying music, that process is actually detailed in this book. My hobbies include music (as should be more or less obvious), video games and deep thinking.

Now, what you've laid your hands on here is essentially a collection of self-reflective essays. I honestly don't have a "one-word" way to describe it, but you could think of it as a journal or diary of sorts. It began with me being randomly inspired to write what I call a "rambling" - hence, partly, the book's title - on an evening in May of 2016. The eighth day of that month, to be specific, as you've possibly found out if you paid attention to the dates marked in the list of contents. And over the next 17 months or so, I took it upon myself to write 99 more of them, adding up to 100 ramblings in total.

Why 100? Because I felt that it was the perfect number for this undertaking. 50 felt too low, and 200 felt too high. (Actually I didn't think of any specific number at the time - I simply jotted down "/100" next to the "1" in the first rambling I wrote, so as to motivate myself to finally write a full book.)

Either way, there's no single specific theme to this book. Rather, there are various themes that recur throughout the book. An especially popular theme to pop up is love, but it's by no means the only theme I touch upon. Other fairly common subjects discussed throughout the book include friendship, life and various psychological phenomena.

If you intend to read this book in its entirety, there is one piece of advice I should give you: don't judge a rambling by its title. What I mean by that is that in a lot of the ramblings here, I refer to other ramblings I wrote prior to them. And in a lot of cases, you must have read a specific rambling in order for another to make sense. However, I should also say that it's not necessarily the immediately previous rambling - it could be one several pages back.

I should also mention that I use a fair amount of foul language throughout this book. So if you're sensitive to that, I suggest you put this book away - either right now or after reading the rest of this preface. Whichever you happen to decide upon.

With all that said, please enjoy Assorted Ramblings of a Different Young Adult.

08-05-2016: An Introduction...

I'm turning 22 in ten days.

And where am I? What's my life situation? Well, I'm a freshman in university, so that's one thing. In fact, my first year is practically wrapped up now. Only waiting for the few remaining credit points to show up in my student "profile". And praying to every deity ever worshipped (despite personally believing in none) that I passed the entrance exam for the pedagogical studies. And still desperately trying to take it upon myself to finally do that health survey thing I've been procrastinating for two months. And waiting to hear back from the rest of the places I submitted a summer job application to, half-eagerly and half-afraid.

I'm also still living at home. With my parents. In a sense, I don't really feel bad, since I haven't felt entirely ready to move out yet. But at the same time, I do feel bad, but not because of societal pressure or anything of that sort. Rather, I feel bad still living at home because my mother won't shut the fuck up about my sense of responsibility, even though I've made it clear that she doesn't need to be worried.

Or does she?

I will hand it to myself that I *can* be responsible when I actually want to be. The dog needs to be taken care of, and I happily oblige to that. If the dishwasher needs to be emptied, I'll do it without complaint. If the laundry needs to be done, I'll get the laundry done.

But for some reason, when it comes to responsibilities involving social communication, I feel as though my will to take care of them has seen a steady decline in recent years. I should contact my godmother about whether she can arrange me some work or not, but I keep failing to bring myself to pick up the phone. I always feel like it takes a punch on the cheek - a *punch*, not a slap - in order for me to initiate anything that involves social interaction to any extent.

Even worse than my sense of responsibility, though, my mother won't shut the fuck up about my screen hours. Yes, I acknowledge that I spend almost every waking hour of my life sitting at the computer. What she fails to realize, however, is that I also spend every single one of those hours productively. Well, more or less anyway.

The computer is essentially my central "hobby hub". Whichever of my hobbies I choose to spend time with at any given moment, it houses all of them - video games, music, level design and writing, not one any less dear than the other. There is one thing it can't house, though: traveling.

I love traveling to new places. Hell, I love almost anything new, be it a place, an experience or a technological innovation. Alas, as much as I would like to travel more, it's only a dream at this point, because not only is my financial situation at an all-time low, but two of the other hobbies I mentioned eat up most of my money.

I wish finding work was easier. I wish things were cheaper. I wish the office that provides me with my monthly student's paycheck gave me more money. But above all, I wish my hobbies would make me money, especially my music.

But the world is what it is: a giant-ass middle finger squeezed into a ball and thrown into a random corner of the universe.

With that, I hereby welcome you, dear reader, to my world.

09-05-2016: The Problem with Mothers and Employers

At the time I start writing today's rambling, I've just come back from a 33-minute walk. There's something about fresh air that calms my nerves when I'm angry.

And from there, we transition perfectly into why I'm writing this: I'm angry. Why am I angry? Because my mother stormed into my room and cursed me into the ninth circle of Hell, as per her semi-regular impulses. I wouldn't necessarily be this angry had she been calm for once, but no. It *always* has to start with her swinging the door open, suddenly mad for next to no reason.

I don't have nearly as much of a problem with the verbal message she conveyed. It's something we've discussed ever so briefly before, even by my own initiative: the possibility of me moving out.

In all honesty, though, I *do* have ever so slight a problem with her presenting the suggestion now, of all times. You see, if I were to move out this summer, I wouldn't be able to carry out a plan I've been formulating for a few months now. That plan regards a new computer.

I'll be happy enough using my current computer for a while longer, but *only* a while, not several years. It's been starting to show its age, most notably with struggling to run the latest games. And there is one game I want to be able to play as soon as possible. There is one game I've been eagerly waiting for almost the past decade. There is one game I refuse to postpone laying my hands on any longer than is absolutely necessary.

If I were to move out this summer, all of my "hard-earned" money - and I mean *all* of it - would go to living expenses. I wouldn't be able to save a single cent towards the new computer. That's due to three parties that fuck over desperate students: the government, landlords and employers.

The government provides insufficient funds to students for them to get by. Landlords take all of said funds and call it "rent". Employers... Well, it'd be unfair to say that they all refuse to employ students, because some of them don't. But the truth is employers keep giving me the metaphorical middle finger, and I have no idea why. Is it because I don't stand out enough? Is it because I always find myself unable to tell them why I would be the perfect employee?

I sent summer job applications to eight different places. Two of them have responded so far, but alas, their responses weren't too fun to read. "We apologize, but you were not chosen for this job." Why? Why wasn't I chosen? Give me reasons, goddammit!

That's where the fault lies with the employers. I can't possibly improve as a job seeker if I don't even get any explanation as to why my application was rejected.

Best to stop before I get even angrier.

Anyway, that's why I have a problem with my mother presenting the suggestion now, of all times. I'd be okay with it if my current computer was powerful enough to run the newest games, but as it stands, I'm not entirely okay with it. I've been contemplating getting a new computer long enough, and I'd hate to have to postpone that plan even further due to a shortage of funds.

While I'm on the topic of actually getting the new computer, my plan is to buy a component whenever I can afford one. Getting money only from the government has its downsides, but at the very least, I get a monthly paycheck for being a responsible student. With the current preliminary setup, I'm looking at a build worth €1,150, peripherals excluded.

But why don't I just replace some of the components? Wouldn't that end up being cheaper? Well, the thing about that is that laptops aren't as safe to modify as desktop computers. With laptops, it isn't as simple as slapping in a new CPU. Neither is it necessarily that simple with desktops, to be fair, but desktops are designed to be upgradable as opposed to laptops, which are pre-built appliances by nature and hence not designed to be upgradable.

Now, let's see if I can shave off €150 from that price...

10-05-2016: Musical Rain

It rained today. Naturally I was inside most of the time, though, so it didn't really bother me.

I've never liked rain. There's something about it I can't quite put my finger on that makes me annoyed. Maybe it's its unpredictable and sudden nature. Maybe it's the water that falls down and soaks you.

Yes, I really don't like rain as an entity, but I do like the sounds it makes. In its own way, rain turns the world into a musical instrument. The sounds produced by different surfaces as rain pours down on them... It's truly beautiful. It's like an aria of natural sounds, where the rain is the conductor and the world is the orchestra.

My family has never really been musical. You could say I'm the first in the bloodline to take a passion to music. I listen to practically everything, from classical and folk to progressive rock and metal. Even the music I make covers a wide surface of genres. I've made metal music. I've made acoustic ballads. I've made electronic dance music. I've made ambient music.

And yet, I find myself unsatisfied with my repertoire. I want to learn more. I want to familiarize myself more deeply with more genres. I want to mix more genres together into more elaborate musical explorations. I keep wandering the landscape of music, and the more I do it, the further I want to go.

The question is, though: once I've traversed every single inch of it, then what will I do? I fear I don't know the answer.

11-05-2016: Less Perfect Than Everyone Else

I had an in-depth discussion regarding the new computer with my mother today. It started with me explaining my plan in detail and revealing the estimated cost. The initial shock from her was more or less expected. As I explained why I decided on that specific plan, though, she was starting to see it, if still not entirely convinced by the end of it.

With some further looking and comparing, I managed to cut the total cost of the build down to around €1,000. Some of the pre-built systems I'd been looking at prior would've been cheaper, but their specifications weren't quite what I was looking for. Other pre-built systems in roughly the same specification tier as the current custom setup were at least €1,200, which is over my budget.

The maximum budget of €1,000 that I've set for the new computer is strict. I'm willing to stretch it ever so slightly, though, but not by €200. Not even €50, to be entirely honest. Maybe €10, but even that only if it's *absolutely* necessary.

My parents can be very understanding when they want to. I talk to my father less often than my mother, but I feel as though he understands me better out of the two. Had he been the one to discuss the new computer with me personally, he'd have taken my word and not asked much more. Now my mother, on the other hand...

Well, in all honesty, I don't blame her. She is who she is. She doesn't want me to go off buying the components without consulting her first. And I understand her in that respect.

I'm a man of my word. Every promise I make, I never break. I'm an honest man - sometimes maybe too much so. But I don't immediately recall any instances where I've unintentionally hurt someone with my words. If anything, the one I've hurt with my words the most is me.

I'd be lying if I said I don't make mistakes. I'm not any more perfect than anyone else. In many ways, I'm even less perfect. To this day, I keep beating myself black and blue over past mistakes.

One such mistake I made when I was 18 years old. I won't go into the details, but let's just say that I wasn't thinking. Or maybe I was, but with the wrong organ - one not designed for thinking. I'll only say that the organ I was probably thinking with was the heart. The rest I'll leave up to you to guess.

I've never truly understood how love is supposed to work in theory. What I understand even less is how love is supposed to work in practice. I do understand the concept of love to an extent, but I fail to grasp it entirely. I'm not even afraid to admit it.

Maybe I just don't love myself enough yet. Maybe I just haven't found perfect harmony yet. In fact, I know I'm far from having found perfect harmony. If I still deprecate myself to the point where my past mistakes haunt me, how could I have?

The answer to that question is not simple. It'll take weeks, if not months, if not years, to find.

12-05-2016: Friend or Acquaintance?

I like to think that I don't take myself too seriously. I can laugh at myself, and I do indeed laugh at myself on occasion. But then, there are things in my past that I don't so much laugh at as I wish they hadn't happened.

I don't usually reminisce on my earlier school years, and I have a good reason not to. That reason has to do with bullying. I hated every minute that I was anywhere else than the relative safety of the classroom. I never made many friends, and the few that I did manage to make, despite whatever they might have said back then, didn't make the slightest move to help me in any way.

In time, I learned to stand up for myself. The nine years that I struggled through elementary, hanging on by a thread, were the best teachers I ever had. In a way, I'm thankful to my bullies for pushing me to become as strong as I have. Their wrongdoings helped me reinforce my walls.

Now that I've made my way into university, I'm happy to see that everyone acts their age. Of course, that's only a first impression, but those are what matter, aren't they?

While I've made acquaintances with many of my peers in university, however, the friends I've made are about as scarce in number as previously. But I honestly don't mind that. To me, quality is what matters anyway, not quantity.

It takes a lot for me to really consider someone a friend. A common interest or seeing them on a regular basis isn't enough. It takes more than that. They need to be able to listen to my concerns. They need to dare to voice their own concerns to me. Most importantly, they need to *know* me.

There is one such person in my life, and I've known him for the past six years. With him, I've shared some of the most memorable moments of my life. I've shared many laughs with him. I've shared many concerns with him. And as long as that continues, I'll be content to have at least one true friend.

Strangely enough, though, I keep wishing I had more friends. Not mere acquaintances, but genuine friends. But the thing about it is that I don't bond that deeply with just about anyone. I'm pretty selective when it comes to establishing friendships. That's probably the reason I don't have more friends than I do.

At the very least, I have one true friend who'll listen to my concerns. One true friend who isn't afraid to voice his own concerns to me. One true friend who knows me inside out. And that's enough.

13-05-2016: A Brief History of Me as a Gamer

A certain game was released today. A game I've been eagerly anticipating for eight years. A game I've been hoping to be the best game I've played yet. A game I've been dying to get my hands on ever since I knew it would come.

Alas, it'll still have to wait. My current laptop isn't powerful enough to run it. It was clear from the moment I installed the closed alpha I had the chance to "participate" in. When I tried launching it, it crashed before even getting past the first pre-menu logo. The game in question is the primary reason I'm striving to save up for the new computer.

Anyway, so what's the game I'm talking about?

DOOM.

DOOM is one of the few game franchises that have kept me captivated with every installment. The games have managed to keep up a consistent level of quality throughout the franchise's 22-year history, at least as far as I'm concerned. Not one DOOM game have I found any less enjoyable than another. And I expect to enjoy the new DOOM just as much.

Video games in general are a dear interest to me. So much so, in fact, that it nearly even surpasses my interest in music. My passion for video games began with the PlayStation and Crash Bandicoot, the console's goofy and immensely lovable mascot. To this day, I love that game franchise to death.

From the PlayStation, I moved on to the PC and RollerCoaster Tycoon. My brother and I used to play that game together for hours on end, creating the wildest, greatest, most nausea-inducing roller coasters imaginable.

As I and my love for gaming grew, it was only natural for me to delve deeper. In 2004, I had the pleasure of hearing about a game called DOOM 3. I lusted after that game in secret for years, until, in 2007, a friend I had just made granted me the opportunity to get my hands on it. Without hesitation, I happily obliged.

Ever since that day, I've kept digging deeper into the wonderful world of gaming. I've discovered many amazing gaming-related interests: modding, speedrunning, eSports, ROM hacks, emulation and the ever-so-vibrant indie game scene. I've grown the size of my game library from a few to almost 450. I've met awesome people through that common interest, if relatively few of them.

Perhaps oddly, despite how passionate I am about video games, I consider myself a fairly casual gamer. To me, video games are, first and foremost, entertainment. I play video games primarily out of a need to be entertained. And for the most part, they do manage to entertain me.

I love games. I love weird games, I love funny games, I love sad games, I love thought-provoking games, I love scary games, I love beautiful games, I love simple

games, I love complex games, I love big games, I love small games, I love light-hearted games, I love dark games.

And I don't see that love ceasing soon.

16-05-2016: Group Tasks, as Viewed by a Shy Person

Fuck.

The results of the pedagogical studies' entrance exams came today. Take a wild guess if I made the cut or not.

A moment of self-analytical pondering led me to the conclusion that the fault was in the group task part of the exams. I did pretty well at the interview as far as I'm concerned. The group task, on the other hand... That has to be where I went wrong.

I've never done well in group tasks. When it comes to working in groups, I'm always the silent observer, uttering not a single word unless I'm asked to contribute my own thoughts, feeling like an outsider, an uninvited guest, a third wheel. It's especially bad if I have to work with strangers. It's worse than the worst nightmare.

Not even limited to group tasks, I tend to feel like an outsider in casual conversation. In fact, even within my own circle of friends, I've felt like an outsider on many an occasion. *My own friends*. That hurts the most. That hurts more than hitting your balls on a sharp corner. And trust me, I've hit my balls on a sharp corner. It's the worst pain imaginable.

Of course, I have no problem conversing face-to-face with only one person, but add as much as one and things start sliding downhill like a skateboarding maestro grinding down a railing. My mouth is like a machine that decreases its activity exponentially the more people are around me.

"Quiet". One of the most common words I hear people describe me with. I can, however, be the complete opposite of that, but it takes a very specific situation for that to be likely in the least. It takes an *extremely* specific number of other people, that number being one.

As far as initiating conversation goes, in most scenarios, it's the other person who starts it off. I only ever initiate conversation if I feel the need to break the silence somehow. But even then, it takes a lot of courage and mental preparation, especially if the other person is of roughly the same age and of the opposite sex.

Funnily enough, though, I met a girl on a train once. She was a beautiful, blue-eyed, black-haired girl in her early-ish teen years. And it was in fact I who initiated the conversation. We talked for hours. And before I knew it, it was her stop.

In any case, I do feel sad that I didn't make the cut. Sad and slightly pissed off. But in all fairness, I can only blame my own shyness.

I'm not entirely sure how I feel about being as shy as I am. On the bright side, it's kept me from possibly getting stabbed on the back. But on the flipside, it's prevented me from working efficiently in group tasks. And from experiencing a romantic relationship.

That, however, is another topic for another day.

19-05-2016: Wonder and Obsessive Love-Seeking

I turned 22 yesterday.

Birthdays used to be sacred to me. I would always wait (im)patiently for the next one after celebrating a birthday. But now, I don't see much worth celebrating in having lived a certain number of years.

If there's one thing I've discovered about growing older, it's that a lot of things tend to lose their former magic over time. They don't give the same sense of wonder anymore. They don't give reason to look forward to them anymore. But in all fairness, that's childhood in a nutshell - when you're a child, everything is new and wonderful.

But once you're an adult, things become less wonderful. They did to me anyway. I don't much look forward to anything anymore, unless it's either a vacation or a new video game or an album by one of my numerous favorite musicians. Things like birthdays and Christmas, on the other hand, are essentially meaningless to me now.

The last time I looked forward to my own birthday was when I turned 18. I'd finally be able to legally purchase alcoholic drinks and R-rated video games. It was the pinnacle of years of anticipation. Alas, it didn't last. Eventually, even that initial sense of wonder wore off.

It didn't wear off quite as fast as the sense of wonder I had when I got the opportunity to have sex with a prostitute, though. I was 20 years old and still a virgin, on vacation in Amsterdam with my parents. We roamed around the Red Light District, and I was invited in by one of the girls. I still have no idea why, but I only settled for a blowjob from her. The experience in itself wasn't bad, but it was a whole lot less amazing than I expected.

Anyway, that was the first time I had sex. Hell, it was the first time I was in any sort of intimate contact with a woman. To this day, I still haven't gone on a single date, much less had a partner. It *is* kind of saddening to think about, but I don't feel as bad about it now as I used to.

The funny thing is that I can't figure out for the life of me where it began. Was it peer pressure? Was it society embedding the idea that love is the source of all happiness into my head? Whatever it was that started it, it haunted me for years. I was obsessed with the idea that I had to get a girlfriend in any way I possibly could.

As you might guess, I never did get a girlfriend. I couldn't bring myself to talk to girls, no matter how much I metaphorically kicked my own ass. Damned if I could even build up enough courage to take as much as a single fucking step in their direction. While those problems do still persist, I've stopped caring about them in a sense.

I've only realized fairly recently that I don't need a partner in order to feel happy. My family and friends bring me enough happiness, not to mention my dear hobbies. But if love ever comes knocking at my door, I'll happily invite it in.

20-05-2016: Moods and Noticing When They Change

Fun fact: If you take away the dash between 20 and 05, you get 2005-2016. And if you count from 2005 up to this year, that's 11 years - half of the years I've lived.

I like making random observations like the one above. So much so that I could almost call it an interest of mine. There's something about observing and discovering the most random things that brings me satisfaction, if a relatively small amount of it.

Maybe that somehow ties into my attention to detail. I don't draw very often, but when I do, I tend to draw fairly elaborate illustrations with many small details. I'm a very observant type of person, and I tend to notice small details a lot. If someone shivers ever so slightly or glances at me quickly enough that they think I didn't notice, I tend to notice that.

I also tend to notice changes in people's moods and behaviors. If someone's even a little less happy than usual or behaves differently, I tend to notice that. But sometimes, I have to second-think my judgment. My mother often asks me what's gotten me down when there's in fact nothing that's gotten me down. Often in those instances, I've only been contemplating different things. That's why I often second-think if certain people are actually down or not.

When I'm truly down, I show it as clearly as my emotional skills allow me to. I make it clear that I don't want to see or talk to anyone. I make it clear that I want to be left alone to vent. I make it clear that you don't want to approach me, no matter how much you think your mere presence will make me feel better.

As far as the spectrum of "calm vs. angry" is concerned, I'm a prime example of both of its ends. Most of the time, I'm incredibly calm to the point that almost nothing can set my fuse off. But when something does set my fuse off, it burns really damn quickly. I can even get downright violent.

And when I get *that* angry...

Even the dumbest idiot will be wise enough to keep their distance.

21-05-2016: Opinions and Respecting Them

I heard a lot of saddening things today. A 15-year-old girl was caught having sex with 25 boys in a school restroom. A band charged €240 for a “VIP ticket” that only ensured a great seat to an otherwise sold-out show. A picture of a father cradling his ill son in the shower was accused of having undertones of pedophilia.

I’d like to think that the good in the world outweighs the bad, but I’m not so sure I’d be right. I’d like to think that the intelligent outnumber the intellectually deficient. But the world keeps leading me to want to think the contrary. I keep finding myself conflicted as to whether I’m right or wrong in thinking how I want to.

The concept of an opinion isn’t something I’ve always been familiar with. I admit that openly. I used to disregard other people’s opinions and think that mine was the truth. But recently, I’ve come to realize that I can’t always be right. Recently, I’ve learned to not disregard other people’s opinions, whether they think similarly or differently about something.

When it comes to respect, I’m a firm believer in the notion that it should be mutual. If I share my opinion on something with someone, I expect them to respect it. If someone shares their opinion on something with me, I’ll do my best to respect it. Now, the reason I say “do my best” is because I haven’t entirely mastered the practice of respecting other people’s opinions.

Take, for instance, the case of the picture that was accused of having pedophilic undertones. When I heard about that, I couldn’t see for the life of me how those people came to that conclusion. Much less could I respect them for having come to that conclusion. There was nothing explicitly (or even implicitly) sexual about the picture. It was merely a depiction of a father’s love and caring for his ill son, and yet, the dumb fucks had to go and bastardize it in such a manner.

When I form an opinion on something, it tends to never change. I don’t see myself changing my mind about the people who made the picture out to be sexual. If, however, I do change my mind, it will likely happen for very good reasons. What those reasons would most likely be, I can’t predict.

I’m not a fan of debating, and thus I do my best to stay away from debates. Don’t get the wrong idea, though - it’s not because I don’t find my own arguments solid enough, which they may or may not be. Rather, I don’t like debating because of the nature of the act itself. It’s essentially a storm of ideas I should be able to take into account when constructing my own argument, no matter how strongly I feel about whatever the topic of the debate is.

In any case, whether others agree or disagree with me on something, I will do my absolute best to respect their opinions. But that does depend on their reasons and how they present those reasons, if they even present any whatsoever. If not, respecting their opinions will prove difficult for me, if not next to impossible.

23-05-2016: Thoughts of a Different Life

It's not on a very regular basis that I give a serious thought to how differently my life would've worked out if I were the polar opposite of my real self. Then again, I'm not much of a fan of speculation either.

One thing I can say for certain is that I wouldn't have been born with Asperger's Syndrome. To be honest, I'm not entirely sure how I feel about it. Sometimes I'm completely fine with it, other times I'm a whole lot less fine with it.

I do feel as though I've blamed certain things about myself too much on my Asperger's. Namely, I used to blame my never having had a girlfriend on it. Believe me when I say this, though: it's not even among the stupidest forms of self-deprecation I've practiced.

I know I already addressed the topic once, but I feel the need to return to it, if only for self-reflective purposes. Luckily for myself, I've learned to stop thinking back to past mistakes. Well, I've learned to stop doing so dangerously often anyway. Nonetheless, whenever I do think back to a past mistake, I often ask myself what I was thinking and call myself an idiot. That, I dare say, is not the nicest thing to do to yourself.

On the other hand, that form of self-deprecation has taught me not to repeat those mistakes, if only because I remind myself of how stupid I was. I strive to do, if not the exact opposite, at least something else than what I did when I fucked up. In a very morbid sense, you could call it self-taught ethics. I can only imagine what professional psychologists would think about my ways of self-education.

While it has worked in its own way, I can't say it's been entirely healthy to the rest of my psyche. I can't even recall the last time I felt genuine joy. Sometimes, I wonder if I'm even completely sane. My mind is a haze of indifference, balancing precariously between happiness and self-loathing, the two spinning around each other like Yin and Yang.

At least my mind manages to keep itself afloat, even with all the chaos it has to put up with.

25-05-2016: Contemplating Seeking Help

Sometimes, I'm not sure what to make of my mother. Sometimes, she sends rather conflicting messages, though she doesn't so much contradict herself as she wants to clarify that she doesn't want to lead me anywhere against my will. And yet, at the same time, I feel as though she *is* leading me to directions I don't want to go.

Well, to be fair, that's a slight exaggeration. I do understand that she's only trying to help me. I understand that she's only leading me back to crossroads I previously overlooked. But for some reason, I keep refusing to turn back.

Maybe I should turn back this time. Maybe I should get some actual help to overcome my shyness for once. In fact, I've already been contemplating that possibility, even before she asked me if I wanted to seek help today. In all honesty, though, I'm in two minds about it. On the one hand, it would help me with my almost non-existent confidence, and I'd have better chances of passing the entrance exams for the pedagogical studies next year.

On the other hand, I somehow feel that my true image would get destroyed in the process. I feel that a more confident me would be conveying a false image of myself. While the benefits of that far outweigh the drawbacks, chances are I'd feel like I weren't myself.

The question is, however: if I were to seek help and overcome my shyness, would the confident me become the real me?

I don't like pretending. I have a deep loathing for people who pretend to be something they're not. If I pretended to be something else, I'd hate myself. Never once have I shown a false version of myself to anyone. I've always been genuine - always shown myself as me.

Shyness is in my nature. I never approach anyone, and when I try, I refrain from actually doing it. I'm rarely the first person to open their mouth. I rarely trick myself into initiating conversation, but in all fairness, I'm too self-conscious to trick myself anyway.

So then, would the shy me become the false me? Would I be confident by *nature* if I overcame my shyness? It's possible, but even in that case, I wouldn't want the shy me to die. At the end of the day, the shy me is the true me. If anything, I'd only want to bring out the confidence hidden inside me, not have it replace my shyness. As shy as I am, and as much as I occasionally hate it, it's kept me safe from a lot of bullshit.

26-05-2016: Collecting

The collecting culture is something that fascinates me, if to a relatively small extent. I find myself struck - almost paralyzed - with awe witnessing people's collections. Some collect video games, some collect movies, some collect music CDs, some collect fucking bottle caps. But to me, it doesn't matter what people collect, as long as their collections are awe-inspiringly huge in size.

I am, in fact, kind of a collector myself, but not to a very great extent. I like to think of myself as a "selective" collector: I only hunt around for items I actually find that I absolutely want, and I always try to find the cheapest price possible. I don't collect crazy amounts of items, and to be fair, my financial situation doesn't allow that anyway. That's why my collections are fairly small.

The three main things I collect are video games, music and DOOM-related stuff. I shouldn't need to explain why I collect those three specific things at this point. In any case, all of those "categories" I collect both physical and digital copies of.

On a quick estimate, my largest collection of physical items would be my CD collection with 100+ items. My largest digital collection, on the other hand, is by far my Steam game library with 400+ games.

Due to my financial situation, I strive to purchase things for the most affordable prices I can find. That's how I've managed to accumulate so many video games on Steam, for instance. Not only does Steam have regular sales going on, but there are a myriad of sites that pack select games into bundles and sell said bundles for incredibly cheap prices, one of the best of those sites being Humble Bundle. 5 games for a measly dollar? Too good a deal to pass up.

Since I've already touched upon how much I love the DOOM franchise, I won't go into pointlessly deep detail about that. However, I do love the franchise so much that I have essentially two different DOOM collections: a digital *and* a physical one. I have all of the PC DOOM games digitally on Steam, as well as physical versions of them. I also own a CD of DOOM's shareware episode for the PC, as well as two additional DOOM games for consoles. And four different DOOM novels. And a DOOM T-shirt. Indeed, so great is my love for that franchise that I collect all the merchandise I can. Or at least the merchandise I figure I need in order to keep the collection equal to the size of my love for the franchise.

I'm gushing again, aren't I?

In all honesty, though, can you blame me? Yes, I might be crazy for DOOM, but I'm also damn proud to be so. Not many other franchises - not a single franchise, in fact - have managed to get me into collecting in the same way DOOM has. And the answer as to why is simple enough: not a single other franchise have I ever loved as much as DOOM.

27-05-2016: Not So Unshakable

I feel very uneasy now.

I just watched the 13th episode (out of 22) of an anime I've been watching for a few days. At the end of said episode, there was an image of a teenage girl waving happily at her guest, not caring at all for the fact that she was in a hospital room. The image was accompanied by the following line of dialog: "He might have to lose someone he cares about." Something along those lines anyway. It felt too much like a dark premonition of future events. It felt too much like a prediction of a character's death.

I've watched other anime series before in which characters die left, right and center. But this instance was completely unpredicted and subsequently made me feel surprisingly uneasy. I was even trembling ever so slightly mere moments ago. But I'm not anymore.

Huh. I guess even a pen and paper can work as a stress reliever.

Or, in this case, as an anxiety reliever.

I do feel as though one of the characters in that anime will die. And that character is going to be the girl in the hospital. But if I can see it coming, why do I still feel so uneasy?

It's not very usual for me to get emotionally invested in media at all. I will admit, though, that there have been a few instances I've cried playing specific video games or watching specific anime series. Even so, those instances are few and far enough between that I can't call it a common occurrence.

"Emotional" is not a word I'd describe myself with. Granted, I do have emotions, but I only show them so often. It takes a considerable amount of effort to bring some emotion out of me. Unless the emotion that's being attempted to invoke in me is anger - but joy and sadness, for instance, are the kinds of emotions I'm mainly talking about. I can get angry over the most trivial of matters, but not so much happy or sad.

Some people might call me cold-hearted. Who knows? Maybe I am cold-hearted. But in any case, my heart isn't frozen solid. My foundation isn't unshakable. All it takes is effort. And that scene in that anime... Oh, did it really shake my foundation.

02-06-2016: Random Compliments and Non-Existent Experiences

It's been a few days since I last wrote one of these. Anyway, today I stumbled upon a rather thought-provoking thread on a forum I frequent. In said thread, someone asked if other people have ever called random people beautiful or been called beautiful by random people.

Now being called beautiful by a stranger is not an experience I've had, much less given. This goes back to a topic I've previously covered, but if I did call a random person beautiful, it would only happen if I mustered up the courage to do so. Perhaps consequently - although that's admittedly the wrong way of thinking about it - no one has ever randomly called me beautiful.

What if a stranger did call me beautiful? Naturally I'd be happy. I'd have a most wonderful rest of the day, knowing that someone I don't even know or recognize finds me beautiful. Or any masculine equivalent of the adjective.

Of course, such activity is more or less common among my friends and family. I've called my female friends beautiful on many occasions, and I've been called handsome by them and my parents. Strangers, however, are an entirely different matter.

I suppose there's one more entry into the list of experiences I wish to have, at the very least.

Speaking of experiences, there are a lot of things I wish I could've experienced. Not just experiences I wish to have, but experiences I wish I'd already had. Call it glorification if you want to, but for instance, in the anime I briefly discussed in the previous rambling, there was a best-friends type of relationship between a boy and a girl. I assume it goes without saying that I never experienced that, and that anime made me wish I had.

In all honesty, media rarely conveys a fully realistic image of anything. If I had a best friend of the opposite sex, chances are it'd be grossly different from the one depicted between those two characters in that anime. But it wouldn't matter. Only she would.

I'm content enough with a best friend of the same sex, though. At the end of the day, wishful thinking, by its literal interpretation, is exactly what it sounds like. It's thinking. It's a wish. It's thinking of that wish. And it's useless.

08-06-2016: Bad Things Were (Not) Said

I'm going over to my best friend's place tomorrow. I'll be staying there over the rest of the week. Meeting with him is always so fun that I wish it could happen more often. But alas, he lives too far away. Not in a different country, thankfully, but still far enough.

In other news, I stumbled upon another interesting thread today. The thread's poster asked what the worst thing that'd been said to people was.

The truth is, I'm not sure. I don't remember having been said anything particularly bad. Well, the bullies aside, of course. Anyway, I've never been told by my parents that I'd never become anything, for instance. Neither have I been told by any of my schoolmates - in university or prior to it - that I didn't belong in their "circle".

It makes me feel sad to see what kinds of bullshit others have to put up with. Getting no encouragement from their own parents. Getting rejected by their acquaintances or friends. Being told by their own family that they're a disgrace to the family name.

I think the worst thing I've ever been told is that I'd never experience true love. By none other than myself. As much as it hurts to admit it, I wasn't too wrong. A lot of my "crushes" back in the day were merely instances where I found said "crush" beautiful and mistook it for love. Only recently have I learned that love doesn't work in that way. It involves more than a visual perception that may only last for seconds.

There may have once been a time I believed in love at first sight, but I don't anymore. Much less do I believe in the notion that only one specific person is destined to be with you forever - "The One", if you will. There's something about that whole concept that makes me want to punch whoever introduced that line of thinking to society. But if people insist on believing in "The One", I'm not going to question them.

Anyway, I don't recall ever being genuinely in love. As far as I understand, it's supposed to involve tension, nervousness and obsessive thinking of the other person, among other things. But none of my numerous "crushes" induced any of those feelings in me. I only found them beautiful. And I'm not afraid to admit that no person will ever succeed in inducing those feelings in me in the future either. At least, the likelihood of it is very small, if not negligible.

In all honesty, loving someone is the equivalent of liking someone, only with an obsessive quality to go along with it. And until I'm convinced otherwise, I'll keep thinking just that.

16-06-2016: Delving Deeper into Darkness

I thought about a lot of things today. I thought about anxiety. I thought about depression. I thought about death.

The odd thing is that death aside, I feel almost scarily comfortable thinking about such subjects. Maybe it's because I've never experienced depression or anxiety. Not that I'd really want to experience them either. Obviously they're serious issues, but how exactly is it that I don't feel the slightest bit of discomfort pondering them?

One factor to consider would be my lack of experience with those issues. I do have acquaintances that either have or have had depression, but even they are ever so few. I do have a vague idea how depression works, but that idea is ever so vague. Much less experience do I have with anxiety. I've never known anyone with anxiety, or if I have, I either don't remember them or didn't know they had anxiety.

To me, depression and anxiety are rather trivial subjects. If they happen to be brought up in casual conversation - I hate to say "happily" in this case, since they're not particularly happy subjects - I'll discuss them just about as openly as any other subject. Death, on the other hand, is a subject I try to steer clear of as best I can.

The inevitable fact is that everyone dies. So did my grandmother three years ago. But for some reason, if death is brought up in conversation, it triggers a feeling of uneasiness and even mild anxiety in me. Strangely enough, that's not the case if I *think* about death by myself. Strangely indeed, wouldn't you agree, dear reader?

On a side note, I guess I do have some experience with anxiety after all, and it's even personal.

21-06-2016: Expert Procrastinator

I thought I could write about something very interesting after spending a day away from everyday life, coming over to our summer cottage. Strangely enough, I can't think of anything interesting to write about.

Then again, I didn't think about anything in particular today. I didn't reflect on anything in particular. I just enjoyed my day as if it were like any other day.

I do feel as though I don't visit the summer cottage enough. In its own way, disconnecting for a day and spending the day doing things I normally wouldn't is fun. As my life currently is, now that my first year in university is over, a usual day for me is a day spent mostly at the computer - playing video games, listening to music, browsing the Internet and generally procrastinating.

Procrastination is a bad habit for me, and it's even gotten me nearly fucked more than once. As much as I hate that habit, I haven't taken a single step towards trying to do something about it. In an odd sense, I embrace my habit of procrastinating.

The interesting thing is that my school success hasn't suffered tremendously from it.

Still, I can't say it's a very good habit to have. Because I tend to leave everything until the last minute, I find myself stressed out with having to think shit up on the fly as opposed to careful planning, especially when it comes to essay assignments. The fact that I generally fucking hate writing essays doesn't help either.

At the very least, I get bored relatively rarely. Despite my habits, I'm never out of things to do.

04-07-2016: Lady Luck's Least Favorite

My mother assumes things way too easily. Just today, relatively late in the evening, she asked me if I hadn't already "shot enough things" for the day when I had done next to no "shooting things" to begin with. She assumes that I spend all day playing video games when, in fact, that's not all I do, even if I sit at the computer for most of the day. She assumes that I only play shooter games when, in fact, that's not the sole genre I exclusively play, even if that is my favorite genre.

And more often than not, she frustrates me with her false, baseless, biased, repetitive assumptions. Even more annoyingly, I'm stuck with having to put up with her until I no longer have an expensive and important purchase to desperately save up for.

I hate being a student. I don't hate *studying*, but I hate the shackles that the Finnish government slaps onto my wrists because I'm a student. As extreme as I know this sounds, it's the rough equivalent of a prison sentence.

Granted, I can enjoy my own life just about as freely as I please, but I mainly use that metaphor to describe my frustration with the restrictions as far as purchases go. Since I'm a student, I can't, for instance, pay in instalments. I can only do one-time payments. If it weren't for that, chances are I'd have the new computer and be enjoying the new DOOM already instead of six months from now.

I've tried my hands at the lottery a few times, but my luck is worse than abysmal. The best I've ever won is my money back - with a multiplier of 1. The chances of winning the jackpot are infinitesimal to begin with, but I wouldn't care about it. All I'd care about is winning just enough money so that I can buy the computer. Then I could go back to contemplating moving out - only this time, I could *seriously* contemplate it.

Luck... Random chance.

What am I doing so wrong that even luck hates me?

12-07-2016: A Mixed Impression

Before I start talking about today's actual topic, I feel the need to mention that this is probably where these things get less frustration-induced.

Now, with that out of the way, here's today's actual topic: I've been messaging with a girl I met on a forum I frequent over the past month or so. If you didn't skip any of the previous ramblings, you should get the impression that I'm not hoping that I'd finally get myself a girlfriend out of her. And in that case, you'd be correct. The truth is that I didn't mention her with that reason in mind to begin with.

In fact, the reason I mention her is because I think it goes the opposite way in this case. I've been getting the ever-increasing impression that she hopes she'll finally get herself a boyfriend out of me. Now, don't get the wrong idea - I *am* open to that possibility and I'll happily catch whatever chances life throws my way. Only I don't feel that I know her well enough to seriously consider that possibility yet.

I'm sure I've already addressed that topic previously, though, so I won't bother repeating myself here.

Anyway, the main reason I get that impression is because I happened to see a post by her in a thread, asking how well long-distance relationships tend to work out. And in that same post, she mentioned me, albeit not by name. But the description she gave makes me most certain she mentioned me.

I don't mind her disclosing the information publicly, but it does make me feel rather uneasy about her intentions, especially considering the context in which the information appeared. At this point, I only consider her an acquaintance or, at best, a distant friend. She, on the other hand...

Or maybe I'm just overthinking it. Maybe she doesn't see me as her love interest just yet. Maybe she only asked it for future reference.

In any case, she does seem like a nice person. We've exchanged a lot of information, and she's told me many interesting things. And I'm sure she's found at least some of the things I've told her interesting.

It can only get better from here.

16-07-2016: Memory Records

My suspicions are starting to lessen. As I've spent a few more days messaging with the girl introduced in the last rambling, I've been feeling less uneasy about her intentions with me.

I'm most certain I was only overthinking it at the time. For some reason, my brain likes to do that to me. I'm not a fan of overthinking, especially when it comes to matters relating to love.

Upon reflection, I don't recall a single instance where I overthought something, strangely enough. But I do feel as though that wasn't the first time either. I'm sure it wasn't the first time.

I don't give much thought to things relating to memories, but I suppose it would be interesting to be able to use them practically. Imagine someone keeping a record of every thought you think, every action you make, every spoken word you produce - and being able to access, or even modify or destroy, parts of that record. The filing cabinets would take up an unimaginably large space, though.

Theoretically, one such record does exist, but it works in ways we wouldn't necessarily want it to sometimes. It only allows access to select entries at a time, and it randomly modifies and destroys parts of itself. And it doesn't take up physical space.

I'm greatly fascinated by how differently people's memories work. Some people have good visual memory, some have amazing information memory, some have incredible muscle memory. Personally, I have a great visual memory. I remember things like people's faces, the clothes they wear, the environment they're in, the way their body works to help convey the message of their statement.

Anyway, I really admire the girl. She has ambitions, she has goals, she looks into the future, she thinks like a dreamer. I admire those things about her.

22-07-2016: International Friends

Things are going well. I've made another friend. I've discussed many a topic with her. I've expressed my wish to eventually meet her in real life. And she's responded with the same wish.

As someone to whom making friends isn't an everyday activity, I feel incredibly happy about the recent events. What I feel even happier about, though, is the fact that I've made a friend from the opposite end of the planet. They do say there's a first time for everything, and this is my first time having made a friend overseas.

In a sense, it's funny how, despite the international communication possibilities of the modern era, I never bonded with any foreigner until now. Then again, I never took it upon myself to bond with any foreigner either. But I don't so much feel bad about it as I find it amusing that the first instance of it occurred this late.

I sure as hell hope this instance won't be the only one either. I've always wanted to make international friends - more than one. Well, theoretically, I have already made an international friend once before, but he isn't so much a true friend to me as he is simply a buddy.

I make a clear distinction between friends and buddies. I feel that I can disclose less intimate information to buddies than to friends. Moreover, there are things I feel rather uncomfortable opening up about to buddies which I don't feel as uncomfortable opening up about to friends.

Between me and you, dear reader, the extent to which I've disclosed information here is roughly the same extent to which I'd disclose information to a friend. But that's because I mainly write these things out of a need to vent. I like to think of writing these as a way of self-practiced therapy. And in all honesty, it's worked wonders.

That said, if I wasn't writing these, I wouldn't be this open about myself and my life, especially to strangers. Keep that in mind.

02-08-2016: Overwhelmed by Inspiration

I've been meaning to write another one of these for a week, but my days haven't been too eventful. No interesting thoughts have come to my mind either.

Interestingly enough, I originally intended to write these every day. Had I stuck to that plan, this would already be nearing completion. But at some point, my interest in doing this so regularly saw a sudden drop, and since then, these have been less plentiful but, in a sense, more inspired at the same time.

Being an artistic person, inspiration is something that comes to me all the time. And I mean *all the time*. Whether it's a mental visualization of a movie scene or a musical cue, ideas keep popping into my head - seemingly out of nowhere for the most part. If only I had the time and talent to make all of those ideas a reality.

As fun as inspiration is as a concept, the sheer amount of it can (and does) get overwhelming to me. I have half a dozen different ideas for video games, which is enough as it is, but add to that a hazy cloud of musical ideas and another hazy cloud of ideas for movie scenes and you can only imagine how overwhelmed I am.

If someone invented a machine that would grab your ideas and interpret and realize them in real time, I'd fucking use that thing constantly. Hell, I'd buy the company that invented it.

07-08-2016: Is This Love?

“God, I fucking love that girl.”

That’s the phrase that I speak to myself every night right before going to sleep. At this point, I don’t even care that I sound like I’ve fallen in love. But the fact of the matter is that I haven’t. I think I haven’t anyway, but then, I might just prefer to think that way.

Now that I think about it, am I lying to myself? Am I trying to convince myself that I’m not in love when the truth is the complete opposite? Do I recognize this? Have I done this to myself before?

Ah, fuck it. I’ll think about it when I feel less light-headed.

I do dare say that I might genuinely be in love. For the first time ever, this might be more than a passing false impression. And the funniest thing about all of it? I don’t hate to admit it. Knowing how things have been going for the past two months, it’d feel wrong to disregard that possibility anyway.

That is, however, what it is for the time being - a possibility. I don’t know anything for certain yet.

Why am I trying to apply logic to what isn’t logical to begin with?

If it is love, then it is love. If not, that’s okay as well. Either way, I’m past the point of being afraid of the outcome. Whatever comes my way, I’ll accept it without complaint.

11-08-2016: Lost in a World of Chaos

I've spent the last few days desperately trying to get my feelings sorted out. Among them have been feelings such as happiness, joy, longing and closeness. I have yet to feel something that defies description, though. I have yet to feel that grossly illogical emotion that begins with an L.

Unless I already felt it at some point but completely overlooked it. Then again, even if I hadn't overlooked it, it may have been a mere false impression. (Apparently I really like to use that phrase lately.)

In any case, the feelings I *am* sure I've felt cover a wide range, some of them polar opposites of each other. I've felt joy with her - and so, I've felt sadness without her. I've missed seeing her beautiful face - and so, I've felt relief when I've seen it.

As much as I hate speculating, I feel as though she's felt at least partly the same way. Something tells me my feelings are certainly not one-sided.

Man, writing off of emotions is harder than I thought. I try to make sense of my feelings, but my thoughts keep insisting on getting in the way. It frustrates me.

At least my feelings and thoughts aren't overlapping yet, and hopefully they don't do so at any point. If I let that happen, making sense of either is going to be impossible. My inner world is chaotic enough as it is, having to sort out a tangled lump of emotions.

Preventing my thoughts from interfering with my emotions will surely take some effort, but I hope I manage.

12-08-2016: A Step Away from Self-Pity

I discussed my recent emotional struggle with my mother today. In a sense, it helped - if not to clear up the chaos inside, then at least to turn my attention away from it. I feel as if I can think normally for the first time this week.

However, if only for the sake of extending the length of this rambling, I feel the need to turn my attention back to it briefly.

If my mother was right - and more often than not, she's *close* to it - my inner chaos is a sign of a lesser degree of affection. A sign of what would be commonly referred to as a "crush".

As used as I am to inner chaos of varying intensities, this is the first time it's ever been this intense. And not once before has it involved emotions - at least not to this degree. I believe I've already addressed the topic of the false crushes I used to have, so I won't waste precious space talking about it here.

I didn't believe I'd be saying this, but when I told myself I'd never experience true love, maybe I *was* wrong after all. Of course, that stage is still far out of my sight. But now, I feel as though it isn't entirely out of my reach.

Now Bohemian Rhapsody is ringing in my head for some reason. How appropriate.

Anyway, I do find it slightly amusing that I was wrong about myself. Granted, I'm only on the first step, but it is a promising first step. I only hope I don't find myself trying to walk up an escalator that's going down. I have a burning desire to prove to myself that I was wrong. I have a reason why I want to reach the highest step.

20-08-2016: Venting of a Broken Heart

My heart was broken today.

Someone I had feelings for told me she wasn't ready. Someone I had feelings for told me she preferred to keep me as a friend. Someone I had feelings for went ahead and broke my heart - and now, there it lies, pieces of the poor, shattered thing all over the floor.

And yet, my feelings for her remain. I can't even think straight right now. My writing is slower than usual. My thoughts are less coherent than usual. I feel the least like myself in years.

All of this because my heart was broken. I'm not surprised, though. After all, this was the first time I actually had real feelings towards someone. And of all instances, *this* has to be the one where she tells me she wants to keep me as merely a friend.

I keep telling myself to cry. I keep acknowledging that I want to let it all out. But nothing's happening. Even if I try my hardest, the tears refuse to be shed. My heart is crying, but why not my eyes?

Devastated. That's how I've felt since I woke up. But I was too shocked to be entirely honest to her. I told her I understood - and I do in a sense - but that was only half of the truth. A part of me still doesn't want to believe what happened. A part of me still has feelings for her.

No. Not only a part of me. *All* of me - *I* still have feelings for her. I was wrong to not ask for further reasoning from her. I was wrong to settle for her wanting to keep me as a friend.

But at the same time, I don't want her to feel bad. If I did ask her for further reasoning, would she give any? Would she be able to? Would she feel too bad to answer?

In any case, she did break my heart. And it'll certainly take longer than ever before to pull myself together. Do I really deserve *this* bad luck? Do I really deserve to be left alone unloved?

24-08-2016: Recovering Ever So Quickly

My recovery has been rather fast. Surprisingly so, in fact. In only a few days, my prior feelings of heartbreak have turned into feelings of blissful, if still ever so slightly painful apathy.

Only another few days and I should be myself again. Then I can carry on. Then I can go back to discussing things more interesting and less agonizing than heartbreak.

Venting sure works wonders in regards to negative feelings. At least I've found that to be true in my own case. I spent the last three days essentially doing just that - venting. Had I not vented at all, I prefer not to imagine how much of a wreck I'd be.

I vented everywhere I saw fit. I vented to my mother. I vented on an Internet forum. I vented to myself. And all that venting - not forgetting the support and comfort I received - helped. I could've done without all of the advice, though.

The most useless piece of advice I received throughout the venting process was to date other people for the time being. Why would I date other people when I never dated her at any point to begin with? Why would I fill that negligibly small void just for the sake of filling it?

I'm happy enough as it is. Despite things developing the way they did, I'm happy. I still see her as a great friend. I'm happy enough keeping her as one.

To think that I was saying the complete opposite four days ago...

Heh. I never thought that love of all things had a sense of humor.

27-08-2016: Left Alone in Silence

I went to celebrate my godson's 3rd birthday today. I love that kid. He reminds me of myself when I was a child - clever, full of joy, never staying still. Following his development over the next 15 years will be interesting.

That, however, is beside the point of today's rambling. You see, some unpleasant developments have occurred in regards to my situation with the girl I had a crush on. She hasn't talked to me in a few days. And she didn't even give me a forewarning. So I'm left to speculate as to why, which I hate.

What I hate even more than speculating, though, is being left in the dark about things, especially in this case. With no explanation from her, I'm left to guess as to her reasons for suddenly cutting contact.

The most likely scenario I'm imagining is that she feels the need to distance herself from me until she feels herself again. She's probably as wrecked from the aftermath as I was. I hope - I *pray* - that that scenario is the real one, or at least the closest one to reality.

If I'm entirely honest, this aftermath almost hurts more than the heartbreak itself. Not only do all of the potential scenarios hurt my brain immensely, but the fact that this happened in the first place hurts my heart.

Am I even helping myself by writing these anymore? Or have these turned into a means of making the hurt even worse?

28-08-2016: A Discussion on Asperger's

I feel as though throughout these ramblings, there's one particular subject I haven't addressed enough. That subject is my Asperger's.

To my understanding, a lot of people with Asperger's - or Aspies, as we like to call ourselves - get diagnosed fairly late into their lifespan. I had the luck of being diagnosed when my age still comprised a single digit. Or to be more precise, my parents had that luck. My mother in particular met many "amazing" people through my Asperger's.

In case you're unfamiliar with Asperger's, it is a developmental disorder that essentially rewires your brain. Symptoms of the disorder may be, for instance, difficulty in reading subtle hints and body language, repetitive or restrictive patterns of interest, or hypersensitivity. I use the phrase "may be" because Asperger's doesn't manifest in the same way in everyone, but the symptoms I listed are some of the most common ones associated with Asperger's.

In regards to misconceptions about Asperger's, the most common one I hear is that Aspies lack the ability to feel empathy. I can safely say from personal experience that it's far from true. I've experienced situations where I felt whatever emotion others were feeling, possibly even more intensely than they did themselves. Only I've had a hard time putting it into words.

Either way, if I had to describe myself as an Aspie, I don't recognize too many common traits of it in myself that I could name. I'm not hypersensitive, but I do dislike unexpected physical contact. My interests aren't particularly repetitive, but I do have a hard time taking interest in new things. Subtle hints, however, I *cannot* read for the life of me.

In all honesty, I feel rather impartial about my Asperger's. I don't consider it a curse, but I don't exactly consider it a blessing either. If anything, I see it as half of both.

If I had to choose between the two, though, I'd probably lean more towards blessing than curse. After all, it *is* a part of me.

01-09-2016: Gone Without a Trace

I don't even know how to start this one.

I was dealt one final blow by *her* yesterday. I bore witness to her having essentially cut all contact and then some. She left me behind, as if without a trace.

Strangely enough, I don't feel sad. And I don't feel angry either. Much less do I feel happy - that wouldn't make sense anyway. If anything, I'm torn.

Upon reflection, the two and a half months I got to talk to her were great. I'd even say they were some of the finest times I've ever had in my life - the heartbreak aside, of course. She was one of the nicest people I've ever had the pleasure of getting to know.

Alas, now she's gone. But I don't hate her. I do hate how she went about distancing herself from me, but I don't hate her as a person.

I'm ever so carefully hoping that she comes back. Only not as a love interest, but as merely a friend. At the same time, though, I hope she doesn't.

I did say I'm torn, didn't I?

Either way, I enjoyed my time with her for the most part. She was my first real online friend. She was my first serious love interest. As much as I may hate how she left me behind without a word, I'll always remember her.

05-09-2016: The Impossibly Heavy Burden of Social Anxiety

I'm supposed to be going to an event tomorrow. My fellow student colleagues are getting together to see each other again after the summer vacation. Each other and some new faces.

I do intend to go. However, I'm not sure if I feel excited or nervous - or both at the same time. On the one hand, it'll be a pleasure seeing my university acquaintances and catching up, but on the other, the new people that will inevitably show up make me feel anxious about going - and not in the positive sense of the word.

I like meeting new people as much as any average neurotypical extrovert, but the social process involved in it is not my strong suit. Very rarely do I initiate conversation, and if I do, it'll be a small miracle in its own way. Very rarely do I conjure up enough courage to go up to a stranger and greet them. Very rarely do I find myself thinking up an interesting topic to discuss.

Even reassuring myself that I'm not alone with those struggles, and that there'll very likely be at least one other such person there, doesn't help.

As much as I embrace my introversion, there are times I really fucking hate it. Granted, those times are relatively rare, but when they do occur... I'll be damned if the feeling of frustration will be gone in an hour. Sometimes, it can even take days. In fact, more often than not, it *has* taken days.

Nevertheless, I intend to go. Even if my social anxiety decides to make its appearance - which wouldn't surprise me in the least - seeing old and new colleagues alike will be a pleasure.

07-09-2016: Wasted Effort

Last night was fun. And at the same time, it was... Well, to say it wasn't fun would be wrong. Even "less fun" would be an overstatement. But I believe "semi-fun" would be an appropriate phrase.

Why not? It was fun and semi-fun at the same time.

I saw my old colleagues. I saw new colleagues. I talked - mostly to prior acquaintances. In fact, I practiced next to no socializing with the freshmen. I tried, but my attempts to force myself to socialize - to initiate conversation with the freshmen - fell short.

But I had plenty enough fun seeing familiar people again. Even if I didn't get to know too many of the freshmen - even if they didn't get to know me - I enjoyed myself. I enjoyed the company. I enjoyed the whiskey.

Sometimes, though, I wonder if people think positively or negatively of me when they see me for the first time. When a colleague of mine asked a freshman - a female - how she'd describe me, she described me as "a little quiet". Did she mean it in a positive or negative way? How did she think of me?

Either way, "a little quiet" is an understatement. I'm more silent than an assassin. I'm the one who wins every "stay quiet as long as possible" competition. There have been days I've easily produced less than 100 spoken words.

Still, I'm just as human as everyone else, and I want to be seen that way. Anyone who knows me to the least extent knows how quiet I usually am. But it only takes the effort of getting to know me and there's a chance I'll be less quiet.

Why do my own efforts have to keep failing then?

13-09-2016: Dreams and the Rediscovery of a Lost Joy

Dreams are quite an interesting phenomenon.

I'm not talking about the type that you consciously think and wish of - I'm talking about the type that appears in your sleep. Why? Because I saw a rather interesting dream last night. I don't recall much of it, but what I do recall is an image of myself getting punched in the face.

I've seen dreams where I've been beaten with chairs, but I believe that was the first dream I ever saw where I took a hit on my face without a weapon of any kind.

What's so interesting about getting punched in the face, though, you may ask? The fact that I saw it in a dream for the first time. That's what's interesting about it.

I've seen many kinds of dreams. I've seen dreams where I have sex. I've seen dreams where vampires get their intestines ripped out. A very commonly recurring type of dream, however, seems to be one where I travel somewhere isolated and weird shit starts going down.

I once had a phase during which I took interest in the interpretation of dreams. I even purchased a book dedicated to the subject. Alas, that phase was short-lived. But I might take interest in it again - inspired by my dream last night, no less.

The same thing has been happening with my interest in drumming lately. For the longest time, I didn't play the drums, and thus, my interest saw a gradual decline. Only a few weeks ago, after playing the drums again after however many months, did I rediscover that interest.

But damned if I haven't rediscovered that interest and then some. I've been starting to take it upon myself to play the drums at least once a week, usually for 30 minutes at a time. I've been watching tons of drumming-related videos online. I've been doing research on affordable drum kits.

It can only get better from here.

14-09-2016: Politeness

One of the things I do my best every day of my life is to be nice. It has taken years of practice, but it's finally at a point where I dare say that I'm overall a nice person.

My strongest point, I feel, is my sense of politeness. While I am an honest person - sometimes maybe too much so - I still try not to sound too harsh. I greet people I know when I see them. I thank people when it's necessary. I apologize where seen fit to do so.

"Polite" is, in fact, another fairly common word I hear people describe me with. I like to leave a good first impression. After all, those are what count, aren't they?

Speaking of which, I'm still trying my damndest to decipher how that freshman girl meant to deliver her description of me. Did she see my relative quietness as a good thing? Did she see it as a bad thing? Was she neutral about it?

I guess I'll have to ask her personally. I hate having questions left unanswered.

Anyway, as nice as I try to be as a person, there are times I "break character", both voluntarily and involuntarily. For some reason, I feel as though the former type occurs more commonly. Then again, I might be wrong. But there *are* times I feel the conscious need to break character. Thankfully, though, those situations are fairly rare.

If I break character involuntarily, the most likely reason for it is that I'm angry about something. Too angry to bother pretending otherwise, but then, I hate pretending anyway.

Overall, though, I'm a nice person. Or I like to think of myself as one, at least. In any case, the testimonies are no lie. If people's first impressions concur with my impression of myself, I can say I've succeeded in something.

21-09-2016: Violence

Frustration, as might have become evident throughout these ramblings, is a feeling all too familiar to me. And my mother is very often the cause of it. She repeats herself like a radio station's playlist, especially in regards to her concerns about my well-being.

In all fairness, I understand where she's coming from with those concerns. But what frustrates me about it is the fact that she has next to nothing else to say to me anymore. That's not even an exaggeration.

Sometimes - as shocking as I know this sounds - I feel like punching her. That, at the very least, might teach her to keep her mouth shut. Or it might not. Either way, taking my frustration out on something would work wonders for my well-being, even if that something were a close family member's face.

The only reason I don't is because I want to avoid such an extreme breaking of character as best I can. I want to keep a positive image about myself. I want to think - and I want others to think - that I only resort to violence as a means of defense and when absolutely required by the situation at hand.

I don't take enjoyment in violence. I only ever use it as a last resort when I've run out of options. Not that there have been situations in my life where I've *had* to use violence, but I like to think that way.

All considered, I wouldn't want to commit an act of violence, least of all towards my own mother. As much as she frustrates me, taking it out directly on her would be simply wrong.

25-09-2016: The Burden That Comes With Love

For some reason, I don't think too positively of my chances of finding "The One". I know I've said I hate that phrase, but I use it here purely for the sake of context. In any case, I really don't think positively of my chances of getting in a relationship.

Whenever I think or say the sentence "if I ever get in a relationship", I always - no exaggeration, *always* - mentally add "by some miracle". It's even entirely conscious. I never stop myself from following up with that thought. And that's yet another form of self-deprecation I've practiced for way too long.

I don't specifically pursue a relationship, though. I enjoy single life, and I prefer to keep enjoying it without the pressure of trying to find a significant other.

In fact, one of the more specific reasons I don't actively look for a relationship is because the implications of it scare me. The time and energy I'm expected to invest into it. The social pressure I'm expected to be able to deal with. The love I'm expected to be able to show and give.

I feel as though I might slowly be becoming afraid of falling in love. Or maybe not so much afraid of falling in love as afraid of commitment. At any rate, despite how much I may be startled by the near-impossible expectations a relationship sets on me, I'm determined to prove myself wrong.

A miracle shouldn't be needed in order to find love.

28-09-2016: An Exceptionally Fun Group Task

I had a rather interesting experience yesterday.

I believe I've previously touched upon my discomfort in and hatred of group tasks. Maybe one but not the other. Either way, I participated in a group task yesterday. It took place relatively late in the afternoon - outside of my usual weekly schedule, in fact. A few of my colleagues and I - my group, if you will - got together to work on a task for a course.

Now, shockingly enough, I didn't feel the slightest hint of discomfort. Granted, I was somewhat quieter than the rest of my group, but I managed to open my mouth on more than one occasion. In fact, I could go as far as to say I talked more than usual. It was the first group task in ages I didn't actually *hate*.

I should also say that I had only seen each of my group members once before and knew them by no more than their names.

I've pondered a couple of possible factors as to why my discomfort didn't kick in for once. The first one is that it essentially took place outside of school. It didn't happen in a classroom situation where an authoritative figure - in other words, a teacher - would watch my every move. It happened in a more relaxed setting with no one quietly judging. Just my student colleagues and I.

That's the other factor I've pondered. The lack of a "pressure" factor, if you will. The lack of a silent, yet somehow startlingly loud alarm that goes off if I don't contribute. Without the existence of that factor in that setting, I felt as though I wasn't quite as forced to keep a constant train of thought going, thus giving me time to form cohesive thoughts and contribute my part to the conversation only when I felt ready without further concern.

For instance, thinking back to the pedagogical studies' entrance exams, I said next to nothing in the group task part. Others kept firing their thoughts like full-automatic rifles, but not me. I need time to think what to say before saying it - but in that situation, that time didn't exist. I wasn't even asked to contribute my own thoughts.

Yesterday's group task, however, was a more-than-welcome change of pace.

04-10-2016: Sadness

Sadness is a very powerful emotion. It's not very often that I feel sad, especially when I should, as has been the case in some situations.

My grandmother died of Alzheimer's three years ago. I didn't feel sad then, and I still don't looking back at it. I didn't feel sad when three of my other relatives died. Indeed, you could say I don't feel sad when I should.

When do I feel sad then? To say I feel sad when I shouldn't would probably be an overstatement. I felt sad when a pet of ours died. I've seen movies that made me sad. I've listened to music that made me sad. I've played video games that made me sad.

Even in those cases, though, only rarely has the emotion of sadness been evoked. I can only recall one video game that made me feel very sad - but it did it *twice*. As far as movies are concerned, not many movies have evoked any sadness in me, but the ones that did have definitely left their mark.

Now music, then, is another matter, since it has its own appearances in movies and video games as well. It often works with the visual image rather than behind it. Interestingly enough, I don't necessarily feel the same emotion - sadness in this case - listening to a piece of soundtrack separately from the visual image as I do listening to it in context with the image.

But as far as music goes, there's one genre of it that manages to make me sad on a regular basis: classical music. There's nothing more beautiful than pure emotion turned into a magnificent orchestral piece. Of course, by "magnificent", I mean "mellow". Classical pieces that have a lot going on don't have the same emotional effect on me as slow ones.

In any case, even if I don't feel sad when I should, I'm glad I have other opportunities.

08-10-2016: Game Making

Video games are a great love of mine, as I've previously evidenced. But I've also been interested in making video games for roughly the past decade of my life. That interest swings back and forth, though.

Over the years, I've had many ideas for games - some interesting ones, others less so - but I've actually taken it upon myself to execute them only a few times. And even in those cases, I almost never finished them. To this day, only one fully finished game by me exists. Or two, but one of them is an improved (and "non-private") version of the other.

I do like to experiment with different game creation tools. I like to see how they work and what they can do, and I often compare their workflows with each other. And of course I have numerous game ideas, which gives me an excuse to do so to begin with.

Lately, after a few years of decreasing interest, I've actually wanted to try and make a game or two. I'm only debating with myself which one of the ideas I should execute. They all seem so interesting to myself that I'm finding it impossible to make up my mind. That and I haven't learned the ins and outs of any game creation tool I've looked at. But at the very least, I'd have an excuse to do that as well.

I've always been impressed by how some people make entire games *all* by themselves. And I see no reason why I shouldn't at least try it myself.

Now if I could just decide on which of the ideas to execute...

10-10-2016: Plans Backfiring With a Twist

When it comes to self-acceptance, I can't say I've quite mastered it yet. For the most part, I do love myself for who I am, but there are instances where I curse myself to the deepest pits of Hell.

I especially have a tendency to drown into self-loathing if I go somewhere with the sole intent of socializing and end up not socializing at all. That's been an especially recurring theme over the past month or so. I've been going to events with my student colleagues, and most of the time, I've failed to practice social interaction to the least extent.

I've managed to socialize in a few instances, though. But that hasn't usually happened more than once in a night. At the very least, it *has* happened, even if it was only once. Surprisingly enough, I even socialized with a freshman last time.

Last time, though, I also made the conscious decision to not try to socialize. And yet, by some unlikely turn of events, I did socialize after all.

Maybe that's where I've been going wrong. Maybe I shouldn't force myself to socialize. Maybe if I simply said "fuck it" instead, I'd have a higher success rate.

Is it possible that I'm putting too much pressure on myself in regards to this?

17-10-2016: An Ideal(ly Social) Partner

I've been giving some thought to a certain subject lately. Perhaps not very surprisingly at this point, that subject regards relationships. I seem to have an affinity for thinking about things related to love. Why, I don't know.

Anyway, I've been thinking about my ideal partner, especially in regards to whether she should be an introvert or an extrovert. I bought a book related to the matter about two weeks ago. It's basically a guide to love for introverts, to put it in the simplest way possible.

After reading through the book - a task I managed to complete in a mere three days - I've been thinking that I'd ideally want my partner to be an extrovert. One of my greatest fears about moving out is that of myself turning into a social outcast. I leave the relative safety of my home rarely enough as it is.

An undeniably great benefit of an extrovert partner would be the frequency of social outings. I'd need to worry less about deciding where to go and where not to. But on the other hand, there's the risk of it turning from a benefit into a drawback if the social outings turn out to be *too* frequent. After all, as an introvert, I need time to myself - lots of it.

That's where another potential drawback stems from. If my partner were an extrovert, I'd want her - I'd *need* her - to understand that there's a limit to the socializing I'm capable of within a week. To a fellow introvert, on the other hand, I wouldn't even need to explain it.

But with a fellow introvert, social outings would also be rare, if not next to non-existent, which is the immediate drawback as opposed to an extrovert. And also why I'm leaning towards wanting an extrovert partner, at least at the moment.

24-10-2016: An Unexpected Encounter

Something unexpected happened today.

I received an apology from someone who ran off. She said she wanted to be my friend again. She said she missed talking to me. But there was something I wanted to ask her first. I believe you can guess what I asked.

I asked her why she disappeared without a trace. Luckily, she gave an answer I found satisfactory. We then exchanged a few more messages, catching up on each other's lives.

What made it all so unexpected to me was the fact that it'd been nearly two months since the incident. In all honesty, though, I'm glad she took it upon herself to apologize at the very least. And when she answered my question, I found myself relieved at getting an answer to a question previously left unanswered.

When I look back at the weeks I spent in silent torment, I never was really angry with her. I was only shocked by the initial discovery. And now, knowing her reasons, I don't blame her for doing what she did. But that doesn't mean I dislike what she did any less. I'm still as shocked as I was then.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed catching up with her. And I hope she enjoyed catching up with me.

27-10-2016: Another Shocking Turn of Events

She left again.

Only this time, the circumstances were drastically different. For one thing, she actually informed me about what'd happened. Apparently her mother found out about her reaching out to me and wasn't too pleased, so she was essentially forced to leave again.

As shocked as I was by the turn of events, it was less unpleasant now than the first time. And I certainly don't hold her guilty for anything. Nor do I hold her mother guilty for doing what she did, even if I don't entirely agree with her taking it as far as to force us to cut contact.

I feel bad for us both. She took it upon herself to go against other people's advice and reach out to me. I took it upon myself to accept her apology after hearing her out about why she ran off the first time. And the consequences caught up to us both, if to a lesser extent in my case. But I don't feel any less bad for myself than I do for her.

If only it was within my power to change her mother's mind. If only it was within my power to make her let us continue - despite the five-year age gap, despite us living on opposite ends of the planet, despite me falling in love with her, despite everything.

But alas, it isn't. And that's what tears me apart the most about the whole thing. I had no more say in the matter than she did, and even if I had, I'm not so sure I would've been able to convince her mother otherwise.

And this time, it only lasted three days. Fuck.

At the very least, the blow was relatively soft compared to the first time. Being informed about the circumstances was a significant pain alleviator. I don't have to suffer this time. And neither does she.

I only wish it hadn't ended this abruptly. But the situation is what it is. Life is like a tireless stalker: when you think you've just managed to hide from it, it finds you again. Regardless, whatever she's thinking right now, I hope she knows that I don't hate her.

30-10-2016: Speech Style

Lately, I've been giving some thought to changes in people's speaking styles in different situations. More specifically, changes in my own speaking style.

I like to think that my style of speech never changes drastically in any situation. And in fact, it doesn't. A few minor changes may occur, but "minor" is still the keyword. Regardless of the situation, I like to keep my style of speech consistent and relatively unaffected by changes in social setting.

If I had to describe my speaking style somehow, I'd say it's largely similar to my writing style. You can feel free to draw your own conclusions from that. Either way, as may or may not have become evident, I happen to like long sentences, for instance. That goes for my speech as well as my writing. You might argue that I like long sentences too much, and in all fairness, you'd probably be right.

I also like words and phrases that sound less "conventional". For instance, where most people would use the phrase "to be honest", I like to use "in all honesty". Or I might use "however" instead of "but".

Most interestingly, though, when using comparative structures, I have an odd preference for describing a thing as "less than" another. Is that a sign of me being a pessimist? Possibly. I try to be optimistic, though, and for the most part, I dare say that I succeed. For the *most* part.

But that is another topic of discussion for another day.

05-11-2016: When to Build a Romance

Another relationship-related subject I've been giving thought to... At this point, probably half of these have been related to relationships in some way. I wouldn't blame you if you were starting to get sick of it.

This one, however, regards something that, to my understanding, isn't quite as commonly thought about by many people. And that is the "basis" upon which people prefer to build a romantic relationship.

When I say "basis", I mean the level of acquaintanceship and affection between two individuals. Are they long-time friends? Colleagues at work? Mutual acquaintances of a third party? Complete strangers who just met at the local bar?

As far as the level of acquaintanceship goes, most people, from what I've gathered, would situate themselves between friend and stranger in terms of their preference. Personally, I'd narrow it down to the range between friend and acquaintance.

I've never been the type to fall in love with just about anyone. Counting out the one case, when I look back at the "crushes" I had, what I felt towards them was varying degrees of physical attraction at best. Counting out the one case, in which I'd already established a friendship with the person by the time she became a love interest to me.

I wouldn't try to build a romantic relationship with someone I don't know and appreciate enough, much less with someone I just met. Much like with building friendships, it takes a certain level of deeper connection for me to consider that possibility. But above all, it takes a foundation of trust.

15-11-2016: Language Change

Language change is one of the few topics outside of video games and music that fascinate me greatly. I find it interesting how different phenomena, such as language contact and social media, can enrich and even modify a language.

I don't actually recall how or when exactly my interest in language change got started, but I'm sure it was a relatively recent event. Until about two years ago, I never even thought languages could change - at least not so drastically. But having studied English in university for almost a year and a half now, my views and interests have shifted.

I'm now studying a course where we were given a relatively free choice of topic for an essay last week. (By "relatively free", I mean "restricted to a topic related to the English language or culture but otherwise free".) Can you guess what my topic is related to? That's right - language change. Specifically, I decided to explore the effect of social media on the English language.

Usually I hate writing essays, but in this case, chances are I won't. After all, I got to choose a topic of my own interest for once. And I've actually written another essay related to language change before, so I have a basis of sorts to work off of.

This'll be fun.

18-11-2016: More Than Work (And Love, For the Umpteenth Time)

One notion I firmly believe in is that life shouldn't be all work and no fun. To me, taking the time out of work to relax and involve myself in hobbies and other recreational activities is just as important as work itself. Even more so, in fact, if I were to be completely honest.

I'll never understand people who let their whole lives revolve around their jobs. There's more to life than that. I've heard of people who've never once traveled abroad, for instance - and if I had to make guesses as to the reason, my first guess would be because they think of nothing but work. Work, work, work until you fall over from hunger and sleep deprivation.

The same goes for people in committed relationships. There's certainly more to life than your significant other. I find it especially sad and infuriating if people's partners are the only possible topic of discussion for them. "He's so sweet and handsome! I want to spend every second of my life with him! Oh, and did I tell you about our first kiss?" Just shut the fuck up.

I'd hate to become the type of person I despise. If I had a girlfriend, I wouldn't put her on a golden pedestal. I wouldn't neglect my friends or hobbies just because she suddenly entered my life. And I sure as hell wouldn't forget how to have an intelligent conversation about a topic other than her.

It baffles me what love can do to some people. But at the same time, I suppose I shouldn't be surprised. After all, I got to experience something similar once. But I still didn't let her take over my mind entirely. I'm still too angry at love to let that happen to myself.

In a sense, I hope I stay that way.

21-11-2016: Gratitude

Gratitude is one of the things I display on relatively rare occasions. But when I do display it, it comes from the heart. On the occasion that I thank someone for something, I make it as clear as possible that I genuinely mean it.

One such opportunity I had the accidental pleasure of having yesterday. I was going to a local bar for a writers' night, but it ended up not happening. What instead ended up happening was me finding a few of my colleagues, among them a woman to whom I owe more than I'll ever be able to repay.

You see, it's thanks to her that I ever attended any of the university's parties to begin with. Without her, I would have been an outcast. That's not even an exaggeration - it's thanks to her that I wasn't left out from the start.

Either way, I thanked her for all of it yesterday. How the opportunity presented itself was slightly unexpected, though. After about three hours at the bar, one of the colleagues was about to leave, so we ended up going along with him. Along the way, the rest of the company left us until I was alone with her. And so I took the opportunity.

In all honesty, I had no particular reason as to why I thanked her right then and there. Surely I would've had more opportunities in the future. But since there was one at the time, I figured I might as well take it.

I did, however, have a reason why I didn't want it to be too far into the future. That reason has to do with my intention of leaving university. And once I do, I won't know how soon I'll see her again, if ever.

I've recently come to realize that I started pursuing a career in education for all the wrong reasons. I was never genuinely passionate about becoming an English teacher - it was merely an ideal career choice I somehow planted into my own head. The oddest thing about it is that I managed to convince myself it was the right way forward.

No. It isn't. I'd much rather pursue a career in something I'm genuinely passionate about. And education is certainly *not* it.

28-11-2016: Optimism

I recall promising a few ramblings ago that I'd discuss optimism one of these days. So I figured that the halfway point should be the perfect place for it.

I like to think of myself as an optimist. Even in the least positive things, I try to see the positive sides - sometimes desperately. But I used to be the complete opposite of that. It wasn't until relatively recently that I realized that focusing on the negative sides of things wasn't beneficial for myself, thus initiating a change of mentality in me.

Alas, that change of mentality isn't complete yet. There's still *that* one thing that keeps me thinking negatively of my chances of finding it. It's something I've discussed in abundance throughout these ramblings. I won't even mention its name - I refuse to do so at this point.

I did come close to finding it once, and yet, I can't help but think it'll never come for me. Why? Why do I do this to myself? What will it take to make me stop doing it?

But enough about that. When I look back at the not-so-positive things that have happened in my life, I try to see the positive sides of them. Sometimes, I even find some unexpected upsides. And when I do, it brings me an odd sense of satisfaction.

I believe firmly in the notion that even the darkest clouds have a silver lining. Even if it isn't immediately visible, the effort to find it should always be taken. I've found many of the silver linings years later, if only because I chose not to see them at first. Do yourself a favor, dear reader, and don't be like my past self.

Now to start looking for the silver lining in *that* one cloud...

08-12-2016: I Finally Caved In

When it comes to dating, I've always advocated the idea of meeting your potential significant other while out somewhere. I might just be romanticizing the scenario, having seen my fair share of romantic comedies. In any case, it's one of the reasons I refused to resort to online dating for a long time.

Yesterday, though, I finally caved in.

Let's face it: as an introverted male with Asperger's, my chances of finding a girlfriend by "normal" means are damn near infinitesimal. Then again, what's considered normal in regards to dating may be more subjective than I suspect. But in this case, by "normal", I mean the scenario I described above.

The immediate problem, however, is that I barely ever leave the house. I do go to bars on occasion, but I never go to bars with the intention of scouting for a potential partner. Then again, I never go to bars alone either. If I do, I'll have at least one friend with me. And that tends to block off the entire intent of looking for someone to possibly get romantically involved with.

Even if I go somewhere alone - which, I should say, is a relatively rare occurrence at this point - I still don't go with that mentality. I used to, but when I kept failing to muster up the courage to talk to individuals of the opposite sex, it stopped quickly.

Surprisingly enough, this isn't the first time I've given online dating a go. I tried it once before for a few months (before I started writing these). But the extent of my "trying" was merely creating a profile on a dating site and sitting idly by. And that's a mistake I certainly won't repeat.

19-12-2016: An Exceptional Weekend

Last weekend was exceptional to me in more ways than one. For one thing, I spent two consecutive days socializing. Usually I'd spend one day socializing and the next "detoxing", avoiding social interaction as much as possible. But not last weekend.

On Saturday, I had a relatively new acquaintance come over, which hasn't happened in quite a few years. I'd arranged with a university colleague that he'd drop by, which he did. We spent a few hours writing music and discussing various subjects more and less related to it.

It actually even gave me a new experience. Collaborative writing - music or otherwise - is something I hadn't done until that day, much less thought seriously about. But I enjoyed it. I especially liked how our minds worked as if in sync - we had very similar ideas about where the song should go. I was almost sad that he had to leave as early as he did.

The next day I spent out in a bar with more colleagues. We were supposed to discuss literature, but the conversation flowed mostly to less related topics. Nevertheless, it was a fun few hours, even if I was probably only half as drunk as the others by the end of it. Then again, I keep a close eye on my own drinking anyway.

There's really only been one time I was drunk in the most literal sense. I won't go into much detail, but let's just say that I felt absolutely horrible the next morning. That third Jack Daniel's was too much, to say the least. And that incident is one of the reasons I'm a very careful drinker.

21-12-2016: Indecisiveness and Video Making

If there's one quality in myself I strongly dislike, it's my indecisiveness. I can almost never make decisions that would hold in the long run. I keep changing my mind about various things.

Well, I exaggerate slightly. I *am* capable of making decisions that'll hold in the long run. For instance, as far as saving money for the new computer is concerned, it's still top priority. But I have two other major priorities next to it that my mind keeps bouncing between. Should I focus on improving the quality of my music or video production?

I do have a few purchases in mind that would slightly improve both. But what should come afterwards? I love to make music and want to improve my music production, so I feel as though that should be my main focus. But at the same time, I love making videos just as much, and I want to improve the quality of those as well.

I realize I haven't discussed my love for video production previously. I used to make short movies with some friends of mine, and I also made various kinds of videos by myself. In fact, I've continued making videos to this day, in case you couldn't figure that out. The variety of videos I make is rather wide, if I do say so myself.

Nevertheless, my indecisiveness annoys me. If, for once, I could make a decision and actually carry it out without stopping to rethink it, I'd be happy. But alas, the likelihood of that is not very high.

29-12-2016: An Unexpected Guest

I had an unexpected visitor yesterday.

A friend I hadn't been in contact with for several months stopped by. We spent a couple of hours catching up and playing video games together. I also made some coffee for us to drink. It was a positive surprise to see him after a while.

In all honesty, though, I don't much like sudden visits from people, regardless of their relationship with me. I'd be fine with even only a five-minute notice, as long as I do get a notice that someone's going to come over. But even then, the notice would ideally arrive at least a day prior. A sudden visit with no notice whatsoever is one of my worst nightmares.

Of course that's not to say I didn't enjoy catching up with him, because I did. What I didn't enjoy so much, however, was the sudden appearance without prior notice.

In any case, he had apparently moved out of home while we weren't in contact and was visiting his family for the holidays. I hope I'll also have moved out by the end of next year at the very latest. Whether that will indeed be the case or not has yet to be seen.

02-01-2017: Obsessions

When it comes to obsessions, I like to think they're relatively rare occurrences to me. But to say that I don't obsess over anything at all would be a lie. After all, I do recall some instances. Some of them have even been inexplicable.

One obsession I recall having over that one girl I met on the train once. Now the interesting thing about that case was that I was in no way attracted to her. And yet, somehow, I ended up thinking about her obsessively for a week afterwards.

And of course, there are the occasional trivial matters I shouldn't obsess over. But I can't help myself - after all, I'm admittedly quite the overthinker. Why else would I have obsessed about the hidden meaning behind that freshman girl's "quiet" comment about me, for instance? Furthermore, why else would I have mentioned it in these ramblings *twice*?

Lately, though, there has been one person you could classify as a pseudo-obsession. I say "pseudo-obsession" because I haven't so much thought about her uncontrollably as I've consciously given her lots of passing thoughts. I am talking, of course, about the one that got away, so to say.

I only hope she's alright. Well, "only" is a slight understatement - I also hope she thinks about me every day, if only for a moment. For me at least, not a single day has gone by without me giving her a thought since our ways separated for the second time.

Of course, my concerns towards her are strictly platonic. After all, she already established once that she didn't want us to get romantically involved. And in all honesty, upon reflection, I'm perfectly fine with her decision.

I might have taken it unnecessarily hard at the time. But then again, she was my first love. My only concern as far as my own future goes is that I never find another woman as fine as her. If I ever even find a woman to start a relationship with.

Best to stop before I start complaining about *that* again.

06-01-2017: My Potential as a Lover

Somehow I'm really starting to hate writing about romantic relationships as much as I have thus far. And yet - as you could probably guess - here I am rambling about them *once again*.

Anyway, I've recently given a lot of thought to my own situation in regards to romance. To be more specific, I've pondered my own merits as a potential partner for someone. How much would I be able to give? How much would I be *willing* to give?

I mentioned earlier that there was a time when I sought a girlfriend almost to the point of desperation. What I didn't realize back then - and would only come to realize years later - was that I sought a relationship merely for the sake of being in one. I didn't want a relationship because I actually had feelings towards anyone, but rather so that I could say I had a significant other. Which I never did.

I do want to experience a romantic relationship at least once. But upon self-reflection, I'm not entirely sure it would be for me. There are only so many things I'm willing to sacrifice. Despite that, though, I want to have at least one romantic relationship, if only to find out whether it's for me or not.

One thing I can say with confidence is that if I ever do get romantically involved with someone, I'll devote myself entirely to them. That's one of the few good things I can say about myself as far as romance goes.

Maybe I should just stop thinking about love altogether. That way, I'd at least spare myself a lot of unnecessary self-inflicted pain. But alas, it's not so easy.

17-01-2017: English in My Life

When I think about the role of the English language in my life, I often times catch myself wondering how it's gotten as great as it currently is. Obviously I get exposed to it daily on the Internet, but that's by no means the end of it. I write in English, I chat with my best friend in English, I talk to myself in English - I even *think* in English.

I could go as far as to say English is a second language to me, although it practically isn't. Neither of my parents is a foreigner by origin. They were both born and raised in my dear home country, Finland. And in all honesty, their proficiency in English isn't particularly high either.

So how, then, does the English language play so integral a part in my life as to even influence which language I think in? I can only speculate. I don't, in fact, have any theories about it either. But I'm sure that if I were to take closer interest in the subject, I'd find more than enough answers.

Something tells me I'm not the only case of this in my circle of acquaintances either. After all, I study English in university, and my colleagues often have conversations in English. Then again, whether they think in English similarly to me or not is another question open for speculation.

I should discuss this with them. The results might be very interesting.

23-01-2017: Spontaneity

Spontaneity is something I'm very much in two minds about. Generally, I wouldn't describe myself as a spontaneous person in the least. But there are situations where I find myself doing things without any planning beforehand or further contemplation. I should still say that those situations are rare, though.

I'm a careful planner. I don't tend to go to social outings unless I've scheduled to go to them. I don't roam around randomly with no apparent destination. Well, I may do the latter sometimes, but not often.

Some people like to do things on a whim, but not me. Not regularly anyway. That would go against my psychological ruleset - it would be a severe violation of it. I'm a man of schedules and routines.

In all honesty, I don't mind being a man of schedules and routines. It's how I've lived for as long as I can remember. And I don't plan on changing that.

At the same time, though, there are times when I do act spontaneously, and I may even prefer that over a thoroughly laid-out plan. And more often than not, those situations have encouraged me to stay in my comfort zone rather than force me out of it. That, in most cases, is the deciding factor as to whether I decide to abandon my usual plans or not.

05-02-2017: Am I Lovable?

It's been a while since I last mentioned an interesting thread on a forum. Well, yesterday, I stumbled upon another one of those. The poster of the thread asked if people found themselves lovable.

I do consider myself rather lovable. Many people have complimented me for my personality and politeness. I've heard my best friend tell me that he appreciates my caring for him. But then, I have some habits that would be off-putting to most people, especially when it comes to dating. I'll spare you those details, though.

And I may have some rather shocking personality traits. For one thing, I can lose my temper over the most trivial of matters. In fact, I just lost it yesterday while rewriting an essay for a course - and I believe I even set some sort of personal record with that.

Some people may also not be fond of my occasional "ghost exits". I call them so because they involve keeping my mouth as shut as a safe. Not saying a single word to anyone - just leaving and hoping nobody notices. Luckily for myself, I do these "ghost exits" on very rare occasions.

Overall, though, I consider myself lovable. I may have a few undesirable qualities about myself, but I like to think they're outweighed by the desirable ones.

11-02-2017: A Promise Broken and Remade

If there's one good quality about my parents I can name, it's that they're not short-tempered. We can usually have calm, rational discussions about things. Such as today when we discussed my future and, more importantly, my career changing plans.

There was one very essential realization I came to during that near-hour-long dialogue. It was that I've let my grip on my own life slip. And for someone who promised to change their own life come this year, I'm shocked I didn't fully know until today what I'd done to myself. I broke a promise I made not only to my parents but to *myself* as well.

But today, I remade that promise.

As of today, I've promised - to myself and my parents - to take every step possible in order to take control of my own life. I've set my mind to moving out by the end of this year, and I *will* move out by the end of this year. It's about time I do anyway.

But I need a different starting point. I have to change my mindset from needing a life of my own to wanting it. Otherwise I don't see myself being able to accomplish that goal. I have to actually start wanting to take my life into my own hands.

Knowing me, it'll be anything but easy. Either way, I'm determined to finally do something about it. One of these days, I'll have to stop relying on my parents and, what's even more important, luck. And I should look forward to that day instead of fearing its arrival.

16-02-2017: The Meaning of Life

The meaning of life is a question with no single objective answer. If anything, it's the most subjective question imaginable. We continuously ask ourselves why we're here - and many of us struggle to find the answer.

If you're in a similar situation to my life in yours, you're probably only starting to find out what the meaning of your life is. You're probably starting to wonder what you're even doing. And chances are you're starting to look for a way out of it.

Or maybe you're still too young to fully know what you want to do with your life. Or maybe you're on the other end of the thread and you found it out years ago. Either way, I wish you the best of luck, dear reader.

But what is the meaning of life in general?

I once jokingly told a friend that the meaning of life was sex. But upon deeper reflection, I wasn't too far from the truth. We were all born when our parents had sex and one of them got pregnant, giving birth to us approximately nine months later.

Think about it. Sex is needed in order to reproduce - to create new life. Without it, we wouldn't exist. But then, that's looking at it from an objective point of view - and subjectively, the meaning of life is different for everyone. And I'm only starting to find out my own.

So what is the meaning of *your* life?

19-02-2017: Finishing Projects and Modding

One of the most satisfying things in the world to me is the feeling I get when I finish a project. Especially when it's a project I've worked on for a very long time.

I'm now tantalizingly close to finishing up a project I've worked on for nearly two years. Almost two full years - no joke. That's twice my previous personal record as far as time spent working on one project goes. And thus, it's also my new personal record.

Now you may be thinking to yourself, what exactly is this project of mine that's taken me two years to finish? Without going into excessive detail, it's a mod for one of my all-time favorite games. The reason why it took me this long to finish it is mainly because I was getting ever so slightly out of my comfort zone.

As much as getting out of my comfort zone intimidates me, I feel that it's occasionally essential. When it comes to my personal projects, I even *try* to get out of my comfort zone, so as to avoid becoming stale. I'm a firm believer in the notion that the worst thing any artist can do to themselves is become stale.

Either way, for a brief history of me as a modder, I started making maps for DOOM 2 in 2008 - almost as soon as I got the game, funnily enough. DOOM 2 is, in fact, almost the only game I've made any mods for. I did make a few mods for DOOM 3 over the course of 2009, but those mods had next to no effort put into them. My first serious DOOM 2 mod I made in 2010, and since then, 14 more have followed. I've kept a nice track record of at least one new DOOM 2 mod in a year, with the exception of last year.

Let's see if this year's addition to the lineup is the only one. Chances are it won't be.

27-02-2017: Suicide

To my understanding, suicide is a very uncomfortable subject for many people - understandably so. But I felt it'd be a topic that would make its way onto these pages sooner or later. After all, I've talked about some rather uncomfortable shit.

Without giving any details for fairness's sake, I know someone who's attempted suicide. More than once, in fact. Suicidal thoughts are the worst kind of thought one can have. I know this because I have had those thoughts - but thankfully, it never went past that point.

In case you're wondering what brought this subject about, I saw a thread on one of the forums I frequent in which someone asked what people would write onto a suicide note. I've never given it any deep thought, and I'm happy I haven't. Either way, if I *were* to write a suicide note, chances are I'd write something along these lines onto it:

"Dear world, fuck you. Sincerely, me."

It'd take a tremendously long series of unfortunate events to make me do that, though. I've always believed that suicide is a coward's way out of life. No matter how far down life drags you, you should keep your head up high and fight your way through it. That's what I'd do.

But then, that's not being entirely fair to the less strong-willed. They deserve better help than I'd ever be able to give - at least by means of written words on paper.

In any case, I don't believe in acceptable suicide. I do understand that life gets unbearably difficult sometimes - but as far as I'm concerned, doing your best to survive through it is a much better option than ending it when it does get that difficult. It's a shame knowing that there have been people who chose the latter.

28-02-2017: An Artist's Worst Critic... Himself

There's a surprising amount of truth to the saying that an artist is their own worst critic. I've heard many different artists - musicians or otherwise - explicitly state how much they dislike or even hate their earlier work. So do I. In fact, I dare say I stand as a prime example.

I've produced over 15 albums worth of music in the past near-half of a decade. After finishing what was my latest album at any time, I've always regarded it as my masterpiece - my magnum opus, if you will. Everything else I made before it suddenly began to make my ears bleed. I can only barely tolerate listening to anything I made two years ago, while anything I made last year (because I haven't made anything substantial in regards to music this year yet) I could listen to for hours on end.

Maybe it stems from my desire to constantly improve. I can say with full certainty that I have a better understanding of what I'm doing with my music now than I did four years ago, for instance. Or hell, even last year.

As I've mentioned prior, I always look for new directions to take my music in. There's nothing I love more than getting inspired by new things. That's why I like to listen to the occasional music mix on YouTube, be it folk music, trance or jazz. And then I look for ways to embed those genres into my own style. It's a truly fascinating and satisfying process.

12-03-2017: I Used to Be More Outgoing

In recent years, I've noticed a rather interesting phenomenon happening - a transition or transformation of sorts. It has to do with my social life. I won't go as far as to call it alarming, though, since I don't feel that it is that necessarily.

Either way, in my younger years, I was considerably more social than now. Granted, my friends were few in number, but I made a habit of seeing them as much as I could. I would invite them over or go over to them in the evenings after school, and we'd play video games together. And it happened at least once a week.

Nowadays, then, things are drastically different. I rarely invite people over anymore. I never organize social events. I don't go visit people unless I'm specifically invited. And the frequency has dropped to once or twice a month.

Do take note, though, that I don't mean to complain about it. But it is an interesting change. What's at least as interesting is that I never came to think about it until now. Then again, my mother used to comment on it, saying that I used to be more outgoing.

And she was right. I did use to be more outgoing. What happened along the way to trigger that change then? Was it somehow caused by how much I socialized when I was younger? Did the university and the people there do it to me? Or did I simply grow too old to care?

Yesterday, though, I started contemplating the possibility of inviting some of my university colleagues over. It'd be a great way to see if I could organize something that resembles a social gathering. And let's be truthful here - my time with them may end one of these days. And I want them to see the best of me before it does.

15-03-2017: Nostalgia

Nostalgia is quite the interesting phenomenon. It can strike at the most random of times - such as for me a few days ago when, for no apparent reason, I started reminiscing about a specific CD I used to own. You randomly remember something, you start digging deeper into it, and finally, you're left wondering why you didn't do so sooner. Or you shrug it off without digging deeper.

Either way, a similar scenario has been going on with me over the past half of a week. I happened to recall owning and listening to a Gorillaz record at some point in my life - probably just over a decade ago. Naturally, that led to me starting to dig deeper and listen to Gorillaz tunes for the better part of an hour. A day or two later, I stopped by our local record store and purchased a Gorillaz album. But it wasn't the same one I used to have, unfortunately enough. In fact, I could only find one Gorillaz record in the entire store.

And that entire chain of events was caused by a random memory that decided to pop up by complete chance. Three or four days later, I'm freshly addicted to Gorillaz.

I should mention that I don't mean it lightly when I say something is interesting. Not in this case either. How something as inconsequential as a memory can trigger chains of events such as that is truly intriguing. And equally shocking, if I were to be entirely honest.

I must say, though - I've enjoyed being addicted to Gorillaz. Not only is the music diverse and enjoyable, but the elaborate backstory crafted for the fictional group of musically gifted oddballs is also interesting to dig into. And the way the music videos work as a visual representation of it - as if they were chapters of a pseudo-documentary film - only adds to the magic.

If only I hadn't taken this long to dig deep into Gorillaz...

20-03-2017: My First Trip Abroad Alone

I'm feeling excited for the coming weekend. It's going to be great - and, in a sense, very important in my life.

I haven't talked about traveling much here aside from a couple of mentions, but I do love seeing new places. And in about four days from now, I'm going to see a brand new corner of the world - with the difference of none of my family members or friends accompanying me. Indeed, I'm going to be traveling completely on my own.

Granted, I've made excursions to my friends within the same country alone, but this coming trip will be the first one that I make to another country all on my own. I'll be going to Birmingham, England to see a show by my favorite band, Haken.

But that's by no means the only thing I'm planning to do. In fact, I've reserved an extra day for simply roaming around - walking in random directions, seeing where I end up, taking in the atmosphere. The latest of the three is what I generally like to do whenever I travel somewhere new. Especially if the place has a very serene atmosphere.

I don't like hectic places. Or loud places. I prefer small, quiet towns over big cities with a noise level equivalent to a dozen air-horns going off at once. But then, living in a small town for well over a decade now may have helped in developing that preference.

Either way, I'm getting off-track here. As surprising as this might sound, I didn't reserve a one-person room in a regular hotel, but instead, I reserved a shared room that houses multiple people in a not-so-regular hotel. By having done so, I hope to increase my chances of making acquaintances with new people. After all, I do like meeting new people - and this is also a chance to make friends with foreigners, which, as I've stated prior, is something I hope to do more.

29-03-2017: A Recap of Birmingham

Last weekend was a lot of fun. I got to see a new corner of the world and my favorite band live. The latter for the third time. The former, though... I can barely even count the times I've traveled to a new location as a tourist. After all, I've been to damn near 20 countries at this point in my life.

I could try and see if I can list them all off the top of my head, but I'd rather save the space.

Either way, Birmingham was a rather nice place. I can't say I fell in love with it, though. I was under the impression it'd be a less city-like place than London, but alas, I was proven wrong. Still, it certainly wasn't a bad place. And I especially liked how quiet it was around the immediate surroundings of the hotel I stayed at.

How about Haken, though? Do I even need to say? They were amazing - just as much so as the two previous times I'd seen them. But then again, I'm a biased motherfucker - after all, they are my favorite band. And for a reason. They made me fall in love with progressive metal. And I can't thank them enough for that.

I should be careful not to get side-tracked again.

Aside from the aforementioned, my favorite experience from the weekend trip was at an instrument store, where I had the pleasure of laying my hands on an 8-string guitar. I don't even know how much time I spent just playing the thing. It was simply too fun.

So overall, I had fun in Birmingham.

12-04-2017: The Two-Way Struggle of a Creative Soul

When it comes to being a creative soul, one thing I can say with certainty is that it's not always easy. I've struggled with my own creativity on many an occasion - one way or another.

Interestingly enough, while I like to complain about having way too many ideas, I can also catch myself complaining about not having enough ideas. The latter has especially been the case with one of my creative outlets lately. I've simply not been able to come up with anything I could do with it for the longest time now. But then, there have been numerous other things I've had to focus my mind on. And when I say "had to", I *mean* "had to".

For one thing, I have entrance exams coming up in a few weeks, so I've had to practice for those. Or I'm supposed to have been practicing for them. But due to my habit of procrastinating, I haven't taken it upon myself to practice yet. I should, though - and I will. Eventually.

In addition, I've been preparing two new releases by me, one of which is coming up this weekend. And for the other, I happened to get not one, but two ideas for additional things related to it that I've been trying to sort out. I've had nothing short of too much to keep my mind on - but luckily, I'm at least getting one of them out of the way. Finally.

Apparently thinking about practical things I should get done fucks with my creative juices. Whether that's a good or bad thing, though, I can't really vouch for either scenario.

19-04-2017: Finishing a Project and Celebrating It

Three days ago, I finished up a project I'd been working on for two years. I realize these ramblings must be getting somewhat repetitive at this point, but in all honesty, I'm running out of interesting topics to discuss. Hence I've, in a sense, expanded upon previously addressed subjects.

In any case, there's no feeling more satisfying than the one I get when I finally finish a project I've worked on for a long time. Especially if that time exceeds a threshold of six months. And this one project was my biggest one yet. Around this same time last year, it'd already set a new personal record for me.

And now it's finally finished. It has been for three days. And yet, the reality of it still hasn't fully sunken in somehow. Half of the time, I didn't even believe I'd ever finish it, especially with the fairly long periods of time when I wasn't working on it at all. Fortunately I proved myself wrong.

When it comes to sharing the joy of it with others, though, I don't celebrate finishing a project with just about anyone. Granted, most of my acquaintances know about my musical endeavors, but not so much my DOOM modding ones. That's an interest I'm comfortable sharing with only so many people. And those that I do share it with, they usually know plenty about DOOM already. With the exception of my own mother.

One thing I appreciate about her is that she supports me in all of my creative misadventures, regardless of the field of interest they may be related to. I only wish she showed interest even towards the non-music-related ones, which doesn't seem to be the case at the moment.

Well, a man can dream.

24-04-2017: Memorization

Yesterday, I finally took it upon myself to start practicing the songs for the entrance exams. Well, one of the entrance exams anyway. And I already have them down for the most part, in fact.

The reason I say “for the most part” is that there’s one line in one of the songs I keep forgetting. Just when I thought I already had it memorized once, it disappeared again as if I never even looked at the lyrics. And I repeated the process God knows how many times. What makes it funny is that the other song I was able to memorize entirely within 15 minutes.

I wonder why that is. Usually once I memorize something, it sticks with me for life. Just like with one out of the two songs I’ve had to practice. And I’ve memorized this one almost fully as well - but I only keep forgetting a *single damn line*. How?

I just hope I won’t forget it again in the exam situation itself. That’s my only concern. Everything else I’m feeling fairly confident about. And I do genuinely hope I manage to get into one of the schools.

I’d tell you to wish me luck, but it’s realistically too late to do so by the time you read this.

28-04-2017: Raising a Child

It may not necessarily seem like it judging by some of my earlier ramblings, but I love my family. They're all good people on their own merits. Even if they don't always display their best qualities.

I also love my godson. Almost as if he were my own son, in fact. In some respects, he does resemble me ever so slightly - and he's taken a clear interest in some of the same things I did back in the day. He has some qualities I could easily see my own child having. If I ever have one to begin with.

Somehow I have a hard time seeing myself as a family man. Or at least I can't imagine raising a child of my own. The burden would drain me more than an entire week spent locked into a room with a dozen extroverts. Even with the help of a spouse.

It's no lie that raising a child is hard work. And for me, getting a girlfriend and making her my wife would be hard enough work, let alone conceiving and raising a descendant. I don't even want to imagine the amounts of energy *that* would suck out of me. Having a wife I could manage, provided she's kind and understanding enough. A child, though...

Does that mean I think I wouldn't be a good father? No. I can see myself being a *good* parent, but I can't see myself being a *parent*. I do realize that makes very little sense, if any at all. In all honesty, though, it's the best way I can explain it.

01-05-2017: Another Fun Night, Another Less Fun Conflict

I've been writing these things for nearly a year now. 358 days to be exact, I believe. I've got to admit, I'm almost surprised that this is the 73rd rambling I'm writing here. That means there are only 27 to go.

Anyway, I was out and about again last night. I went to see an old acquaintance I hadn't seen in a while. To my surprise, we happened to run into some of my colleagues, and we accompanied them to various places around the town. The old acquaintance called it quits about halfway into the night, but I stayed with my colleagues for four more hours. By the end of it, eight hours had passed by. A record-breaking *eight* hours.

If my memory doesn't fail me, the most time I'd spent hanging around with the guys prior was about five hours. Maybe six, but definitely no more than that. It was a fun eight hours, though - and I wanted to spend as much time as I could with them. After all, chances are our time together is coming to an end.

I almost don't want to leave university. That's how much I love those people - I don't want to take myself away from them. But alas, my true calling beckons me, and it's guiding me away from them. It's as if my heart wants to stay there and get out of there at the same time. It's a complicated feeling with no easy way of describing it.

But if it should happen that I do get into one of the schools and end up having to move, I have a plan to sort out a regular interval at which I'd drop by here and say hi to them. It'd only make sense. It's been an amazing two years with them, and I want to keep the spirit going. Even at the cost of a bus ticket.

05-05-2017: I Invited Friends Over

Yesterday, I finally did the one thing I had on my list of things to do while I still had the chance. I invited my university colleagues over for coffee. Not many showed up - but the few I'd consider friends to an adequate degree did show up.

Exceptionally, there's not much to recap in the way of things we did. It was almost literally just us having coffee. But it was fun regardless. It's only a shame that they had to leave as soon as three hours into it.

Either way, even if it was only three hours, it was a pleasure having them drop by. And I like to think I made a decent enough impression. This was the first time I'd invited a group of people over since... Geez, I don't even recall the last time. Anyway, I feel I did a good job of being a host for the day.

And then there's the factor of us potentially seeing each other for the last time. At least in a while. I know I've probably rambled about it enough already, but it was great giving them all a proper farewell with a heartfelt hug.

Overall, I had fun. And I hope they did as well. As brief as the gathering was, I did find satisfaction in the fact that at the very least, three people cared enough to want to pay me a visit. Hopefully it wasn't the last time either.

13-05-2017: Close Encounters with Nature

I was attacked by a bumblebee yesterday.

Or was it the day before? It may have been - hell if I remember. Either way, that's a thing that happened. Luckily I wasn't stung by the poor bastard. It merely came buzzing into my ear - almost in the literal sense.

There haven't been many times I've seen a bumblebee, let alone had so close an encounter with one. This was certainly the first time in several years, if not ever. And a thing as trivial as *that* inspired this whole rambling... Inspiration is the oddest thing.

On a completely different note, I finally had the luck of landing a summer job after two years of misfortune on that front. I've already spent a week at it, in fact. So far, my work here has mostly entailed varying sorts of yard work and cleaning. It may not be the most glorious job, but it's something.

And my employer is an absolutely wonderful person. She doesn't lose her temper easily, she takes good care of me, she has a great sense of humor. I've generally had good luck when it comes to employers - not one of them has had a single trait I could complain about. And I love seeing that streak of luck continuing.

It's only a shame that this isn't a salary job. But my employer did promise me a small payment, provided I do my job adequately. How small exactly, I have yet to find that out. On the other hand, though, I don't so much care about money from this as I care about the experience it gives. And I expect not to be disappointed there.

20-05-2017: Gore

There aren't many things that make me feel uncomfortable. But one thing that does make me uncomfortable is gore. Even then, though, there's an interesting oddity related to it.

As I've stated prior, I love video games, bloody and non-bloody alike. As far as bloody video games are concerned, I can play them without the slightest hint of discomfort. The probable reason behind it is that the gore is unmistakably virtual. It's not real. It's mere pixels on a screen.

Contrastively, if I'm watching a movie with gore in it, it can make me uncomfortable. But it's dependent on the setting, interestingly enough. Ultra-violent movies with over-the-top gore? Sure, I can handle that. Surgery scenes in movies? No - those make me pass out.

And that's the interesting oddity in it. I'm completely comfortable with gore in some contexts, but not in others. And the gore doesn't even have to visually exist in some cases. I recall watching a video in biology class back in 2009 that dealt with blood and breaking bones. And, as you might guess, I passed out right then and there. Even hearing people talking about such subjects can make me feel uncomfortable.

So how exactly is it that I can play the goriest video game completely fine but I can't even listen to people talking about blood without feeling uncomfortable almost to the point of fainting? Fuck if I know. And it doesn't appear to be something that could change. At least not easily. But if I can refrain from exposing myself to gore, I will. I'm not the type to push myself past my limit, especially in regards to this matter.

27-05-2017: Expectations

I went to see the movie Alien: Covenant today. After the horrendous previous entry in the Alien franchise, Prometheus, I wasn't holding my hopes for Alien: Covenant too high. But I was still cautiously excited. I went into the cinema with almost no hopes whatsoever and ended up leaving with mixed feelings. The new movie certainly did the franchise more justice than the previous one as far as I'm concerned, but it had a roughly equal amount of questionable things about it.

When it comes to expectations, I'm a rather easy person to disappoint. If I develop a liking for something - whether it's a game or movie series or anything else at all - naturally I'll have high expectations for the next entry. And if it fails to meet them, chances are they'll be low for whatever follows as well.

I admittedly had high expectations for Prometheus. But, as implied above, it didn't meet them. And my expectations for Alien: Covenant were consequently low. Nearly non-existent, in fact. To my surprise, though, the fresh entry in the Alien franchise actually met those low expectations when I was anticipating for it to not meet even them.

Not very surprisingly, that also extends to human beings. If it just so happens that I befriend a new person, I'll expect them to prove to me that they're worth my time. Not by constantly asking me how I'm doing, but rather by means of small "reminders", if you will. Small things such as wishing me a good day or a happy birthday, or buying me something like coffee or a video game I've been going on about for weeks. And of course, I do my best to return the favor.

30-05-2017: Break-Ups and Appreciating One's Own Company

Break-ups are not easy. Obviously I can't speak from experience since I've never been in a relationship, but that appears to be the general consensus. And they also appear to be one-sided more often than not. Evidently enough, the ability to rationally discuss the state of a relationship is a skill only possessed by a select few.

And so is taking time to be alone and evaluate things, if my personal observations are to be believed. I haven't come across many people who spent at least a month out of relationships after a break-up before jumping into the next.

And then there's the case of an anonymous young "gentleman" whose antics I heard about today. Apparently he dumped his girlfriend and had a new one *within the same day*. Now that is a quick jump from one relationship to another if I ever saw one.

I feel bad for the poor girls. And before you ask, I do use the plural form intentionally. He's playing with not only one but two girls' hearts. Within one day's span, he ended one relationship and almost immediately started another. That's no way to treat women. Or yourself.

In my honest opinion, being alone is grossly underappreciated. I feel as though not enough people take the time to learn to appreciate their own company these days, especially between relationships. Which may also be why many of them suffer. That's just my personal speculation, though.

Either way, in the past 23 years, I've certainly learned to appreciate my own company. As much as it still hurts to think that I've been single my whole life, I don't put too much pressure on myself to find a significant other. Not even for the sake of merely filling the void. If it's bound to happen, it will. I can wait.

06-06-2017: Fear

Fear is a fascinatingly strong emotion. According to my own observations, it can affect your behavior more strongly than any other emotion. And it doesn't come as a surprise to me.

We all have our own fears, and that's completely understandable. I myself used to have an irrational fear of death. What was odd about it was that it could pop into my mind at the most random of times. It knew no limits. Luckily I grew out of it.

To my understanding, a lot of people are afraid of heights. I can relate to them to some extent - although I'm not afraid of heights themselves, but rather, I'm afraid of falling. I can't look down without being struck by the thought of falling and hurting myself, or worse yet dying.

I also recall one instance of literally being afraid for my life some years ago. I believe I was 14 years old when it occurred. I was just about to go to sleep when I started feeling very uneasy. Not uneasy in the sense that I vomited or anything, but uneasy in the sense that I felt as though I was lying unconscious. Which I was not - I was, in fact, fully awake and standing firmly. I honestly thought I was going to die that day, but luckily I did not.

Luckily indeed.

14-06-2017: A Wait Nearing Its End

The wait is nearly over. Very shortly, I'll finally find out whether I made the cut into any of the schools or not. I'm hoping for the best. And prepared for the worst.

If it should happen that I get into one of them, it'll also mean that I'll have to move out of home. Or I should say I finally *get* to move out of home. I've looked forward to that day. As well as the day that I find out how the entrance exams went. I've waited half-eagerly and half-afraid. I'll know soon enough, though.

I do hope I make the cut. I want to study music. I want to make a career out of my greatest passion next to video games. I want to start living a life of my own, away from my parents.

I forget if I've mentioned this already, but my plan for a long time has been to move out by the end of this year. At this point, I feel as though I know all the essentials of living on one's own in theory. But I want to at least test that in practice. And I'm looking forward to the day I get to do so.

The only thing I'm not looking forward to as much is the lack of funds. Unless I manage to land a job to work on the side - which would honestly be a miracle - I'll be just about able to afford my rent and food and basically nothing else. My hobbies are still so dear to me that I'd hate to have to stop feeding those passions due to a shortage of funds.

I'll figure out a solution, though. After all, perseverance pays off.

18-06-2017: A Positively Shocking Surprise

The results of the entrance exams came in. Three days ago, in fact. Three days ago was also when I originally intended to write this rambling.

Anyway, since I didn't see my name in any of the lists of new students accepted, I was under the impression that I didn't make the cut anywhere. I believe you can guess how I felt as a result. But today, I got a phone call from my mother. Apparently I'd received a letter which stated that I was accepted into one of the schools after all.

Now despite not sounding particularly enthusiastic or even relieved during that phone call, I was actually relieved. That relief, however, was mostly overridden by confusion. How did I not see my name in the list if I did get accepted?

I can think of two scenarios: the fault was either on their end for a minor misprint or on my end for not checking a specific checkbox back when I applied for the schools. Maybe I didn't check the box that said my name could be displayed online in that list. I have a strong suspicion that the latter is the case.

Either way, getting that phone call was an immense relief. Contrary to my initial impression, I was given the chance to follow my true passion after all. I was given the chance to learn more about it. And most importantly, I was given the chance to possibly make it into what will hopefully be a fulfilling career.

And I can't wait to seize the opportunity.

25-06-2017: Planning

When it comes to plans, I'm usually very punctual about them. Once I plan something, I stick to it. Granted, they may change along the way, but only rarely do they get canceled, if ever. Alas, I had to cancel one plan today.

Can you guess what that plan was related to? It was one I'd had in mind for over a year. One that involved purchasing a new electronical device. Yes - it turned out my parents weren't able to fund part of the new computer for me, hence it had to go.

My feelings following the unfortunate revelation are mixed. On the one hand, I feel sad and annoyed that I had to cancel the plan, especially after such a long time spent simply formulating it. I was even looking forward to finally buying it. But a lack of funds on my parents' part prevented me from doing so.

On the other hand, I'll be moving out of home shortly. And realistically, I'm going to need all the money I can get. After all, living in an apartment isn't free. I'm going to have to pay rent, I'm going to have to buy my own food, I'm going to have to have money. And preferably think of a way to get some extra if I want to be able to buy things other than food. That'll be about the only thing I'll be able to afford next to rent, even with all of the government-provided financial aid imaginable.

That's the one thing that really sucks about living in an apartment as an unemployed student in Finland. My brother, for instance, used to need extra support from our parents because even with the financial aid he had coming in from the government, he was only just able to pay his rent. His rent *alone*.

Luckily there's a cost-free alternative - a dorm room provided by the school. The only downside is that they only appear to have two-person rooms, and I'm not exactly fond of the idea of sharing a space with another person, no matter how nice they may be. I like my solitude, and some of my creative endeavors even require it in a sense.

We'll see how things go from here, though.

28-06-2017: A Confession

I have a confession to make, dear reader.

I lied ever so slightly in the first rambling. If you recall, I claimed somewhere in it that every hour I spend sitting at the computer I spend productively. Which I in fact do not. Half of the time, I barely do anything productive at all on the computer, let alone off it.

My mother was right. I was letting the machine control me too much. I was focusing too much on things I *wanted* to do rather than things I *needed* to do. The realization didn't fully hit me until a few days ago - by way of my mother giving me a phone call, no less. And I regret not listening to her earlier.

That's about all I can think to say about the matter. My mind is blank after writing a mere three paragraphs. Sometimes, though, keeping it short is for the best. Sometimes, you don't need to be excessively detailed.

So I suppose I'll leave it at that.

07-07-2017: Intersexual Relationships

I had quite an interesting discussion with my mother today. We talked about dating and intersexual friendships. The latter was an especially intriguing point of discussion.

When it comes to forming non-romantic relationships with females, I feel in two minds about my own ability to do so. Somehow - and I have no idea why - I still have the mentality that women exist only to serve as potential partners. It's as if the only type of relationship I could and should form with them is a romantic one. And yet, funnily enough, I've only ever been able to form non-romantic relationships with them.

Looking at it from the outside, I wouldn't be surprised if most people found that funny. It *is* quite funny, admittedly. And at least equally odd. I'd imagine this phenomenon isn't very common, but then, I'm only speculating again.

Either way, I wonder how most women would react to such a revelation. Either not very positively or with mixed feelings, I'm guessing. On top of that, I wonder if telling that to a woman would ruin my chance of getting a girlfriend out of her. Of course assuming the chance was ever there in the first place.

I'd really better stop myself from thinking about these things. My situation is bad enough as it is, and I'm certainly not helping it by worrying over purely hypothetical scenarios. If only I *could* stop myself.

Christ, this has turned into a book of complaints, hasn't it?

09-07-2017: Thinking Back to My “First Time”

I read quite an interesting article today. A mother wrote in it about the struggles of her autistic son. He was never much of a social butterfly to my understanding, and he was bullied for it. On top of that, he never had friends, and his efforts to get romantically involved with women fell short as well. The mother eventually contemplated hiring a prostitute for her son but ultimately ended up not going through with the plan.

I certainly don't blame her. Every parent wants their children to find a spouse and continue the bloodline. And I can understand why her son's failures in romance nearly drove her to that point. She was willing to have her son experience the joy of sex - at the risk of getting herself in jail. In a way, that's very admirable.

Somehow, the article got me thinking back to my first (and so far only) sexual experience. After all, it did happen under similar circumstances. Only my mother didn't work as a middle hand in that instance - it happened by my own volition. And rather than having an unfortunate chain of events lead up to it, I merely seized an opportunity.

Upon reflection, I'm glad that I did seize it. While the setting was far from ideal, the experience wasn't really as horrible as I've previously made it out to be. At the very least, I got to know what “it” feels like.

It's not very often that I second-think myself or my past experiences in this way. And when I do, it happens for a reason. In all honesty, though, I very rarely change my opinions, let alone when it comes to personal experiences.

I never really regretted seizing the opportunity, and I still don't. I'm not one to pass by an open door. In fact, I dare say that had I *not* seized the opportunity, that I *would* have regretted. But then, I only have so many regrets in the first place.

17-07-2017: Collaborations

When it comes to creative works, there are certain benefits to doing everything by yourself. But there are also disadvantages. Some of them can be countered by means of collaborations, but then, even those introduce their own potential problems.

I've always been somewhat of a lone wolf on the creative front. As far as my music goes, for instance, I've taken it upon myself to do everything on my own - recording, production, advertising and whatnot. Lately, though, I've been toying around with the idea of involving other musicians in my musical works. In fact, I've already even executed that idea in practice, if not a whole lot.

I can recall an impressive *two* people I've musically collaborated with: my best friend, with whom I co-wrote the lyrics to one of my songs, and another friend who played a piano section for another song. Those are also two out of three friends I have who play music in some way. It's kind of a shame that my more musically involved friends are so few.

Luckily I'll have a chance to make more such friends once my studies in the new school begin. Hopefully it'll also mean musical collaborations out the ass - I love working with other musically talented individuals. Just today, in fact, I discussed the possibility of a collaboration with a new acquaintance.

Yes. I discussed that possibility with a near-total stranger. I realize it may not sound like me, but the truth is that unless I give myself a proper push, my music will only reach so many people. And I want it to reach as many people as possible.

24-07-2017: Forgetfulness and Dungeons & Dragons

I was going to write about something specific a day or two ago, but within an hour, I'd forgotten what I intended to write about. Now this is not a particularly common occurrence – in fact, it may have been the first time it's happened as far as this project goes. I can say with certainty, however, that it was *not* another love-related subject. Thankfully.

I don't want to say I'm a very forgetful person, but I do find myself forgetting things on a semi-regular basis. Sometimes without the “semi” prefix even. For instance, yesterday, I changed the password for one of my e-mails (of which I have 3 in all, in case you were curious). By today, I'd forgotten what the new password was and ended up changing it again.

Certain other things, then, I remember like the back of my hand. Things such as birthdays and phone numbers – as well as random numeric sequences, the origins of which I tend to remember less. I also remember faces and other visual details fairly well. I dare even say my memory is best on the visual side.

On an unrelated note, I bought myself a Dungeons & Dragons Starter Set today. It was something I'd been contemplating for the better part of a year, and now I finally took it upon myself to do so. And expectedly, my mother flipped out, thinking it was another video game when I “promised to not buy any more video games”.

First of all, I *never* promised that. I'll keep buying as many video games as my finances permit. Besides, there are video games coming up that I'm genuinely looking forward to and want to lay my hands upon as soon as I can. Second, Dungeons & Dragons isn't a video game. The logo on the plastic bag in which I carried the thing should've been enough to give that away. But no. Apparently “games” needs to always be preceded by “video” when it comes to new games I buy - at least according to her.

She was wrong, though. Dungeons & Dragons is primarily a pen-and-paper role-playing game. Granted, video game adaptations of it do exist, hence I said “primarily”. But I didn't buy a video game version. Rather, I bought the original, non-virtual edition.

My mother seriously needs to learn to let go of her apparent biases. Especially in regards to the whole video game thing. They are in fact not the only types of game that interest me. They never have been. And it's only good to get interested in many different things. Life is too short for being a narrow-minded jackass.

31-07-2017: So It Begins... Soon Enough

It is now the beginning of my last week of vacation before my music studies begin. I wouldn't usually be able to say this, but somehow, I've genuinely been looking forward to the day. The reason as to why shouldn't be hard to guess at this point – after all, I've stated many a time how much of a beloved hobby music is to me.

That and I can finally get away from my parents for the time being. As much as I love them, they can be quite the annoyance at times. Especially my mother with how she either bothers me at the least appropriate times imaginable or throws a tantrum over a completely assumed scenario. Getting some distance between her and me is going to do a lot of good for my mental health.

Rather than write another essay on her annoying habits, however, I'll try and focus on the actual topic at hand for once.

As much as I'm looking forward to beginning my studies with music, the fact that it's going to happen in a week from now hasn't fully hit me yet somehow. Then again, I can only be so surprised. These things do have a tendency to take their time with me.

Actually now that I think about it, chances are it's a trait of Asperger's. I've never had much of an affinity for mental preparation, in all honesty. Practical preparation, on the other hand, I'm a self-proclaimed master of. I make a mental checklist of things I need and pack them accordingly. I make the necessary reservations and purchases. I check and double-check everything prior to departure.

Either way, I can't wait to begin a new stage in my relationship with music. I have a feeling it's going to be nothing short of fun.

02-08-2017: Dedication

I talked in one of my earlier ramblings about my indecisiveness and my dislike towards it. While it may not be related to what I'm about to discuss, I figured it'd at least be useful to refer back to that. Anyway, today, I'd like to discuss dedication.

Dedication is a very admirable trait regardless of the level at which it occurs. It's nothing short of humbling how much some people are willing to sacrifice in order to do what they love. Not necessarily even for a living. After all, what are the chances of being able to monetize speedrunning video games? Without the miraculous place that is the Internet, they're fairly low.

Speaking of speedrunning, when it comes to hobbies that take a lot of dedication, it's definitely one of the first examples that'd come to my mind. Playing a game casually is one thing – learning every tiny bit of it and figuring out ways to get the fastest time possible is another. That's why I have nothing but respect towards speedrunners. They're essentially artists in their own way.

I wish I had the same level of dedication for anything. Then again, I'm soon beginning my studies with music, which is a beloved hobby of mine, as I'm sure I've already said quite enough. So that counts for something, doesn't it?

Either way, I somehow don't entirely trust myself to dedicate my entire being to it. But time will tell. And there's just under a week left before it begins.

06-08-2017: The Day Closes In

Two days. The beginning of my music studies is a mere two days away. In fact, I'll already be moving over to the new place tomorrow, since it's so far away. Going to the new school while still living at home would've been practically impossible, considering the distance.

You know something, dear reader, I still can't quite believe I'll actually be starting in the new school. I half-expected to fail miserably and have to put up with studying English in university for the next few years. And I did fail more than miserably in one of the entrance exams. Either way, I'm glad I somehow made the cut into one of the schools.

I won't go as far as to say it was a miracle, though. The entrance exam for that school felt easy enough that I was positive I'd get in there at the very least. But as I've said before, the reality of it still hasn't fully sunken in yet. In any case, I suspect it'll sink in by tomorrow.

Even back when I traveled to Birmingham on my own, the reality of it didn't sink in until the day I left. So I can't say I'm surprised.

Speaking of surprises, I *will* be surprised if I finally manage to find love while studying at the new school. But I won't complain if I don't. After all, my studies will be my primary focus, now that I'm about to start studying music of all things. I won't lie, though – it would be perfect if I met the love of my life while studying there. A mutual passion like music is the greatest starting point I could imagine.

07-08-2017: Stumbling Upon an Old Self-Analysis

While digging through some old stuff earlier today, I happened to find a print of a book I almost wrote at some point. Now by “almost wrote”, I mean that I wrote 15 or so pages and then gave up, never finishing it. So I read it.

It was a non-fictional, self-reflective work, much like this one. Only the topic was more focused and the format wasn't diary-like. Now, if I said that the theme it explored was love, would you be able to narrow down the exact topic based on that?

Well, it was essentially an exploration of my attitude towards love. I'm not joking – I actually nearly wrote a book discussing why love and anything related to it pissed me off. I hated love right around that time in my life. And while I still sort of do today, I've grown out of despising it in all its forms.

Or maybe it never was so much hate as it was longing for what I lacked. And still lack. Either way, I still recognize that feeling in myself even today. But it usually takes a very specific type of event for it to surface. An event such as someone mentioning their partner in a conversation or a couple displaying their affection publicly. It's not a feeling I seek to bring out of my own volition.

I almost felt like rewriting that book, but I figure the love-related ramblings in this one are enough for anyone. And I certainly wouldn't want to drive people insane. Unless I've already driven you insane with my ramblings here, in which case, I apologize.

14-08-2017: A Week Has Passed

The first full week in the new school has now more or less passed. It's been enjoyable overall, if somewhat uneventful. But then, it's only been a week. I have not the slightest doubt that things will pick up the pace shortly.

I have, however, made a bunch of new acquaintances. Which shouldn't be a surprise. Something tells me I couldn't count them with the fingers in both of my hands. (And in case you're curious, no – I've never lost a finger. All of them are fully intact.) But I can't exactly go as far as to call any of them friends yet. I'm very slow to trust people enough to consider them friends anyway.

Surprisingly, though, the “gentlemen-to-ladies” ratio among the new students was 3 to 1 – that's 9 men (counting myself) and 3 women. I half-expected it to be more equally divided. Even counting in the “older” students doesn't nudge the ratio much. That's only the music side, though – the ratio is significantly more equally divided when counting in all the other branches as well.

Speaking of the women, another thing that's come as a slight surprise to me is that I didn't immediately set my eyes on any of them. Usually at this point, I'd be daydreaming about a relationship with at least one new lady I've met. But not in this case by some miracle. It might be that a subconscious process of some sort is working overtime, so as to ensure that a relationship won't be a mere daydream from now on.

Who am I trying to fool here?

I'm only looking for an excuse to justify my wish for a romance not too far from now. I'd be lying if I said I hadn't been thinking about the possibility. But can you blame me? Being 23 years old now, the thought of still never having had a girlfriend is not a particularly comforting one. And I want to experience that sooner rather than later.

21-08-2017: Alcohol

I recall mentioning in a rambling some time ago that I have somewhat of an indifferent relationship with alcohol. So I figured it'd be a good idea to elaborate on that as well.

When it comes to alcohol, my relationship with it could be compared to that between me and a fresh acquaintance. That is to say I know them by name, but I'm not yet sure they'd necessarily make a good friend.

Now I love drinking, don't get me wrong. I love tasting new beers and whiskeys. I love cracking open a cold one on a night out with friends. But therein lies the problem with alcohol, as drinking too much of it brings about a state of intoxication, and a large enough dose can even be lethal.

Luckily I've learned my limit in regards to that. And it gets reached fairly quickly, for better or worse. I can drink roughly two pints of beer without feeling anything – that, of course, does depend on certain factors. But as a rule of thumb, I keep my daily dosages close to two pints of beer, or whatever is the whiskey equivalent.

As shocking as this might sound, I've only been drunk once in my entire 23-year life. I won't go into too much detail, but in a nutshell, I consumed too many drinks within a day. That experience in particular – which just had to happen during a holiday trip in Costa Rica – taught me to really watch my own drinking.

I'm not a strict drinker only when it comes to the amount I'm willing to consume either. Generally, I only drink on more festive occasions, with the possible exception of a night out with friends. And I'm not a daytime drinker. So overall, I think it's safe to say that my relationship with alcohol is not a very close one.

27-08-2017: Injuries

The other day, it somehow crossed my mind to talk about injuries. So I guess I'll talk about injuries today.

I've generally managed to live a relatively injury-free life. I always exercise caution when it comes to dealing with dangerous objects and situations. Granted, even I have had my share of cuts and bruises. But I've mostly had only minor injuries. *Mostly*.

Pretty much the worst injury I've had came in the form of a bruise from slamming into a door. (Don't ask about that.) My left arm hurt for weeks. I even thought I'd gotten a fracture from the incident – fortunately, the X-ray revealed that there was no fracture. Not quite as fortunately, I also bruised my right arm in a similar manner about a year later, only from falling off a bicycle rather than slamming into a door.

That aside, I've only had minor injuries. I've never broken a single bone. And I hope I manage to live my life without ever breaking one.

Speaking of bones, my mother found the bones of a bird on our backyard once. Or rather *some* bones of a bird. Before I started collecting video games and music, those bones were a proudly held collection of mine. Alas, my brother stole them for his own purposes. What those purposes were, I don't know, but then, I'm not so sure I want to know either.

Worry not, though, for his mental state is in no way questionable. He's a perfectly sane individual. And I'm not only saying that because he's my brother.

03-09-2017: Blessed Solitude

I start writing today's rambling with nothing particular in mind. I have literally no idea whatsoever what I should discuss. But I suppose starting on a blank slate isn't a bad thing necessarily.

Say, dear reader, have you ever experienced a moment where your mind was completely blank? Because if you have, I envy you. My non-thinking capabilities are nearly non-existent, and if there ever is a moment of total "darkness" in my mind, it's fleeting. (By "darkness", I mean "emptiness", really.)

Speaking of emptiness, I find it oddly satisfying whenever I enter a space with no one else in it. It's a feeling I could easily equate to that of being home alone for an undetermined amount of time. No one to bother me, the whole place to just myself, the freedom to do whatever I please, to stay up however late only my energy reserves allow me. I simply love it.

Then again, that shouldn't come as a surprise. After all, I should have made it quite clear how much I enjoy being alone. At least when I'm not thinking about romance, but I'd prefer not to go there today.

Of course, even I can only be alone for so long. Any person would go crazy with enough time spent only with themselves. But I can spend immensely long periods of time without socially interacting with anyone. Most importantly, though, I don't feel bad about spending time alone. No one should.

11-09-2017: Online “Dating” With a New Approach

It happened to cross my mind that I never talked about how my recent(ish) online dating adventures went. Well, without going into excessive detail, it didn't work out too well. Then again, I suppose it was already evident from a few of the more recent ramblings. I ended up leaving the dating service I used within a month.

Yesterday, however, I rejoined said dating service. Only this time, I joined it with a different mindset – not so much to look for a serious relationship but more so to simply look for a conversational partner. I was paying a visit homeside over last weekend, and I also visited some friends. One of my acquaintances – a former fellow student of English – revealed that the first question he asks the people he “matches” with is about their thoughts on transhumanity. So following his example, I've gotten into the habit of asking the people I “match” with about their thoughts on varying philosophical topics.

One such topic I've inquired for someone's thoughts on is predeterminism. While I don't believe in fate or things happening by influence from a “higher power”, I do find it to be an interesting concept. Anything related to philosophy intrigues me, really. I like being challenged to think.

You may be wondering, why would I ask people about their thoughts on philosophical topics? Quite simply for the same reason. If someone can answer such a question with a genuine sense of interest in and understanding of the subject, then I'll know I'm on the same wavelength with them. I want to be able to have deep conversations with someone.

16-09-2017: Follow Your Dreams... or Don't

In case it hasn't become clear from my more recent ramblings, I'm a believer in following your dreams. I actually had an interesting conversation regarding this with my best friend today. Contrarily to me, he's "playing it safe" when it comes to his career. He does, however, wish he had done the opposite – in fact, he followed his dream briefly before settling for a safer career option. (His dream, similarly to me, is a career in music.)

I, on the other hand, did the opposite. I initially aimed for a financially secure career path before second-thinking myself less than halfway into it. Then I ended up following my dream. And I don't regret doing so. I'm loving every second of it.

Although I regret taking a detour through university to here in a sense, I'll admit that the two years I spent in university didn't entirely go to waste. I met a bunch of amazing individuals during my time there. And I learned a few new things about English and its different aspects. But had I not failed that stupid entrance exam for the pedagogical studies, chances are I wouldn't have ended up here. In that sense, I'm kind of glad I did fail it.

Either way, I acknowledge that I'm risking financial stability by having chosen this path. But fuck if I was going to stay in university to just barely pump out a degree in whatever with how rapidly my motivation was declining. Imagine the energy with which I would've worked a job in that field. It certainly wasn't looking to be very high.

On another note, my online dating misadventure has seen... well, mediocre success, to say the least. Out of five women I "matched" with (counting out two spambots), only two ever responded. And only one of those I actually talked with. To add insult to injury, I talked with her for a mere day – after that and a message I sent her the next day, she never responded.

I can only be so mad, though. Online dating does have its fair share of similar cases, and my approach is purely experimental anyway. It's not guaranteed to work out – if anything, it's guaranteed to *not* work out. But there's a reason I took the approach that I did: I'm essentially weighing my chances of finding a thinker like myself.

Will it get better or worse from here? Somehow I'm suspecting the latter.

22-09-2017: Motivation

When it comes to motivation, it likes to jump around a lot in my case. Especially if there are more things that I'm doing or working on at a time than one. The other day, for instance, I got a sudden motivation boost to continue doing something I've had on hold for a couple of months. And another thing I took a slightly longer break from.

Consequently, my motivation to practice my drumming has dropped ever so slightly. Which it definitely shouldn't have. Considering the drums are my main instrument in the music school, practicing that should be, if not at the #1 spot on my priority list, at least very near it.

Then again, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't afraid of this happening eventually. I am, however, quite surprised that it happened this early. It's been less than two months since I started here and I'm already having a phase of decreased motivation. With enough luck, though, it'll go back up shortly.

For some reason, I tend to experience these shifts on a fairly regular basis. One week I may be working on something tirelessly, and the next, I don't even think about it at all. It may have something to do with my short attention span. Or my indecisiveness. Either way, I could go as far as to call it an annoyance.

It does have a surprising benefit, though: I rarely get mentally exhausted from working on one project for too long at a time. In a sense, I take a lot of "unintentional" breaks. And I've found that I often get the best ideas during those breaks.

Anyway, as far as drumming and practicing that is concerned, I do hope the drop in motivation won't last long.

25-09-2017: Competitiveness

I like to think of myself as a fairly laid-back person. I don't get agitated very easily (unless I'm having technical difficulties with something), and I generally don't treat anything as a competition. However, that's not to say I can't get competitive if I want to, because I can.

For the most part, though, I manage to not get excessively competitive. Except when it comes to video games. I used to play some video games with a friend – or against him, to be more accurate. I could get competitive to the point where I had to win by any means necessary. But I was not a sore loser. I blamed nothing but myself for my own defeat.

Even today, when I've mostly transitioned to playing video games alone, I can *still* get competitive while playing them. This is going to be hard to explain in layman's terms, but if I'm playing something like a botmatch (as in a game against a computer-controlled opponent), I often find myself getting frustrated if things don't work out as I anticipate. Yes, I can get competitive against a fucking AI.

It is funny how my competitiveness is limited to video games. I'd never display the same level of effort if, for instance, a girl I have a crush on was being chased by another man. I simply lack the mental strength to deal with such obstacles.

On the topic of obstacles, I've been spending more money than I should lately. My financial situation right now is threateningly low thanks to an impulse purchase I made. And I even have a bigger purchase to save up for! Then again, I'm honestly not too good at managing my money anyway.

But practice makes perfect.

26-09-2017: Dear Future Me

Dear future me,

By the time you take it upon yourself to read this book, chances are your perceptions have changed a lot from what you've read here. But that isn't directly related to what I'm about to tell you. You've seen poured onto these pages what's essentially your life's story, incomplete though it is. Anyway, for what it's worth, this book represents a version of you that felt the need to say something. To leave his own mark.

You were 21 years old when you started on this adventure. And let me tell you, it was one worth taking. However old you are at the time of reading this particular page, you may still be one of, if not the only person to ever have laid their eyes upon this literary work. Even so, this was a project worth pulling through with, if only so that you yourself could revisit an older version of your inner world.

The timing on this was rather perfect as well, for better or worse. You failed an entrance exam, which led you to second-thinking your career choice. And you experienced heartbreak. And you poured your emotions and thoughts about those two experiences onto these pages. As much as it may have hurt at the time, especially in the latter case, I'm happy that you happened to write this book during that specific time of your life. Who knows how boring this book would've become if you'd started writing it at a different time.

So, what's your life looking like? I'm no psychic, so whatever it does look like, I couldn't possibly have predicted it. However, I may have had a part in shaping it. Either way, I hope you're living a happy life.

Maybe you're working your dream job. Maybe you're making a name for yourself as a musician. Or maybe you're working somewhere else in the music field. Maybe you're composing the soundtrack for an awesome new video game. Or maybe you're unemployed, or working some other job.

Maybe you have a girlfriend. Possibly even a wife. Or maybe you're still single. Maybe you're still enjoying life as a relatively free spirit. Maybe that online dating experiment of yours actually worked out somehow. Or maybe you've stopped caring about the matter altogether.

Maybe you have different hobbies now. Maybe you've taken up a sport of some sort. Maybe you figured you needed to do something that involves more physical activity. Or maybe you still spend your time playing video games and listening to music.

Maybe you finally know how to manage your money. Maybe you know how to prioritize your expenses. Maybe you've learned to keep regular track of your finances. Or maybe you're still learning all of that.

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In any case, I hope you don't regret making the choices that led you to your current life. Regardless of whether you're living the dream or not. I hope you're proud of yourself either way. Just as I am proud of you.

Sincerely,
your past self