

HOW TO BECOME FAMOUS
IN
HIGH SCHOOL

The Ghostwritten Memoir
Of a boy
Who became famous

Inspired by the Journals of
Beaumont Sirius Braithwaite

By
Grey Gheist

My name is Beaumont Sirius Braithewaite. I write because I
am a conqueror, and I lived to tell the tale...”

First Journal Entry
August 4, 1985

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Dedicated to:
The Lead Player,
Who has been requested for encore
in a better country,

In despoiled honor is honor still,
and no lie or impostor will honor fill.

“Life is a moving treasure map
And wonder marks the spot.”
A. C. Braithewaite

The Braithewaite Pentalogy

1. How to Become Famous in High School
2. The Sunday Edition
3. The Five Lights of Morning
4. The Autobiography of A. C. Braithewaite
5. The Literary Theory of God

Contents

Introduction
Prologue
Chapter 1 Believe in ghosts
Chapter 2 Ride a bike
Chapter 3 Live near a highway
Chapter 4 Have a cool hangout
Chapter 5 Memorize your lines
Chapter 6 Take proud pictures
Chapter 7 Be a video hero
Chapter 8 Seek secrets
Chapter 9 Try
Chapter 10 Conclude your childhood
Chapter 11 Regurgitate
Chapter 12 Dare the devil
Chapter 13 Drive a cool car
Chapter 14 Buy your chance
Chapter 15 Solve the riddle
Chapter 16 Find true love
Chapter 17 Honor what is sacred
Chapter 18 Help your neighbor
Chapter 19 Don't look back
Chapter 20 Walk the gauntlet
Chapter 21 Count the stars
Chapter 22 Place all bets on red
Chapter 23 Heed no advice
Chapter 24 Catch the tear
Chapter 25 Perceive beautiful things
Epilogue
The Mighty Melancholic
Beau's Last Entry
Valedictorian speech
On the art of living

Introduction To the ghostwriter

When I was twenty-one I decided I would become an adventurer and so I absconded with the money sent me for commencement from the university — one semester shy of graduating — and traveled the world on my father's dime. I first went to Africa and walked the ancient plains and then to Egypt, to stand beneath the limestone Pyramids. Then on to the Mediterranean, where along its shores I journeyed back to the beginning of the Western world, that Peloponnesian isle where the Western myth began. In Rome I trod where Caesar trod and carved I with my finger into the dust on a shop-keeper's window the words Caesar spoke: *Veni, vedi, vici*: I came, I saw, I conquered. It is a peradventure the man never said that, but is also hearsay for over two-thousand years that he did — the expression has become as famous as he remains — and so its long historical precedence holds sway over whatever be true fact. In the ruins of Rome I perambulated over the place where it is believed the conqueror lay for three hours after the conspirators stabbed him. None now know for sure where that place is but the educated-guessers believe it to be beneath a common road, in a nondescript part of town — somewhere deep within the sewage. The day I was there an old gentleman was selling flowers to tourists from a dilapidated wooden wagon a few feet above where Caesar once lay down to bleed awhile. I bought a dozen red roses and strew them about the gutters in honor of the fallen conqueror. But it could be some other place, for as I said, the place where Caesar died is not known anymore; it is mere estimation. I scooped up a parcel of dirt anyhow; same as I had from the other world-famous places.

After a year of travel and high adventure I came back to America with memories of hearsay-history so keen it felt I also had lived and loved, conspired and conquered, been conspired against and conquered; I also had left my life's last breath in a forgotten place and been reborn and lived again. In one year I perused in leisure, as I walked among the ruins of the world, the gossip of the last thousand generations of man. All of recorded and unrecorded history had come to be perceived, at least in parts, by me. I learned from a living classroom, not as the professor would lecture, but as the world would instruct. I learned the world of man is a moving map on the spinning globe of planet earth and all that once was still spins and all that is yet and will be moves and will move. I brought home with me in Korcken glasses the dust of nations, as mementos that I had been to these places and had trod where the famous, great and dead had trod.

Dust... It is what all of us and our nations become and is where we come from. I had wished to see the world while I had the eyes to see and hear the world while I had the ears to hear and to know the world first-hand while my knowledge and hands were yet set in stone about anything. I discovered the world is a big place — until you travel it — then it becomes a smaller place and no matter where you end you do not forget having been nearly everywhere there is to be and those places remain in you and they become all places you ever go — all places become one place and one place becomes all places. When they found out I quit school and used the money for world-perambulation my parents disowned me but it was no big thing; I had never felt owned by them, anyhow. After globetrotting I eloped to California and married my dream, a fair lady I affectionately named Happiness.

By the time I was thirty-five I discovered Happiness was carrying on with others and not including me in on it. Don't get me wrong, I am not an overly-possessive man

and was glad that others found Happiness delightful and I was happy that Happiness found others delightful. But she could have included me. I did not wish to upset anybody's delicate equilibrium with such a flaky woman so I begged off. This was my own bed I had made and my own tale of woe. I set Happiness free to live her own life and went on without her. I had then a long tradition of unsuccessful living to look back on. In the time since I first dreamt of happiness many laughing dreams had been sifted through my brain, leaving behind torn synapses and a fractured soul. I had become a card-carrying member of the demimonde club and we did not believe that happiness was for us, so after a long and rocky marriage Happiness and I decreed it impossible to live together. I saw her as a failed dream and she saw me as a failed dreamer. My conceit about Happiness is that she was a coy, bright-eyed flirt who fools and knows all along she is fooling. But I was young. It was, perhaps, mostly some of my fault.

That was the mind-set I was in after living toward my fourth decade on this blue, hard-boiled egg, one dipped in strong drink and speckled above with silver specks of salt. But for the silver specks of stars I would never have known what to do with myself. They have always been my beacons, onward and upward, and all fool dreamers who have come to the knowledge of the world must use the stars to keep their ship of dreams stable.

So I was given — and threw away — a fine education from a prestigious university on the business and philosophy of the world. My parents had a fortune in money but were misfortuned in love and I have not seen either of them since the egg of the world became boiled. Both are now at peace. Not that they ever raised hell nor that their deaths are a great tragedy; they were old and were able to live their lives exactly as they wished. They were given all they could handle and hold; and then, too, one cannot miss too much what one never knew. They were

strangers I went through the early part of my life with and were it not for us sharing the same name I would not believe we were related. Ghost-like memories they made even when alive, as if the sheen of living could not reflect off them and give radiance but was absorbed by a sense of propriety that obfuscated all of their being. They were aged and letter-perfect and had me long after the era of my mother's fertile age. In the early years they called me their miracle baby, but I was never like them, and so the possible miracle of my being was gradually lost to them. They were all business and I was all something else. I looked on the world with curious eyes and they looked on it with acquisitive eyes and so we never saw the same things the same way.

So after betraying the benefits of my seventeen years of proprietary instruction and traveling the world I struck out to discover gold in California. I would be a writer — the greatest of them — and not a titan of business. I would be a poet — the summa cum lauded among them — and not a colossus of cash. I would begin by penning the greatest script of the biggest movie Hollywood ever made. I used the last of my graduation loot to rent a flat near the beach and got right to it, for I had to unlearn much and learn much more and after a long apprenticeship of fourteen years I had penned a dozen scripts and a baker's dozen of novels and had filled up journal after journal of ramblings on life even life itself would be discomfited with. Of these immortal works I failed to sell a single one; so then — and about time — came woeful me to the end of my first dream. Then I met a stranger who was familiar, but it is sure I had never met anyone like him. He informed me he had a series of tales he wished me to write and the first concerned his dead brother. All I had to do was connect the dots; the writing of the story had been done long before.

When I first met A. C. Braithwaite in the late summer of 2005 he smelled like freshly-minted mammon

— crisp, clean and hopeful. He promised to make it worth my while and since I had no while to barter with I took his offer. It sounded like a fun few months of work and I would then have enough to live on until the next hopeful script. Dreams are gambles we make as soon as we have the money to roll the dice, so with the currency to back them, dreams can always begin again. It is a rough truth that there is more hope to be found in hard cash than all the colors of all the sunsets of all the worlds to come. The big lesson Braithewaite would end up teaching me is something all of us need to learn sooner or later: *It's never too late to live happily ever after.*

The Dream of Youth is
PROLOGUE
To The Age

This is a story about a boy named Beaumont. His mother named him after a beautiful mountain, a bright star, and a great uncle. As for mountains, they need men so they may become named; and as for men, they need mountains so they may be inspired to climb. Beaumont's middle name was Sirius, named after the brightest star in the night sky. Stars need men so they may become named and men need stars to be inspired to wonder. It was Beaumont's father who handed to him the name of Braithwaite — an old English name. A boy needs a father for a name and a father needs a boy so his name might live on; but with each generation the meaning of a name changes. I am not wise enough to know what meaning Beaumont gave to the name his father handed him. Maybe you will be wise enough.

Endings happen all of a sudden and of a piece, it's the middle that takes the while, and the beginning, well that is always begun many, many times. That being said, this part of the story of Beaumont Braithwaite has a beginning, middle and end. As for the true beginning and ending of Beau Braithwaite, I do not know any of that. This universe is bigger than I know it to be and such matters are beyond my knowledge. Here are some few parts somewhere between the two. All I can promise is this small part of his story has an end. Any other promise is yours to make. Our lives begin with promise and our promise becomes our stories and our stories eventually end, and after our stories end only promise remains — for every single life is a dedication to the future.

To the young, one journey around a star is a lifetime; to the old, well, they have seen the far side of the galaxy many times by now and have decided all stars look the same. The young consider the minutes in each day as important as the old do the pills they take. The young count all that touches them essential; the old have already touched what they could and now wish to leave alone and be left alone — bleached now is the skin they die in by the day — yet in the growing obscurity that surrounds them are the colorful, fading memories of what they once touched. The young are they who do not believe they will become old. The old are those who find it hard to believe they once were young; there has been too many days and pills to count since then, and the strict discipline of mathematics has replaced the soft sentiments of life within their minds. Large numbers are an abomination towards the appreciation of life, for example: rich men and accountants. And how can the young not count most everything they touch, and that touches them, as vital to the sustaining, if not of the universe, their own existence? All is new to them. They have not seen any of this before. The old have seen everything twice, or so they believe — no matter how parochial they actually are. Men go to places exotic and see only what they are. But it is true: wherever we go, there we are. But it also is true that men should slough off their old skins and old thoughts, on occasion...

Beau Braithewaite sat on his bed and looked out the window. His lime-green curtains were open and outside was an ocean wherein those with eyes could breathe light from the close, bright star, but its tide was now ebbing, pulling back the ocean of light toward the other side of the earth. Another day was passing and the great ocean was waning. He studied the picture on the bedside table as the light passed across it. It was awash in melancholic, fading sea-light and the memories evoked by the picture were

ebbing in him also, all the bright colors were turning to black and white. The picture was a Polaroid of him and a girl named Jenny. Jenny's mother had taken the picture of them at the stone wall built by Jenny's father at the back of the property to keep the snakes on their side. In the picture, Beau is sitting at the top and Jenny is climbing up to him. As Jenny pulled herself up her mother snapped the picture. All that was a very long time ago.

He turned the picture down. It symbolized everything that meant anything to him and all of it was over now. That picture was the still-frame of a life he had lived and one he had hoped for. Now he sat in an empty place. He looked in his mind's eye upon creation and pondered on what he had come to learn from the days he had lived; he reflected on what he had come to believe. He was emptied of it all and left behind was the useless knowledge that beauty is only in the eyes of rare beholders and truth is only in the thoughts of some few believers and so the figments of men's imaginations accomplish more for beauty and truth than beauty and truth do.

None of this is what he had worked and hoped to evolve to. Since his earliest days he had been ambitious to discover the secrets of life. He never expected to arrive at a state of hopelessness by knowing that, except in the few who are beautiful, beauty does not exist, and except for the few who are honest, honesty is a figment. This negative philosophy depressed him; but being full of truth he would not delude himself about it and being full of beauty, could not escape it by becoming part of it, and being one of late, dark and bad luck, there came in that moment, as he gazed upon their picture, the final loss of a graceful hope to ever know in this world what he knew and felt within. His perceptions of existence had eclipsed his life and made of it a thing pitiful and pathetic towards any future. Or so he believed.

He twirled fallen stars on the ends of his fingers and picked up the D. E. Hemingway. He had now just to drink the last dregs of his wonder and complete the forgetting. That was his last hope of grace: to forget the last of dreams and of him. His anger was quiet and dead earnest.

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On set of:
"How to Become Famous in High School"

Setting:

A quiet bedroom in suburbia; August, 1984. Two boys on a bunk bed. One up top; one down bottom. Film crew busy making last minute changes. Director takes his place in THE CHAIR.

He calls out:

DIRECTOR:
ALL QUIET ON THE LOT!

A prop girl throws a klieg bulb on the bare concrete of the set. No worries. The sound of a smashing klieg light is the director's trademarked good luck charm before all his movies start.

DIRECTOR:
Lights, camera and...
ACTION!

Film is rolling...

.....

Ghost 1 writer

I never believed in spooks growing up, until me and my brother saw the ghost of our grandfather floating in the closet. It was around midnight, which I knew to be the witching hour, though some call it the spectral hour; either way, such is the time for much of the weird, odd and unexplainable things of existence to be going on. It happened while we were talking about girls and baseball. I had the high bunk and he had the low, my blanket was hanging over his bottom bunk, so I think I saw it first — a vagabond ball of ethereal, spectral light — bobbing around in the closet. My brother was pontificating on the mathematics involved in the Major League swing when he stopped in mid-sentence and that let me know he was seeing the same thing I was, but he whispered the obvious question anyway,

“Do you see that?”

“Yeah, I see it,” I whispered back, open-mouthed and slack-jawed.

We watched the glowing orb, about the size of a softball, move around in the clothes for awhile. There were no dreadful emanations coming from it — quite the opposite — there was a perceptible, celestial joy and love in the light. And we were too amazed to be timid, anyway. We checked the window to see if the light was streaming through it, but no light was entering from the window. The supernatural presence was independent of any source. We watched in wonderment as the ball bobbed like an apple in a bucket for about five minutes, then disappeared.

I know you must be deducing there was a scientific explanation for this light and I do not doubt you are correct.

The poor science of mankind simply has not codified the knowledge of ghosts and specters, yet. Or perhaps you believe we dreamed it, or that we missed the origin of the light from outside the window. But I say you are wrong, if that is what you think. We were both bright boys not inclined to the supernatural or fanciful. No. That was the ghost of our grandfather. We knew it was him as if he had just walked in the door, fedora on his head, shiny shoes on his feet, broad suspenders holding everything up and a chewed-up King Edward cigar in his mouth. It was sure him, come to say hello and let us know that everything was going to be alright.

We were fourteen. My brother was soon leaving again. He was going on to one of the most prestigious preparatory high schools in America. I was going on to the public high school in the town we grew up in. My brother was leaving me alone and I would not be seeing much of him until the next summer. But I never had seen too much of him, even before he started attending special genius school. He had loved a girl since they both were born on the same day in the same summer. When he came back they would spend their time together and by doing that, more than tripled, quadrupled, their own time to be alive. That is what love does for us — it expands our time to live. And the greater the love between two, the faster the time goes and also the longer it lasts. That is ironic, but nonetheless true. It is as true a statement as ever was made that two lovers can live an eternity in one lifetime. And you know for yourself that it is true — if you have ever loved eternally and been loved eternally. It is rare, but maybe you have known it.

So it was what they call a bittersweet time. This brother of mine was a born genius and it was never doubted that he would someday remake the world in his own image. He was the bright star and I was the thoughtful moon. I reflected the glow of his sun and he relaxed in the soft

reflection of my lunar ponderings. I was the minor satellite to his stellar majesty. It took me a long time to come to things; not factual things — I was as bright as he was with those — but emotional things. He smiled his way through life and I mused my way through mine. Things touched me too much. Nothing touched him but what he wished to touch or be touched by. I had to think through all the possibilities while he imagined them immediately; the future was diffused through the synapses of his brain and he took only what he needed from it and discarded all the rest. I held it all in and sifted out the heavy parts and sent them down to the furnace of my heart, where they burned bright colors. The future came to him naturally and the past stayed naturally with me. He saw all possibilities at once and simply chose the one he thought best — the future was easy for him. I saw all that could have been — the past was easy for me. My problem was the need to get to the bottom of things; his gift was to naturally gravitate to the top of things. He was born to be an engine of the world, always moving in his mind toward the future; flying there in his imagination. I was born to be a tree, slow to grow and ponderous in my thought.

When we were three I cried at the death of a fly. I could not believe the fly would fly no more. That idea struck me as profound and tragic for the poor fly. My brother told me if I were to cry for every fly that died I would not have time to live; to keep my tears in a deep well within me and not to let them out except for important things. On that day I decided never to cry again, except for important things. But I kept the idea that flies are important, at least to them. We learned from each other how to be different, yet to stay the same. There was never any competition between us; we lived and loved like two different versions of the same being.

Besides being a brainiac of the first magnitude, he was a bona-fide mechanical wunderkind. Our mother didn't

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