

## Schedule

I sat inside. Outside rushed by. My mind was still dulled in the early morning. The colors had not yet brightened. Thick light bled through the windows of the train. My slow eyes were caught up in the slipping of the window-scenes. The horizon unfolded like a whip. It was moving too fast for my sight. My head felt strange from that mean speed.

Seven fifteen. My backpack was in my lap. There were two other people on the car, and one of them looked dead. I looked there for an extra second to make sure. They made a sound.

I caught my reflection once. It flashed across the thick glass. I pushed my gaze away from it. I looked like a hundred things.

I was now walking. I approached my synthetic day. There was concrete on all sides except up. My ponderings remained underwater. I was funny but was not laughing. If I spoke, I reckon I would speak like a fish.<sup>1</sup> I opened the door with patient frustration. I settled as I strolled in the hall.

October fell in and out of me.

## Vignette 1

I set down my backpack and sat in the lap of the grand piano. I pressed a chord and it sounded like cold water. I arrived before the other people, and all my gestures seemed impatient. The

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<sup>1</sup> That uncanny mashing of apathy and surprise.

piano waited with me. The unhad future took the form of that empty room, those white walls. We all sat there together.

Eventually everyone came. I could say the room breathed a sigh, but I don't think it cared. Everybody seems like a caricature of me when I'm tired. So I walked in, and then I walked in, and then I walked in, and then the room was full. I am exhausting. I played the piano the whole time.

The class ended. I was in another hallway now.

So many people in this building! Under this roof, there is restlessness and confusion to rival fireflies in a jar.

### **Vignette 2**

I walked through the door. I felt big and sour, like a tall person with bad posture. I am a teacher's aide for a freshman English class. Sandra Cisneros spent the morning speaking from Mr. Fable's mouth. That is his name.

My hands hemmed and hawed through a deposit of broken pencils deep in my bag's front pocket. I got some things out of the way while Fable taught. Poetry means very little when you're failing school. I'm not. Some days I print things or fill his water bottle.

That vignette always ends abruptly. It's narrative walls are thin, I can hear through them because I am not a freshman now. So I left quickly and started down the hall. Usually when I am in the hall, my feet fall like they have something to say. They don't. They are feet.

### **Vignette 3**

I entered the room. These walls had no opinion, and so neither did I. Everybody talked over each other. I didn't say a word. Nothing important was said or heard. It was all predisposed. These conversations already existed. These people were just acting them out. I scared myself with my cynicism. But they seemed like wind-up toys. That is my fear. Maybe I am the automaton I see in them. This ponderance gives me access to humility, a balm during criticism. Though synthesized humility is just a blanket. It doesn't work when you take it off. Usually I try to ignore myself when I get like this.

My teacher was loud. I didn't mind. He was talking about money. That is what he is paid for. I didn't mind. But I didn't want to participate, either.

### **Vignette 4**

I was in the hall. I was a marble. All the people were marbles. The maze tilted. we rolled right, and left, and right, and much noise was made. And then I was a person again and I walked up the stairs. It was quieter in there. I try to take my time when I am not a marble.

And I entered the next one. These are all ecosystems. This one is more explicitly so. That is the mark of a good teacher. I wasn't ready to sit back down, so I hovered near the chair. The

ecosystem was being clicked into reality. Music was playing from the ceiling. Click. People were walking in. Click. Click. The bell rang. Click. I sat back down.

I became everything else by default. This happens to me often. It used to make me mad, but it is funny now.

I looked across the square room and saw somebody who was not looking at me. I ripped paper from my notebook like a third grader and added it to the pile. It was funny. I was smiling. The girl next to me smiled too, but by default, I believe. I didn't mind.

I was speaking in a different language, which was heavy for my tongue. I enjoyed it. I spoke with the knowledge that the person across the square was looking at me. It was not scary. I was propelled, because I sounded like her. I tried not to be bothered by my lack of years. What a funny thing, I thought.

The bell rang. Everyone grabbed a loose string and walked. Something unraveled behind us. Tomorrow we will make another one.

### **Vignette 5**

I was in a grey hallway and I was really tired. I could not tell if the hallway was too wide to be observed, or too narrow to think inside of. I walked through it like a donkey.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> That uncanny mashing of dignity and resignation.

I walked in the pathetic room. I sat down in the pathetic chair and joined in the pathetic silence. I could tell that the ceiling was tired of looking at us. It was embarrassed of its job. The adult lumbered around, and allowed words to form themselves outside his mind. Recycled banalities. I was being taught by a cardboard box.

When I am in here, I am reminded by the shameless stupidity of the situation that there are no final destinations. All is transient. Complete stagnance has a humorless way of forcing impermanence down my throat.

My mind spent the hour swimming in television static. It was the wrong meditation, it was zen gone bad.

Regardless, I had no choice but to sit still with these things. I think I will learn a lot in this class.

### **Vignette 6**

I stood in front of the next room. I was pausing to observe the scene in the doorframe. The kind scarecrow of a man shuffled happily about. The younger people spoke to one another from their chairs, their faces communicating a polite excitement. The light was like cool air.

It all had the quality of a nice thought. I stepped into it.

I recently learned that many mathematicians are also philosophers. My teacher is like a scientist from Tlön<sup>3</sup>. The answers, to him, are simply means to an amazement. There is no extravagance in his method, only a calm awe.

I sat down and looked at the other people. I blinked and noticed a solipsism. It felt like a cramped muscle. It had been with me all day. I listened to the voice of my teacher and it went away. What serendipity, I thought, that this other mind is sharing itself with mine. There was no extravagance in this realization. There was nothing profound. I did not seek answers. All my cravings were settled by a calm awe. It lasted until the bell rang.

### **Vignette 7**

I was being dragged through the hallway by the hands of the clock. The only thing I could do was walk very slowly. I arrived at the door with a freshly worn mind.

I opened it with defeated impatience. People were scattered throughout the room like loose paper. I was already becoming something else. I sat down fast. The adult's face was clenched in compensatory enthusiasm. Words poured out of her mouth like water. I was bloated with indignation. The ceiling was so low.

Like a mime, I could not escape the box. I was hunched to fit it. My mind was a harsh place. I considered osmosis and looked at my feet. They remained silent. The bell rang.

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<sup>3</sup> Jorge Luis Borges describes Tlön as “a world conceived entirely by poetics... there are no nouns, and so truth is made irrelevant by the sublime.”

This all dragged behind me while I walked away from that building. I had nothing to say.

The vignettes write me poorly.<sup>4</sup>

I spent the day trying to extract poetics from the mundane. I found that I was not really the subject.

But it is never over. Tomorrow, I will try again.

**Liam Campbell is in 12th grade at Minneapolis South High School. His hobbies include writing poetry, stories, and essays as well as reading, karate, songwriting, singing, jazz piano and guitar, and playing drums and bass.**

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<sup>4</sup> Minds are rearranged by passing moments, and by each other. A gathering cannot happen twice. But we gather under the same circumstances as yesterday. Assimilation is not only a social phenomenon, but a temporal one. Like clocks, we are all made to travel in circles. There is no wasted time. We are wasted by our relationship to time. We are disarmed and disoriented by dry patterns. The situations are naturalized, as is our strange condition. Who is the author of this bad poem?