

Full of Life

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I just finished John Fante's 1933 Was A Bad Year. Reading it made me realize I can't write. Not with emotional impact like that anyhow. That book has it all. At 17, Dominic Molise tries to fuck his best friend's sister, he steals tools from his dad, and believes he'll be a rich southpaw pitcher within six months

Caroline and I are just back from Martinez. I went into the Amtrak station there and asked the lady how far east it went

She said "Chicago."

I said "How long does it take, two and a half days?"

She said "That's right, two and a half days."

"Does this train go as far south as L.A.?"

"Yes"

"How long does it take?"

"6 hours or 12 hours, depending."

"Depending on what?"

"If you want to take a bus from Bakersfield it's six hours."

"How far north does it go?"

"Seattle"

She watched me pacin' around. I finally said

"Yeah, I'm thinkin' about just getting on a train and taking off."

She said "Yeah, well, there are a lot of people doing that right now"

I was just checking it out. Thinking out loud. She didn't seem to mind

Caroline and I were the only people in there besides a kid sitting on the floor looking at his iPhone

He looked like he hadn't washed his hair or cut it in a year

I don't know what to read now

I'm going to open Henry Miller's Moloch, see how it makes me feel

But nothing makes me laugh like John Fante

I don't have any of his other books here with me right now

I just watched a little news. There were fires today. One in Gilroy. One in Fairfield. And one right under the George Miller bridge at 2 pm

It looks like things are heating up over a confederate monument in Downtown Shreveport

Came home from six days of bein' away

Checked on the dove who's been outside my bedroom window

Protectin' her eggs

The last time I peeked she was gone

And there were her two little fuzzy ones

This past month the dove's nest comforted me

Like a guardian angel the mother dove protected me

Have been so down this year, out of work, no work in sight

And now it's July and for some reason I just came home feeling

Full of life

So full of life I picked up John Fante's Full of Life

At City Lights on Columbus

Ah they might have to change the name of the street

Because as of late Christopher Columbus is gettin' a lotta heat

I gotta ask you

People burnin' down statues

Yeah I gotta ask you

Did you knock down that statue

Just after cashin' the check

The Donald Trump wrote you

I don't get you

You go knockin' down statues

Well maybe I'd join you
But I got somethin' better to do
For in this song I might just take the opportunity to knock down you
And if I may, whoever this song is speakin' to
May I suggest that your great great great great granddaddy
Probably ain't no better than that man who got the plaque or the statue

Like I said, I came home walked in the door, full of life
So full of life, full of optimism, knowin' everythings' gonna be alright
Like I said, I came home walked in the door, full of life
So full of life, full of optimism, knowin' everything' gonna be alright

But I slept alone last night and I missed you
I read Henry Miller's Moloch, or This Gentile World
Readin' about his days as a young boss in the telegraph world
All about the racial tension in The Bowery, New York 1920s
For laughs I read Fante, for confidence I read Nietzsche
For the truth I read Henry

I closed the book missin' my mom and dad and my sister and her girls
Feeling disconnected and adrift in this 2020 world
I watched Walk Hard The Dewey Cox Story from beginning to end
I rewound the part where Dewey's' brother was halved
When Dewey with his machete cuts his brother in half
Yeah I laughed and laughed
I rewound it so many times for laughs
I love when the doctor says to his parents
"This is the worst case I ever seen of a kid gettin' cut in half"
(Speak English doc we ain't scientists)
While we were gone, I walked in circles and circles through the graveyard
In a state of cogitation
There are usually two deer in there, a male and a female
But the last time I walked through there
I saw two people fornicating
Yeah fuckin' in the graveyard
Hey I don't blame 'em
Looks like fun, fuckin' in the graveyard
Bein' young
I don't blame 'em, looks like fun
Fuckin' in the graveyard
Bein' young

Yeah where they gonna fuck with everybody stuck in the same home
And an above ground pool and a flamingo in the yard
With a garden full of watermelon, squash and chard
They take their fuckin' to the graveyard
You ain't gonna stop nature, no you can't
You can file complaints, vent your hates
Let the blood boil in your veins
You ain't never gonna fully stop human nature

If someone wants his fentanyl fix he will find it
If somebody wants to fuck behind a gravestone
They will do it
And of all things god damn those people were fuckin' behind two tombstones
Husband and wife
Each stone engraved with a pentagram

There hasn't been a lot happenin' this year I guess
If I'm singing about kids fuckin' in graveyards
But I have you and your love, the two deer and now I have these three doves
But I turn on the TV and all I see are the cases of obliquity
If I spend too much time sittin' around sedentary

I get panicky and take a few globules of melatonin to make me sleepy
I hate the news, it gets me down
I'm so crazy, Fox makes me laugh, CNN makes me frown
Everybody's talkin' "Black Lives Matter"
And now they're sayin' "Don't forget to include brown"
How come when I was in New Orleans all those many years
Black on black murders
I told my white friends and they'd say 'and?'
I told my white friends 'Hey. blacks killing blacks in New Orleans is outta
hand'
And they'd say 'and?'
And they'd say 'and?'
And they'd say 'and?'
And they'd say 'and?'

And I said, hey, are you sayin' it doesn't matter
Because there were drug dealin', gang bangin' or chasin' somebody' else's ta
ng
They said well all that stuff you just mentioned above is felonious
I said, no, you are erroneous
I always knew intuitively that black lives mattered
Some kids are brought up in situations where all they know is what they see
And I can see in your eyes that a kid who got shot by kid in a New Orleans'
shoot out
Is less important than you and me
'Cause when I used to tell you about black on black crime in New Orleans you
would yawn
And now you're tellin' me that Black Lives Matter on the phone keepin' me up
until dawn
As it never dawned on me
As if this whole time I've been sitting around unobservant
Not noticin' white-owned restaurants and hotels with black servers

It's not a trend I follow or information I've just come to gather
Don't need to see it stenciled on a sidewalk
Don't need to be reminded by Don Lemon's smirky talk
Don't need to be taught by teacher's chalk

And hey if Black Lives Matter, why do you live in an all-
white neighborhood in Portland Oregon?
Of course your protests are peaceful
Because in Oregon there are no Black People
And why am I even listenin' to you
Tell me about race when my girlfriend is Vietnamese
That's right, when I kiss her skin
It tastes sweeter than a light girl's skin
Can I say that? Is that alright?
If a woman can say she prefers a man to be of a certain height
Or that a man with an accent is her type
Can I say that a darker skin woman turns me on more than light?
And maybe as I'm white I ain't supposed to speak on this
Well, anyone who tells me that eats fish 'n' chips
Maybe 'cause I'm white they want me to sound like 'Dear Prudence'
Or John Fogerty, or Ted Nugent, or REM who met as college students
Or that just me singing about the subject is impudent

I'm just trying to say I always knew that Black Lives Mattered
I'm glad that in 2020
So many of you have come to gather and acknowledge that Black Lives Matter
And to me it should be Blacks Lives Matters A Lot!
'Cause where would Jim Carrey be if was not for Keenan Ivory Wayans?
You see what I'm sayin'?
Where would boxin' be without Jack Johnson, Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson

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And where music be if it weren't for Robert Johnson, Louis Armstrong, James Brown, Isaac Hayes
Marvin Gaye, Michael J, NWA, HR from The Bad Brains, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry
Sammy Davis and Miles Davis?
Where would art be without Bill Traylor and Basquiat?
And where would writing be without James Baldwin, Mia Angelo
And the autobiographies of Mike Tyson?
And where would comedy be without Richard Pryor and Red Foxx and Garret Morris
Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall and Martin Lawrence?
And who would have guessed that the highest paid comedian
In all the world's history was Kevin Hart?

So as the sun's comin' up I look next to the window at the nest
At the mother dove and her young
Feelin' their comfort
Feelin' their detachment from this world situation
Feelin' their love will continue on no matter what
The political situation on the ground
They are three doves and all they know is love and protection
I feel their appreciation for the nook I've given them
I feel their affection
I open Henry Miller's book Moloch
One-minute Pregosi is ebullient
The next minute he is crestfallen
Isn't that the way it is with all of us?

Homicide victims in New Orleans, recent trends. From the American Journal of Epidemiology, volume 128, issue 5. Data are presented on 694 criminal homicide victims killed in the city of New Orleans during four years; 1979, 1982, 1985, and 1986. The homicide rate for black males was 6.5 times higher than that for white males for the years studied. Over 70% of victims were killed by handguns. When victims were assigned to one of five socioeconomic strata, homicide rates for blacks exceeded those for whites by a factor of at least 2.5 times for each socioeconomic stratum. White victims were more likely than were black victims to be legally intoxicated at the time of death, but black victims were nearly four times more likely to have illicit drugs other than alcohol detected. During the time period investigated, there was a marked decrease in the number of victims with pentazocine and tripeleennamine ("T's and blues") detected and an abrupt increase in the number of victims with detectable phencyclidine and cocaine levels. Further studies are needed to investigate risk factors for homicide victimization so that effective intervention strategies can be employed.