

FIVE RUMINATIONS

In black chalk I have drawn a perfect circle and a pentagram, and placed an unlit candle at each of the five foci.

I am in a park, kneeling nearby a wooden bench that's some ways out from the reach of any lights, as the cold night wind blows against my cheeks and my nose and my hair, as cars pass on the highway a few blocks away, as other dwellers of the dark hours shuffle to and fro and sit elsewhere and sniff their runny noses and sometimes talk, as an unwell person is shouting at no one, as someone maybe a block away is repeatedly dropping wooden pallets on the ground.

I pick my lighter up off of the pavement, light a little flame, and hold this flame to the wick of the first of the five candles.

Candle by candle, I will set it burning, ruminate until it goes out, and then set the next one burning, and so on.

rumination i.

Why am I so goddamn polite? People back in Paducah, when they would find out I came from Green Bay before Paducah, would ask me, "What brought you here?" I felt so completely driven to give them a polite answer; I felt so completely obligated to lie. I would tell them, "I have family who moved down here and I was kind of following after them." What family could I point them to who lived within even a hundred miles of me? None. "I was trying to change it up, get away from the busy city, move to somewhere with different values." Was Green Bay

really such a sprawling metropolis? “I just really could not deal with the weather in Wisconsin anymore.” Paducah is better? That was maybe the most egregious lie.

I moved because my uncle (who always liked me better than his own kids, which I have always felt ravenously self-pleased about) had a house he wasn’t going to be living in while he worked a job in Hawaii for 3 years, and he offered me a rent-free house to stay in in Paducah if I would look after it, and he happened to catch me at a time when my life partner’s body was really-really starting to show signs of its old age, and I was willing to throw away whatever office-worker career I’d gotten for myself in Green Bay and live off of savings, if it meant never having to go in to work and instead living attentively together with my life partner for the last of her days. ‘My life partner’ being a Chocolate Lab; yes she was my life partner ‘in that way’, and yes she did die, and yes I am still broken; no I don’t pull out, but we never had puppies.

Why didn’t I want to tell people that? Would they not be entertained? Even if I left out the creampie aspect of it. Why could I not tell people I was cashing in on all of my privileges for the sake of my dog? Do we hate dogs that much, as humans?; Is something that benefits dogs so unspeakable?

I still do it, even now, after another move. When a queer person asks me why I moved here, I tell them I am queer and I was starting to feel unsafe in Paducah; When someone who doesn’t seem to be queer asks me why I moved here, I tell them something about the weather. Maybe there is a human instinct to be socially invisible, camouflage yourself with your social surroundings. Maybe it’s only an instinct that comes out in people like me, who feel a sense of danger at being seen, and so politeness makes us forgettable. Because other people—maybe even MOST people, it seems like some days—do not have a problem with being impolite, being owed everything in every possible social interaction.

rumination ii.

I think that trans people have reinvented christianity. All of your flaws of the past have an explanation and are forgiven; Where

have I heard that before? Stories of personal transformation, of years spent in an on-and-off relationship with this thing, before finally discovering how important a part of your life it is, and dedicating yourself to it. A whole lexicon and grammar with which to talk about the world in a way that gels nicely with your beliefs about how to not say the wrong thing. Brick for brick, it's all still here: "Your soul is stained with sin and you could be going to hell;" "You posted some really bad things before and I could remind everyone."

I wonder if christianity is on its way out and trans is on its way in to replace it at large, or if trans is seeing a notable but ultimately inconsequential spike in popularity before it's back to business as it has been for the last 2000 years.

I find individual christians infinitely more palatable than christianity as a body.

I feel almost lucky that it's almost not my business. I am not christian; So, it's almost not my business. But how could anyone fail to see the deep scars, shame, harm, that christianity as a body has done to the world? I wonder whether anything about this harm is actually christian-specific, or whether misanthropy by any other name would smell just as sweet. I could believe either possibility, I think; maybe the sex-repulsed puritanism of christianity did human society a deep and unique disservice that we are not even close to recovering from; or, maybe when you hand society to humans, what they come up with is sex-repulsed puritanism no matter what.

I think history is a repeating geometric pattern. I wonder if someday another species will claim reign of this planet, and when they do, if their pattern and ours will even look different.

rumination iii.

What if I was a water bender but for dog cum? Or, to put it in a brand-nonspecific way, what if I had telekinesis that I could specifically only use to levitate canine semen? Could I use that to put on a show? Ladies and Gentlemen! Furies and Corpses! You are about to witness an incredible act of inexplicable magic, but first, please bear with me for a moment as I get down on my knees and jerk off this Alaskan Malamute! It's part of the show,

worry not! As soon as this big, aesthetically pleasing guy nuts, you will see things that will make you doubt your own eyes! Dog cum loop-de-loops! Dog cum getting splattered everywhere like fireworks, all done with nothing but my mind! Tell me your name and I will spell it in the air, in dog semen, a fluid which contains all of the genetic information to make the best friend you will ever have in your life, and it also tastes pretty neat, if you're agreeable to that!

Could I make porn featuring dog cum telekinesis? I mean, *yes*, I *could*, but, is that hot? I don't think it really is. I think this magical talent would kind of be a bust.

Maybe if I had enough dog semen at my fingertips, I could fly with it; Levitate it under my feet, and then effectively just walk in the air, on dog cum. I presume the dog cum would have to be reasonably fresh for all of this to work, so maybe like, I keep two studs around, and then when I need to fly, I jack both of them off and have an hour or so of dog cum flight to work with. That might be something.

Maybe I use dog cum telekinesis as a tool of assassination. Attend a dinner with Politician Who Is Scum, and float some dog cum laced with poison into his drink. Or skip the poison and just float the dog cum down his throat directly, and make him choke to death on it.

I don't think there's anything about this power that makes it really useful that it's dog cum specifically. I think if a genie were granting someone telekinetic power over any substance of their choosing, their choice should not be animal jizz.

rumination iv.

When laundry day comes, I wash all of my clothes together: the black socks I wore out on a hike through the mountains by myself; the neon green-and-blue t-shirt with furries on it that I was wearing when I bent a stranger over the counter at the gay bar and fucked him, and someone who was watching bought me a drink afterwards; the dark green-and-blue flannel I was wearing during several meetings this week about my team lacking critical documentation about our campus, specifically documentation on the tunnels and all of the infrastructure

therein. All of my clothes, no matter the piece of my life that they accompany me through, get piled up on top of each other, go in the same load. Water as cold as my heart. Detergent. Wash it all clean for another week.

It's so, so easy to imagine a nature documentary, and then when they cut to the next animal they're going to talk about, it's just me. "Oh my, well, that's enough of the northern red-footed robin; Maybe we'll come back later, to see if his fishing technique ever enjoys any success. Up next, we see Thaim. Thaim engages in the mating routines of his species, though is chronically ineffectual." Footage of me busting inside of a dog. Footage of me busting inside of a gay furry. "By day, Thaim gathers resources by attending his job; He has found a rewarding place within his ecosystem. However, this ecosystem in which he finds the greatest rewards is also very stressful, and so when not at work, he often escapes into other ecosystems unrelated to his resource gathering." Footage of me walking along a hiking trail in the woods. Footage of me swimming in a lake. Footage of me eating a hotdog and sitting on a street curb and staring at nothing contemplating existence. "Seemingly not destined to reproduce, Thaim serves only the meta to-do of being a living being." Footage of me paying for something at a store. Footage of me standing at a crosswalk waiting for my turn. Footage of me and half a dozen other gay furies in someone's living room stroking each other's erect penises. Footage of me doing laundry. "He washes his clothes, and is ready for another week."

rumination v.

I think it's more likely than not that I will live to see the end of The United States of America. I don't even think it's doomer of me to say, because, I meanwhile still live my life; I in fact still predict that I will be doing fine in Post-US Earth. But I do think my home country is nakedly floundering on borrowed time at this point. Oil shortages. Hateful politics. Expensive food.

I can imagine a time in this country that is post-law. I can imagine sucking off a St Bernard in public and there are no police for anyone to call about it.

I don't know what's going to happen with the land. "It goes back to the natives" is not high up on my probabilities list. I think what's going to happen is that various foreign powers are going to establish presences in North America, perhaps "To help American refugees" if they're feeling generous enough to give a pretense to why they've come; And these foreign powers are going to cut up North America on a map like they cut up Africa, and there will be a lot of messy, bloody conflict between the foreign powers and the Americans who have still remained here. I think North America will be a very unpleasant, very unsafe place to live.

I don't see myself sticking it out, whatever the case may be; I see myself fleeing to the EU. I wonder what it would say about me, in the EU, to have an American Flag pin on my backpack. Would it be taken as a symbol of hate? Would it be a symbol that I am a cool post-apoc wanderer whose home has been nuked? Would it be more controversial, or less controversial, than the zeta pin that I would also have on my backpack, right next to it?

prayer.

The gift of Thought was given to me without my desire or my permission. I have used my mind to love a dog. I have used my mind to love nothing else.

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There are now five melted candles atop a perfect circle and a pentagram, drawn in black chalk, on the pavement of this park, this night.

My sword Ruminat[i]on lies on the ground, summoned, atop all of the melted wax.

I stomp on my sword and it disappears into a mist of shadows.

"I remember thee, my closest; but I pray I have no need of thee tonight."

Someone (someone for whom I and them share a core common interest) has been coming to this park every Sunday night.

It's Monday mornings I always see their work, a fresh new zoo sticker, as I'm passing through here, through this park. And Sundays during the day, I have never seen the new work yet.

So it must be Sunday nights.

Same place? Same time? Same signals?

Someone wouldn't make a very good spy.

I don't know when, what time specifically, I can expect them.

But I can tell from the sound of their jingling collar that I have found them, before I have even laid eyes on them. Someone dressed in black-and-neons puts a sticker on a street light and keeps walking. The sticker has an illustrated German Shepherd presenting to the viewer, and has the text "Don't miss out on dog pussy" and then a zeta. Haven't seen that one before. Interesting. Into it.

I start following after the zoo at a distance.

Two blocks later, they're sitting at a bus stop, alone, waiting, head down, looking idly at the pavement.

I take a seat next to them. From a pocket, I take out a clear plastic bag with two dozen different zoo stickers in it, and toss it onto the pavement in front of them. Startled, they look up at me, and then they look down to the stickers again, and then they look at me again.

I give a mischievous smile, and I tap the zeta tattoo on the side of my neck.

They look very surprised and very pleased. They pick up the stickers.