

THIS ABOVE ALL;
TO THINE OWN
SELF BE
ZOO.

Vol. II No. 1

Spring Equinox 2024

In this issue,
a room has zoo art all over it,
and a pair of guys who do vlogs and stuff chat about stuff.

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To Thine Own Self Be Zoo
Vol. II No. 1
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WOE BETIDE HIM THAT HATH A NARROW HEART

The studio was an abandoned gas station in Nebraska, reseeded with new purposes, the weeds of its old purposes pulled out root and all. They had toppled over the big sign and taken apart all of the pumps, and hung canvases over the edges of the roof overhead of the pumping area to create a sort of canopy tent out of the sort of geological feature of industry. The shelves inside were carried one by one out into the parking lot to rust like misshapen cars. Sound paneling was put up all around the inside of the station proper, and deep- and rich-hued curtains hung along the walls and overhead across the ceiling, the old fluorescent lights foregone, and instead just some covered lamps with black lights inside, on some dressers or little tables that were scattered here and there.

In the break room, the door closed and the bolt locked, a green light bulb instead of a black light. On the walls, a painting hung of a dog's vulva, her heat glistening in the painting's sunlight, a notebook page taped up with sketch studies on equine anuses, a notebook page taped up with sketch studies on canine anuses, marker drawings straight on the walls of humans kissing dogs, dogs kissing cats, cats kissing birds of all different species and sizes, stamped prints of dog penises, developed photographs taped up of horse balls and dog mouths, a poster taped up of a dog in knights' armor humping an anime woman with big breasts and long hair, a poster taped up of a human middle finger entering into a mare's wanting sex, and many, many more works, a thorough collage of zoophilic passion and

lust. At the floor of the room, three big blankets strewn around, each of them torn here and there, the stuffing inside touchable, coarser stuff than the soft fabric without. Midas sat with his back against a wall, eyes closed, and playing a mellow, repetitive line on his black bass guitar, as Jon nuzzled into Midas's left armpit, rubbing their face into his armpit hair, taking in long, pondering inhales through their nose. When Midas didn't need use of his left hand, playing the bass's deepest register, he rested his hand on Jon's sweaty back, and massaged their back with pressing, petting movements of his thumb, groping, caressing movements with his other fingers. Jon, with their left hand, played on a keyboard that rested against Midas's stomach and lap, the keyboard rising and falling like a boat on a lake with Midas's breaths. The line for the keyboard slithered down Midas's legs, went through the space between his big toe and the next one, and then crossed the blankets on the floor to some synth equipment that was stacked in the corner.

Midas reached past Jon, and grabbed a microphone that rested on the ground. Jon moved a switch on their keyboard that keyed the microphone on.

Midas spoke, orating a tale off the dome of dogs manning a spaceship, cruising the galaxy for aliens to sex up. The dogs ended up on Earth after some other planets, found that monkeys were some fun but much too crazy, and so the dogs bred the monkeys generation after generation to be more docile, until they were humans. By this point the space ship had deteriorated, and would need to be repaired to fly again. But the dogs were having so much fun sexing up the humans, some of the dogs had even fallen in love with the humans, and so the dogs did not repair their space ship, but instead buried it in a desert, and built a great pyramid over the top of it that nobody would remove. The dogs and the humans kissed and rubbed and inserted and romped and howled and walked and wrestled and threw sticks and brought sticks back and feasted and enjoyed all, and Midas spoke the name of the album, Woe Betide Him That Hath A Narrow Heart, for there is love and knowledge found aside of the path, if one looks to their left or to their right. There are not men and women only, but a splatter painting of visions of sex and gender, and all of the beasts of the land, birds

of the sky, monsters of the waters. Joy betide him that seeth them; Joy betide him that hath a heart increasing; Joy betide him knowing of knots and rubbing at bellies; Joy betide the lover of animals.

Seth, who had been sucking Jon's dick, began a guitar solo.

GONDOLA

The city then was criss-crossed with canals like the wrinkles of skin on the back of a finger, and abundant in flooded plazas where canoes and swimmers paddled about. The air wavered under Helios's close company, his slow despondent sighing breaths falling onto the city day by day, stoking the heat of each new noontime that came in that summer. In one plaza, a statue of a tall bird on a plinth in the center: children clambered onto the plinth and jumped off in a variety of squealing daring ways, cannonballs, dives, spins. At one side of the plaza, a gondola idled around, in the shade in the hollows of the gondola a black dog with long fur panting where he laid, and steering was a human with a trim beard and a wide and flat hat to keep off the sun.

From a window that overlooked the plaza, four stories up, with a knotted rope thrown out of it long ago and resting neatly and lazily in one corner, a pair of bureaucrats from those offices stuck their heads out, and one called to the gondolier, "To the high streets?"

The gondolier, Waybringer, lifted a hand and tipped his wide hat towards the bureaucrats, and then lifted the hat off of his head and pointed it with a fully extended arm in the direction of the high streets: all by way of saying, Yes, I will take you, and I know where it is.

The dog, Inkspill, saw the shade change as Waybringer moved his hat about, and looked up to see the hat returned to Waybringer's head, and Waybringer taking them with his

paddle straight towards the plaza's edge, towards the buildings head on, rather than idling about. Inkspill stood up in the steady vessel, took a small number of steps, and lied down fully against Waybringer's ankles.

At the building, the two bureaucrats had climbed down the rope, one hanging on just above the water, the other hanging on just above the head of their colleague.

Waybringer brought the vessel right below them, or so; one viewing from even a short distance away would think the gondola was scraping against the building's gritty walls, though, from the gondolier's sight of it, there was room just enough for the boat to rock as the bureaucrats climbed the last of the way off of the rope and boarded, and still leave the vessel's edges without any new scratches.

Each bureaucrat shook hands with Waybringer, both of them slipping a petty coin into his hand as a token of good will that the final fare would be paid with no trouble. One bureaucrat leaned forward towards Waybringer, over Inkspill, and kissed Waybringer on the cheek, a gesture which Waybringer reciprocated on her cheek; for with the feminine gesture then, it was known, while all present in the boat had hair on their chins and upper lips, that the boat bore a gentleman passenger and a lady passenger.

The gondolier paddled them away from the wall, and began bringing them around the plaza, towards the canals that would lead them to the high streets. Sweat beaded on the gondolier's brow, and wetted his chest, underarms, forearms, buttocks; not much from the work of moving the vessel, but from the sheer heat of the day which he moved it through. The bureaucrats, also, were sweating, as they sat still in their seats, now and then conferring with one another, to the meter of, "Did you review the assistant speaker's manifest for today?" "I did. One item was amiss, I brought it to him, he had it corrected, the version that went out is accurate." "Good, good." "Did you see the reports from the new eastern district, the twenty third, I believe." "Yes, yes, I did, the twenty third. All seems as expected there, moving along proportional to the amount of the eleventh it was taken out of, so." "Yes, I reckon so much as well. Not a runaway

success, but, there was nothing spurring it to be so, so. All within parameters.” “Good, good, good.”

The gondola passed through the open gates of a lock, and Waybringer gently brought the vessel to a halt, not causing it to rock the least amount; the side of Inkspill’s head pressed neither more firmly nor more lightly against Waybringer’s heel as the vessel ceased its movement.

The lady bureaucrat stood, and offered out the amount of the fine to Waybringer. Inkspill quietly inched himself away from Waybringer’s ankles as the gondolier moved about. Waybringer bowed himself as he accepted the bureaucrat’s coins, and then he turned forward again, removed his hat, and waved it for the lock keeper to see in the booth above.

The lock began filling with water. The lady bureaucrat sat back down, as did Waybringer. With nothing to do for some time as they waited, the gondolier rested his long paddle across the gondola, and sat down before Inkspill with his legs bent and apart; The dog shuffled in against the gondolier, and the gondolier began delighting over the fur of the dog who was there in his legs, stroking, gently, firmly, to a consistent, relaxing pace.

After some long while, the lock was filled with water, bringing the four of them up to the canals of a district where the water levels were 15 feet higher than in most of the rest of the city. Waybringer gave Inkspill a firm kiss on the top of his head, a familiar feeling to feel the black fur hot in the summer day against his lips.

The gondolier stood, and picked up his paddle, and brought the vessel over to the booth to pay the lock keeper’s fine. With a polite salute from the lock keeper and wishes exchanged that all may find a cool spot at some time in this day, the gondolier began paddling them on.

The high canals were populated with gondolas of very impressive woodwork, figureheads of dragons and hawks, the vessels ornamented with silver at a minimum, many also glittering in the sunlight with elements of gemstones or gold. Waybringer, while proud of his vessel as something that was well maintained, an ease to operate, a comfort to ride in, was all the same, markedly, visibly, an intruder here.

Waybringer brought them around bends and through plazas, until eventually they arrived at a dockyard. Waybringer took them in to an area for smaller vessels, and with a line of narrow rope that Inkspill had been partially lying on top of, the gondolier moored his gondola to the dock.

With some stretching and little moans, all aboard climbed off. The gentleman bureaucrat thanked Waybringer for the passage, and offered out a pair of significant coins.

Waybringer was startled by the offer, and made no movement to accept the coins. Mustering words—a thing the gondolier struggled with—he did his best to explain the problem politely. “Sir, the fare is not that much, if you may have mistaken which coins you grabbed.”

The gentleman bureaucrat laughed heartily, stooped down to take the gondolier’s hand, and placed the coins into it himself. He patted the gondolier on the side of the arm, and said, “She and I discussed it: We have not a drop of water on us from the trip, not that you can tell it with all of the sweat, ha ha! You are a master, o steerer.”

The gondolier blushed, and bowed, and thanked both bureaucrats. The bureaucrats departed, up the dock, towards the high streets.

Waybringer placed the coins into the coin purse strapped to his side, and took a moment to make especially certain that it was secured closed.

Then, with a giggle and a smile, Waybringer allowed himself to fall to the dock, lowering himself and then rolling out backwards onto his back. Inkspill came over and trotted all around his face, stepping on the human’s chest as he passed back and forth over the human, wagging and wagging as the human reached up and ran petting hands across the dog’s hot coat, the oily black fur radiant in the day’s sunlight.

As the dog calmed some, Waybringer had a proposition for him. The gondolier did a little gasp, immediately fascinating the dog’s attention, gazes locked, the dog’s head tilted, ready to hear. The gondolier offered, “Let’s run.”

Inkspill instantly ran off up the dock.

Waybringer got up, and jogged after him.

The dog and the human ran and splashed and had a fun time all up and down the nice beach. Dashing through the shallows, swimming in the waters, skipping along the shore, they made a good time of being there. The working day was over, with the unexpected payment, and now with more time the best thing to do was inhabit that time with one another, the human and the dog, giving to the dog all the play and excitement and fun that the dog was deserving of. The two crossed back and forth over the beach in the high area time and time again, jumping and rolling and running.

Both panting, and about ready to call it a day, the two looked to one another, the human laughed and fell to the ground again, and the dog walked all over him, as the human held his arms up and petted all along the dog's coat.

The human gave a happy sigh, and then heaved himself up, and walked to a nearby vendor, who had a stand out there on the beach.

The human purchased some manner of meats skewered on a stick. Sauntering away a little from the booth to give the vendor their space, the human, piece by piece, took meat cuts off of the stick, and tossed them to the dog, who caught them expertly and wagged as he ate.

With the both of them seeming rather tired out, the human began back towards the docks, towards the area for smaller vessels. The dog followed along, sometimes trotting around ahead, sometimes investigating back around behind.

The human stepped back into the boat. The dog stepped in after, and quickly settled in among the rocking he had made.

The human untied the mooring, recoiled the rope, and set off.

The two proceeded back through the high canals. At a lock, the human paid the toll, and laid there fully in the gondola with the dog as the water lowered, fraction by fraction, until they were at the low canals again.

The gondolier meandered them around, canal by canal, until they had arrived at an out of the way alleyway, the entrance into the place where Waybringer and Inkspill resided. There was a straight and unremarkable passage of water, which, turning into, Inkspill recognized the turns and ways they had been through, and stood ready to offboard. Waybringer brought them

to the edge of the passage of water, up to the passage of brick pathway. The bricks continued a very short while, then turned around a corner, and then a few yards thereafter there was the door.

Inkspill hopped off onto the bricks.

Waybringer offboarded as well, and pulled the vessel up onto the ground, and around the corner, out of sight of prying eyes.

Inkspill laid down around the corner, against the wall opposite the gondola.

Waybringer took a key from his person and unlocked the door. He held the door open a moment, waiting for a shadow to come barging past him.

When, after a moment, none came, he turned around, and saw the shadow still lying there against the wall.

Waybringer asked, "Coming in?"

Inkspill stretched out his paws, nuzzled his head back against the wall behind him, and remained lying down.

Waybringer asked, "Can I lay down with you?"

The shadow's tail rose and fell.

The gondolier lowered himself down onto the ground, and brought himself face to face with the handsome shade. Each of them occupied their own spot along the wall, meeting head to head, gaze to gaze, face to face. The dog licked the human's mouth. The human returned a smooch to the dog's lips. The two played at touching their tongue against the other's tongue for a little moment, and then, Waybringer slid closer in with Inkspill, nuzzling his face into the dog's belly.

The human closed his eyes, and laid there, inhabiting the rising and falling hair before him as the dog breathed.

After witnessing a number of good breaths, the human opened his eyes, and looked to a part of the dog yet farther up that he hadn't given care to yet that day. The dog's sheath, with the dog being on his side, rested between the dog's legs, the bulk of it drooping towards the ground, lying limply over the grounded leg. Waybringer slid forward a little closer to it, and gave the sheath a lick along the bottom from tip to where it disappeared among the legs.

Inkspill gave a single wag, and then lifted his leg.

Waybringer's heart fluttered at the invitation. He slid forward more and pressed his face fully against the dog's sheath, and the dog lowered his leg, enveloping Waybringer. The weight of the dog's leg over him, wrapping him close, in this hot day, Waybringer planted kisses on the soft skin in front of him that radiated a heat even more. Waybringer smooched the entrance of the sheath, toyed at it with his tongue. He nuzzled against the flaccid penis inside through the sheath's soft veil.

They spent quite a good amount of cozy, playful time there together.

Waybringer then heard a voice above him remark, "Oh, um."

He slid himself out from between the dog's legs, and looked up into the sunlight to see his brother, Candlekeeper.

Waybringer's throat twisted, trying to find some words.

Candlekeeper arrived at having words sooner: "I was only passing through."

Waybringer's brother then jogged towards the door past the human and the hound there sharing intimacy on the ground, and entered into the door and closed it without looking back.

Waybringer's breath was frozen, and the world crowded with blurs and spots as his lungs locked.

Inkspill stood up, walked in a curt circle, and laid back down, with his own houndly head looming above the human's. Inkspill licked at the human's forehead, collecting up a day's dried sweat on his tongue, taking it from the human's body, lick by lick.

Waybringer found his breath, and lied there, letting the dog do what the dog was doing, as he breathed.

Tears came.

Inkspill began licking at Waybringer's eyes, taking the salty tears from his biped.

"I love you," Waybringer said to the dog.

The dog gave a few licks on Waybringer's mouth, and then returned to the eyes.

Eventually, Waybringer sat up, wriggling out from the dog's attentions. He sat there with his back against the wall, and stroked at Inkspill's back.

The two of them would have to go inside eventually.

Waybringer stood, and began towards the door. Inkspill stood, and followed after.

Inside, Candlekeeper was at the table, preparing strong waters. Glancing up at the two entering, Candlekeeper mentioned to Waybringer, "I am making extra, if you might care for any."

Waybringer thought on it, and then nodded. "I think I might."

Candlekeeper continued about his business of preparing all of the components of the drinks. He asked, "You are like lovers to one another?"

Instinctually, without any mulling it over, Waybringer nodded. Then, in the little silence that followed, he felt frozen for any ability to convey just how fully of lovers he and his houndly companion truly were.

Candlekeeper, graciously, merely nodded as well, and said, "A good love it seems to be."

Waybringer's brother then took one cup of drink and walked away, up a staircase, smiling as he went.

The moments and the days continued moving by.

Waybringer and Inkspill stood at a booth at the sea ports, taking alternating bites of a bowl of mixed foods, Waybringer handing down most of the flesh to Inkspill, and the other non carnivorous things for himself.

Waybringer and Inkspill swam about a plaza, no boat to hold them, paddling at the waters with paws and feet and hands and following after one another.

Waybringer and Inkspill laid on a rooftop. Waybringer looked up at the stars; lying there long enough, the stars spinning laid bare how his own planet merely spun among the cosmos, no special thing itself, a mere lone player in this incandescent cast of characters. Inkspill's nose pulsed at the air, little breaths moving in and out, and he learned, of the neighbors, that a nearby building might have seemed to suddenly possess many more rats, someone upwind was smoking a kind of tobacco the hound had never smelled before in this city, and someone was cooking fish at a particularly late hour of the night. In the height of all of these smells, learning so much about the world around, Inkspill looked up to Waybringer for a kiss, a landmark to assure it was all cemented, real, here. Waybringer leaned down

and met the kiss fully. Inkspill wagged as he slid his tongue into the mouth of his tall lover.

Waybringer brought them along the way of an unpopulous canal, himself and Inkspill. Coming the other way, another gondola, steered by a human, and accompanied by a hound. The hound of the other gondola was of brown hair, short. The human of the other gondola bore a long beard, but was not old in years, it would be a surprise if the human had ever once shaved.

As the two vessels were passing, Waybringer slowed, as did the other driver. The dogs of each vessel rose, and leaned forward over the edges, sniffing at one another.

Waybringer began, "Do you and the dog ever kiss?"

The other steerer answered, "It is a joy to."

Waybringer sought to be sure, "As lovers?"

The other steerer answered, "As lovers for lovers we are."

Waybringer, resolute, remarked, "Here, then, is a mirror, as we pass by."

The other steerer's cheeks raised gaily, and they wished, "A good day to you two."

Waybringer answered, "And to you two as well, a good day."

The steerer and the dog paddled on, through the canals.

CONVERSATION, LIKE, TALKING WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT STUFF

AJ stood at the counter, wagging an imaginary tail and singing a song to himself as he counted the bills from the register into piles of 100s.

“Got money today, got it here in my paws, sold vegan food today, smoke weed and break laws, got money today—Woahhh where are you going with that?”

The new hire, Fief, stopped walking with a huge bag of trash just as he was nearing the front door. He turned and looked back to AJ.

“Benny said to take out the trash.”

“Yeah go out the back, you can’t get in from that way, there’s like a gate that’s gonna be closed unless it’s trash time. Trash time? Day. Trash day. Garbage day.”

AJ continued to wag his imaginary tail, and wished the kid would laugh along with his it-has-been-a-long-day-today-oh-my-god line of thinking to arrive at the word for garbage day, instead of just standing there holding the garbage with a concerned frown. But, if he wanted to be all serious, his loss.

Fief offered by way of explanation, “Benny said to go out back too, but I only saw the one door back there and it said an alarm will sound if I open the door, and I didn’t want to set it off so I was going to go around front, is there a way I could open the gate out front, like is there a key or something I could use?”

“Nah just go out the back, don’t worry about it.”

“So, set off the alarm?”

AJ snickered, and said, “Yeah I unplugged that twenty million years ago.”

“Okay, but the door did say—”

“It’s fiiiine, plus we’re closed, it would be fun to set off the alarm even if it did happen. You done after taking that out?”

“Yeah.”

“Sweet, remember your stuff and have a good night, I’ll clock you out when you go.”

“Oh uh, okay. Sounds good.”

Fief headed behind the counter again with the garbage, headed for the back door.

AJ continued his song.

“Got money today, most of it was on cards, no one uses cash today, something something some bards.” As he finished totaling it all up and jotting down the figures on a scrap of paper, he said to himself, “Allright, not bad,” and then shouted into the kitchen, “Money good!”

He then heard a shout back, “Yay money good!”

“Home soon good!”

“Home not soon!”

“What!”

AJ put the money into the safe under the counter, and then walked into the kitchen to find out what heresy Benny meant by home not soon. He passed by Fief, who was on his way out. Benny there in the kitchen had a clipboard in his tattooed hands, and was marking items off on a checklist that all of the equipment had been turned off and cleaned.

“Thanks for the help Fief.”

AJ and Fief high fived, it kind of didn’t connect amazingly but the spirit was there. AJ snapped his fingers, did a clap, and then slid up to the punch in thingy, brought up Fief, and waited until a little bit after he heard the front door close to punch him out. Then he turned around to yell stuff at Benny, and saw Benny had been standing directly there behind him.

“Oh. Hi,” AJ said, and began timidly wagging.

“Hi you,” Benny said back.

AJ got up on his tiptoes, and he and Benny kissed.

“Why are we not home soon good?” AJ inquired.

Benny gave a smooch to AJ's forehead, minding he didn't mess up AJ's fox ears headband. "Do you really not remember?"

"No?"

"It was your idea?" Benny prompted.

AJ: "Benny I have no idea at all what you're talking about."

Benny: "We agreed to do the dishes of that sit-down Chinese place two doors down."

AJ: "You are fucking me."

Benny: "Um. Not actively."

AJ: "You are fucking WITH me, Captain Grammars-A-Lot."

Benny: "Nope. Unless I'm going to be really surprised by the totals you counted, getting paid to knock out these dishes is actually the only way we're making a profit today, like, personally, and our home loan kind of depends on like, that."

AJ groaned, but didn't disagree. He also remembered that it completely was his idea. It had come up in a group chat with a bunch of the local businesses that the sit down Chinese place's whole dishwashing apparatus basically needed to be completely replaced, and the sit down pizza place next door made an offer on cleaning the dishes during the day but they closed early, and so he had jumped in and offered to clean up the end of day for the same rate proportional to the number of dishes, which was a steep figure but it was a figure that meant the Chinese place could stay open while their dishwasher was being retooled, and anyways they had agreed to it.

AJ groaned a second time more loudly and for longer.

Benny rested his hands on AJ's shoulders, and gave the fronts of the shoulders little massages with his thumbs. "Hey, we're doing alright," Benny said. "It was always going to be a stretch starting a vegan burger place out here. We're making it work. I'm proud of us."

Timidly, as though the answer might change if he acted small enough, AJ asked, "How many dishes are there?"

"They left a pallet out front—"

"A pallet!!"

"Yeahhhh."

"Godddd. Alright let's do it." AJ karate chopped away Benny's hands off of his shoulders, and started trotting for the front door. Benny snickered, and followed after with a cart.

Outside, AJ had turned his head up to the night sky and was letting out a groan like howling at the moon. Together, the two of them piled the dishes from the pallet onto the cart, and then brought everything inside to their sink.

“Okay okay okay okay okay,” AJ said, “let’s throw them in the dishwasher and let that run for like forever and meanwhile we will go outside and I will eat your face, like, make out.”

“Ohhhh, *not* like a zombie.”

“Right.”

“You’re not going to eat my face *off* like cannibalism, you’re going quote-on-quote ‘eat my face’ like kissing.”

“Right.”

“Okay let’s do that.”

Benny turned on the water and soap feeds to get the sink going. The churner thing inside didn’t seem like it would be a problem for any of the dishes they were about to throw at it. It was a pretty general purpose, straightforward piece of machinery. Benny and AJ piled in all of the dishes, both of them lamenting how caked on some of the crud seemed to be. Neither was optimistic the dishwasher would get the entire job done, but they agreed it would at least help. When the basin was all full of dishes and water and soap, AJ turned off the feeds, started the churning thingy, took Benny’s hand, and lead the two of them outside.

There were a couple of park-style table-benches-combo things out there, for diners to eat at if it was a nice day outside. It was a really nice night out, as Benny and AJ sat down together on one of the benches: cool, but not chilly, clear sky, you could be out in a t-shirt and it would feel great.

AJ wriggled up onto Benny’s lap, and sat there as the two of them started pressing their lips together and doing stuff with their tongues. Benny’s whole mouth and stuff tasted like vanilla cake vape.

The two of them had met about five years ago. AJ was making a vlog of offering people piano lessons at a public piano. And then a skinny tall boy—guy, adult, AJ just said boy a lot for that—a skinny tall boy with messy hair and tattoos of geometry and howling wolves and deer antlers and stuff came up, and it was over, AJ was in love at first sight. He played it pretty cool,

showing this cute boy how to play up a scale, and that went well and they joked around a bunch, and then AJ asked, “Hey so would you wanna meet up for another lesson sometime, or like, food, we could eat lunch together, I am asking if you want to go on a date tomorrow or whenever, I like you.” And Benny said yes, and the two of them turned out to have so much in common it was uncanny. They were both vegan, both artists who did lots of drawings of animals, both into doctor drama TV shows, both had gone through a period of going by she/her pronouns but then went back to he/him, both ambidextrous, both atheists, both interested in projects like vlogs and blogs and making video essays and all of those internet entertainment kinds of things. Each of their follower bases were very into the fact that they were dating each other, it was a perfect match. And it really was. It wasn’t just for the fact that them kissing and being snuggly on the selfie cameras did numbers, they were just chronicling their lives, and their lives now happened to involve kissing and being snuggly and having a really aesthetic and intimate existence.

AJ moaned as he kissed Benny, sitting there in his lap, and Benny ran his hands all over AJ’s body, feeling, touching, taking AJ in. AJ’s imaginary tail wagged and wagged and wagged.

Both of them jumped a little as they heard from the parking lot, “EEEUUUUUGGGGGG!!!”

A cry of disgust, on par with a lot of AJ’s earlier groaning about the dishes, but something different. Angry rather than despairing.

The two of them looked, and saw a man with grey hair and a collared shirt walking by, looking at them as he went. He went on, “Gross!”

Benny asked, “Gross?”

The man jeered, “Sickening!”

AJ snickered. “Sickening you say?”

“Eugh, awful. Two GROWN MEN defiling each other!”

AJ clung tight around Benny, both of their stomachs contracting in trying-to-keep-quiet laughter against each other.

The man went on, at this point speaking louder as he had passed by them and was not looking back, “You’ll be fired for

this! I'll be sure to call in about employees in an illegal 'relationship!'”

Benny lost it, and began laughing openly. AJ drummed his hands against Benny's chest rapidly in excitement, and whisper screamed to Benny, “He said *illegal!!* He said 'relationship' like sarcasm!!! aaaaaa!!!!”

“You won't be laughing TOMORROW when your manager FIRES YOUR ASSES.”

Benny called after the guy, “We're co-owners of the restaurant sir! Have a nice night!”

AJ called after the guy, “Being gay is legal also!”

Benny called after the guy, “We're gonna keep being so gay back here!”

AJ called after the guy, “We both used to be trans too but we changed our minds!”

The old man shouted, “Don't shout at me, that's assault! I'll press charges!”

Benny asked AJ in a much quieter tone, “Do you think he was in the store's security cameras that whole time?”

AJ answered, “Bro yes and the front door is mic'd.”

Benny gasped.

AJ headbutted Benny's chest in excitement.

Benny hugged AJ, and said, “I am so gonna start editing this right when we get home, this is goldddd. Homophobia in 2024, that is so amazing.”

Benny and AJ, AJ in Benny's lap, sat there hugging as they both calmed down, a process marked with many reignited giggling fits on both of their parts.

Benny repeated, “He actually said we were *defiling* each other.”

AJ nuzzled Benny, and said, “He did. That was so funny of him.”

Benny: “What did he think that meanssss.”

AJ: “Like, in all honesty, probably he thinks we should have wives and make offspring and we're ruining our potential by getting with another hairy boy instead.”

Benny: “Why does *he* care if we have kids!”

AJ: “Bro he is tripping I'm not defending him.”

Benny: “Wait, oh no, I did forget to check again when we sat down whether or not you consented to kissing.”

AJ: “Oh no, you did.”

Benny: “I know we had made plans that we agreed about to go kiss, but I forgot before we started to check in and make sure that those plans were still something that you consented to.”

AJ: “Right.”

Benny: “You didn’t ask me either.”

AJ: “Oh no.”

Benny: “Maybe we *were* defiling each other.”

AJ: “That seems possible now that you mention it.”

Benny: “Did you consent to all of that kissing that I forgot to ask about your consent with?”

AJ: “Yes. Did you also all of that stuff?”

Benny: “Yes.”

AJ: “Phew.”

Benny: “Phew for real.”

AJ started petting Benny’s back, and asked, “Do you consent to more kissing, just a little?”

Benny: “Yes. Do you consent to more kissing, just a little for fun before we go in and do dishes?”

AJ: “Yes.”

AJ licked Benny’s lips, and the two of their mouths connected as one again.

Eventually, thinking of how the dishwasher had probably done all it was going to do, AJ rested his palms on the sides of Benny’s head, gave one last big mwah, and then gently pushed Benny’s head back.

Benny gave a disappointed little groan, and asked, “Do you consent to going back inside and helping me with the dishes?”

AJ slid off of Benny’s lap and stood up and stretched, and then said, “Mmmmmm yeah, I consent to helping with the dishes. You kind of already implied you will be doing dishes also, but just to double check because it’s always good to be safe, do you also consent to doing dishes with me?”

“Yeah, I do.”

“Yay.” AJ wagged his imaginary tail a little.

The two of them headed inside, and got to work. Throughout the process, they shared questions of, “Do you consent to trying

to get this gunk off of this dish? I can't get it." "Yeah. Do you consent to handing me that dish so I can do that?" "Yeah. Oh sorry, do you consent to me handing you this dish so you can do that?" "Yeah." "Do you consent to starting to drain the sink?" "Yeah I'll hit that. Boom, there we go, sink is draining. Do you consent to sniffing some of these with me to make sure they're clean?" "I consent to you doing that in front of me but I don't think we need to sniff the dishes, they're clean." "Do you consent to toweling some of these off with me so we can stack them up and get them back?" "Yeah. Do you consent to the towel stuff too?" "Yeah."

When the dishes were all ready to be brought back, the two of them wheeled the cart out. Benny unlocked the front door of sit-down Chinese place with a key he'd been given for the occasion, left the cart inside, and locked the door behind himself.

"Phew," Benny said.

"Phew indeed," AJ agreed.

"Home now."

"Home now yay so glad."

The two of them started walking for their car.

AJ asked, "You got the keys?"

"Yeah I'll drive."

"Cool. You still gonna start working on that video when we get back?"

"Nah I don't know."

AJ mentioned, "Sarah is good on mornings, she honestly wants us to leave her alone and trust her more I think."

"You think?"

"Yeah I think."

"Hmmm," Benny hm'd, and then said, "Yeah if you think, I will stay up late and work on it then."

"Do you consent to me lying on your feet under your desk while you do?"

"I don't know why you like that so much."

"Dog stuff."

"You do like dog stuff. Yeah you can lie on my feet."

"Ayy, glad, yay."

Benny unlocked the car with the remote key thing, and AJ got into the passenger seat and settled in and relaxed as Benny turned the ignition.

Benny drove them out of the parking lot and onto the road.

AJ turned on the radio, and closed his eyes as some R&B played.

At some point in the drive, Benny turned down the volume to one.

AJ opened his eyes, and sat upright.

Benny mentioned, “Hey so uh. Talking about consent. I know we’ve been joking around tonight but like, I actually have some thoughts I wanted to share.”

AJ answered, “Sure. What’s up? I am so here for this.”

Benny: “So like, remember I said a long time ago that I thought animals can’t consent?”

AJ: “Yeah, and that’s why you like, never would, even though you’re interested. Like, you think a lot of animals are really hot, you are technically a zoosexual, but it’s just fantasy and stuff. Is what you said before. But, you think differently now?”

Benny: “Yeah so like. I think I’ve changed my mind.”

AJ: “Yeah?”

Benny: “Yeah um. I think they are really capable of expressing themselves. Like, it’s actually really insulting—and I was at fault on this before, for sure—I think it’s really insulting to say that they can’t communicate what’s on their mind. And, a lot of animals are sexually capable beings.”

AJ: “Yeah, for sure.”

Benny: “So like. What convinced me, and this is going to sound so spicy—”

AJ: “Oh my god please.”

Benny: “I swearrr the neighbors’ dogs are trying to fuck me.”

AJ gasped, and asked, “Are they??”

Benny: “I swearrr dude.”

AJ: “Holy shit I love that.”

Benny giggled, and asked, “Really?”

AJ: “That rules.”

Benny: “Like, I haven’t, to be clear. I haven’t done anything with them. But I swear they all want it. Like, literally I will just be sitting out back reading a book like I do, and one of these

dogs will come up, try to get my attention, or *literally* casually just grab my leg and start humping and I have to push them off.”

AJ giggled.

Benny: “And like, sometimes, like you do, one of them will come up and lie on my feet. Like, I don’t even know what’s up, I have never fed these dogs, I have barely even pet them honestly, but there are like five dogs in the neighborhood who think I’m their boyfriend.”

AJ: “I’m so happy for you.”

Benny: “Yeah?”

AJ: “Yeah. Also I know all of the dogs you mean and none of them want me like that, they so just think you specifically are dog hot.”

Benny snickered.

AJ: “They do! They must! I have never had any of them try that with me at all!”

Benny: “Well, that’s flattering, maybe.”

AJ: “I think we should give one of them a handie. Like, you jerk him off, I’ll supervise.”

Benny: “Oh my god, I. Actually kind of would like that, but I didn’t think you’d be, like. This up for it.”

AJ: “We should! Animals deserve sex.”

Benny: “I mean, hey, I agree.”

AJ: “So you’re like a real zoosexual now.”

Benny: “I mean, I wasn’t *fake* before.”

AJ: “I mean you kiiind of were.”

Benny: “Well, I know what you mean. Yeah I guess kind of. But yes, I am a zoosexual, like, fully actually now, I guess I really would do it if you’d be so okay with that.”

AJ: “Yeah man. So like, you definitely for sure approve of that stuff in real life? Like, if someone actually had sex with a dog, you would cheer them on from the penalty box?”

Benny: “From the penalty box?”

AJ: “Ugh, noooo, what’s the other one? The like, box, you sit in to watch sports from high up?”

Benny: “Ohhhh.”

AJ: “Is that also called a box?”

Benny: “I think it’s just a box.”

AJ: "It definitely has a fancier name than a box. Hold on I'm going to look it up. Uhhhh... Luxury box, oh we were close. Luxury box, club seating, suite. Anyways if someone actually had sex with a dog would that not be a big deal to you?"

Benny: "Yeah I mean if they were respectful to the dog and everyone seemed to have fun, good for them."

AJ let out a big relieved sigh.

AJ: "Fiiiiiiiiinally."

Benny: "What?"

AJ: "Okay, I, haha, the short version is I lost my V card to a dog."

Benny: "Nooooo."

AJ: "I did!"

Benny: "You just let me keep hating zoos when you were one?"

AJ: "I mean I kind of am I'm kind of not, it just happened that way that first time! And it stuck with me, like, I have a lot of animal-oriented thoughts, that I kind of ascribe to that, like, him rawing me imbued me with dog mentality. But like, there's no dogs I'm having sex with anymore, so whatever you thought about that stuff was like alright I'm not really over here having a reason to argue."

Benny: "You should have!"

AJ: "I don't think people really listen about that kind of thing, I think they just have their opinion and it is immune to arguing."

Benny: "Oh wow. I mean. Yeah."

AJ: "Hey, we got there now."

Benny: "So when you tell me about your tail, is that like, part of that?"

AJ: "Yeah totally."

Benny: "So what happened?"

AJ: "What?"

Benny: "What was your first time?"

AJ: "Ohhh."

Benny: "Like, did the dog lick you, or—"

AJ: "Oh he mounted."

Benny: "Oh fuck!"

AJ: "I said he rawed!"

Benny: "I thought you were exaggerating!"

AJ: "It was so... So like, I had been playing around with myself, learning how to bottom for some hypothetical partner, but I wasn't really out to anyone? So like, what's a fella to do, well, what I did is get myself all lubed and played with and ready, and then, there was a neighborhood near where I lived that was notorious for having ill-behaved dogs just run around —"

Benny: "Oh my god."

AJ: "Yeah and so I went there, like oh yeah these dogs definitely have balls, and a dog pretty soon did come up to me, and we got on the ground and kinda petted and swiped at each other all playfully, and then he sooooo fucked me under a pine tree, and that was my first time."

Benny: "Woah."

AJ: "It was so good."

Benny: "That's amazing."

AJ: "It was so amazing."

Benny: "Did he knot?"

AJ: "Oh yeah."

Benny: "Wow."

AJ: "I think of him basically every time I have a plug in."

Benny: "Oh my god, so, my wang has been inside of the same ass that a dog wang has been in."

AJ: "Haha, yeah I guess so."

Benny: "Wow."

AJ: "Does that matter to you?"

Benny: "It's... kind of really hot."

AJ reached over and felt at Benny's lap, and definitely felt the raised outline of a boner in Benny's pants. He said to Benny, "Alright, drive safe, you're getting road head right now."

Benny answered, "Nooo that seems dangerous."

"I believe in you."

Benny held AJ at bay with one hand, and said, "No I wanna save it anyways for uh. If you'd be up for anal when we get back home."

"Ohhhhhhhh. Yes," AJ said. "Yes let's do that, I'm into what you're going for. I consent to that."

AJ patted Benny's penis, and then left it alone for later.

APPARENTLY EXISTING

Lauren woke up with a gasp of breath, feeling everything in the world around her come into crisp detail with the invigorating oxygen like a fire flaming up from being stoked. Trees loomed over her in the daylight, their skinny arms all dancing in the breeze. Dry and dead leaves were crunched under her cheek.

She muttered to herself, only half able to articulate the thought, “What in the hell... woods?”

She sat up, and gathered her thoughts. As she did, she noticed a little homemade bracelet on her wrist: a strand of yarn tied in a loop, threaded through a scrap of paper with a hole in it. On the paper was drawn a circle with a vertical line through it from top to bottom, and two dots outside of the circle, one at 12 o'clock and the other just shy of 2.

Lauren muttered to herself, “Oh my fucking god. Really?”

The pieces were coming together. Some of the pieces. Most of the important pieces, probably. She remembered—and felt in her aching insides—that she had been drinking yesterday. And apparently had blacked out, because, she didn't remember going out into the woods. But blacked out drunk her had apparently definitely gone out into the woods trying to get abducted by aliens. She had seen, before, in visions that were shared to her when she was growing up, Their symbology—there were many languages that They used, but the one that she had been completely informed of was based on psychically sharing symbols with one another. The one that she had written, the circle with the vertical line inside of it represented herself, and

dots and other symbols could be placed at various locations in and around it to indicate various intentions and feelings and even ailments. The dot at 12 represented Pacifism. The dot just shy of 2 represented Horny.

Lauren groaned, and rubbed her face with her hands. She ripped the paper off of the yarn and crumpled it up. No longer an accurate reflection of her state. And, she certainly didn't want to be taken for a liar, if They finally did decide to retrieve her, like They had promised to so many years ago. She would move the dot from just shy of 2 pretty much all the way around to 7, which would indicate Non-Life-Threatening Discomfort (NLTD). The Pacifism dot at 12 was at least pretty much a constant for herself.

Sitting there in the woods, she patted down her pockets for her phone, and didn't find it.

She stood up, and stared up into the sky for a moment. Past the skinny branches of the trees, the sky was a uniform bright blue. So much was up there, but so far away, and Earth so blind to so much of it so often.

She took a deep breath, feeling clarity settle in, that she had been overly ambitious last night, to think that it was the night. They would likely inform her when it was. It wouldn't happen out of nowhere.

Or it would happen out of nowhere, but They would know that that's what They were doing, and account for any unpreparedness on her part.

They were not cruel, and They understood very much more than even she did.

She took her eyes away from the sky, and looked around on Earth. Turning about 180 degrees from where she had woken up facing, Lauren saw, past some trees, a park benches-and-table thing. She didn't recognize these woods at all. She didn't think she had been here before in her life, before apparently coming here last night.

She walked towards the table. Coming out from among the trees, it seemed she was in a campground: here, there was a table, a campfire ring, and space for a tent. All around across neighboring hill slopes, there were other pairings of tables and campfire rings.

No one was camping at any of them.

She wondered if she was the Only one on the planet.

On the table that she had arrived at, there was a phone that looked a lot like her phone, a wallet that looked a lot like her wallet, a toothbrush that looked a lot like her toothbrush, and a partially used tube of toothpaste that looked a lot like her partially used tube of toothpaste.

Lauren groaned again, “Oh my godddd...”

Well, easy to find out if anyone else was still around, at least. She grabbed her phone. It unlocked with her thumbprint, and behind all of her apps was her background photo of some sailboat she had seen a week ago that had looked cool. She had bars here, enough to pull up the internet, and 41% battery. Standing there at the table, she opened the internet, searched “news,” and found a bunch of political bullshit dated from hours ago, some from minutes ago.

Yup, definitely still others around on the planet yapping.

Her stomach ached. She groaned. A shame she hadn’t packed water or a baggie of scrambled eggs.

Searching for further hints about last night, Lauren opened up her phone call history, didn’t see anything from all of yesterday, kind of a relief.

No new notifications icon on the text messages either, but, she opened that up to see if anything had been sent after she had stopped holding down record on the ol consciousness box last night.

Seeing what was there in the texts, Lauren closed her eyes hard, and groaned, “Uggggghhhhhh nooooooo...”

There, right at the top of her recent texts, was Tasha, a teacher’s assistant in one of her classes from last semester. Archeology. Some gen-ed bullshit. Tasha had been fun to joke with about old vases and embarrassing skeletal remains and stuff, but, they hadn’t exactly said... anything... to one another since the class ended. Until last night, apparently.

She would have to look at it.

Or she could not.

But, she changed her mind back to yes, she would have to look at it. She wanted to. Wanted to see what had been on her mind last night to share with a near perfect stranger.

She tapped on it, scrolled up past a number of messages, and started from the start of last night's conversation.

23:57, Lauren B.: omg Tasha I heard you got a lab.

0:14, Tasha M.: I did!

0:14, Lauren B.: This is Lauren btw.

0:15, Tasha M.: haha yup I still see our messages about that one assignment with the wrong due date. The dog's name is Abeline. I got her from a friend of a friend, she's been very good.

Sitting there in the woods, Lauren had absolutely no idea Tasha had gotten a dog. She had probably been up to some social media stalking the night before, among, apparently, other activities, like wandering out into the woods with a toothbrush packed, ready to dip on Earthskis.

Anyways, new lore for the world, Tasha, Lauren's old TA, had a dog now, apparently.

0:15, Lauren B.: Can I see!!!

A few pictures came next, timestamped 0:18. In the pictures, there was indeed a yellow lab with a black collar on. One picture of her sitting in front of a bookshelf facing the camera seeming very amused to be asked to sit still and look forward. One of her running in a fenced in field, presumably a dog park. One of her on her back, and Tasha's hand reaching forward and rubbing her belly, and, Lauren also noted, as she looked (re-looked) at that picture, the dog's cooch was actually enormous, like, actually.

She closed the pictures.

0:19, Lauren B.: omg she is so sexy

Lauren dropped the phone onto the table, cheeks filling with heat.

She shook her head vigorously, picked up the phone again, and kept going.

0:20, Tasha M.: hahaha

0:21, Lauren B.: I want to make out with her on a bed of roses and go down on her for as long as she needs

0:21, Tasha M.: LAUREN

0:21, Lauren B.: WHAT

0:22, Tasha M.: Lauren that is a dog you know.

0:22, Lauren B.: I mean it!

0:24, Tasha M.: Hey good for you girl. If that's actually a thing for you, I can lend you a copy of My Secret Garden, there's some pages in there you might find really resonant.

0:24, Lauren B.: I want to make whoopie with your dog

0:24, Tasha M.: MAKE WHOOPIE

0:25, Lauren B.: I want her puppy maker in my face

0:26, Tasha M.: MAKE. WHOOPIE.

0:26, Lauren B.: gtg

0:28, Tasha M.: MAKE WHOOPIE AAAAAAA

Lauren groaned to herself, “Fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck...”

She sighed, and looked at the one last message remaining. From Tasha, timestamped a little while after the other messages, and apparently Lauren had either never seen it or decided not to respond to it, because, it ended after this.

0:44, Tasha M.: Hey, in all seriousness, I think zoophilia is pretty natural. What you are describing wanting to do all sounds very sweet :) I don't know if you were joking or not, but that's what I think either way.

Oh. Huh.

Lauren's stomach grumbled. She groaned. She looked around. Still no one nearby here. It would be a good idea to be moving towards somewhere with water, somewhere with...

She reached out and flipped her wallet open on the table, rooted around in it, found that there was plenty of cash in there.

So, yeah, somewhere, anywhere, that had any kind of food. Getting to a food place would be pretty great.

But, nah. More importantly, at least start the conversation again with Tasha, before the idea went cold.

6:31, Lauren B.: I was the drunkest last night.

There. Good, accurate start. Mitigate liability, in case Tasha had had a change of heart in the meantime, and decided someone flirting with her dog wasn't cool anymore. She had been nice the night before. Very nice. But, people weren't trustworthy. Lauren had broken a personal rule of hers in a big way last night by even bringing up to anyone that dogs were an interest anyone could have, let alone herself.

It was strange, sitting with the feeling that someone knew now. Not comforting. Someone was out there who could really go and ruin her entire life if they suddenly had a mind to. No one would ever want to hire her, allow her to rent a place from them, ring up her groceries, getting liquor was completely out since she'd literally have to ID herself, and, nope, over. She might basically have to move to China or something.

Lauren's text chime went off. So, confirmed, not the only person on the planet.

6:32, Tasha M.: girl.

Keep going.

6:32, Lauren B.: *girl I don't remember any of this.*

Lock phone, take a deep breath of the cool morning air, sigh.
Ding.

Unlock with her thumb, look at the screen.

6:33, Tasha M.: *I was rollllling XD Abeline was all concerned trying to nudge the phone out of my hand and lick my face to make me better, and that just made me laugh so much I wasn't able to breathe, imagining how sexy you would think her licking your face was.*

Do or die.
Maybe both.
Alright.

6:33, Lauren B.: *I would have squirted for sure.*

6:33, Tasha M.: *XD*

6:34, Lauren B.: *That is soooo funny though, omg*

Lauren closed the phone, breathed, waited.

Apparently they were leaving it there for the time being.

Fine enough. What Lauren would most want would be to erase this little tidbit from Tasha's memory. But, short of the aliens doing her an enormous favor, it was more likely that she would just have to endeavor to keep this topic as something that was a flattering shade of dumb and funny in the TA's mind.

She stood up and went to find a place that would sell her food.

After getting her bearings, she discovered, firstly, that apparently there was a campsite way closer to where she lived than she ever realized, because she was less than an hour's walk from her apartment, and secondly, the path between this apparently existing campsite and her apartment would take her by the place for burgers food, which would be doing their breakfast menu.

After a feast of eggs and meats and cheese stuffed into buttery cleaved biscuits, she walked the rest of the way home feeling better.

She had also decided she was going to go a different route with Tasha.

Sitting on the edge of her bed, she ventured back into her texts with the TA. Former TA, or, at least, former to her, she didn't know one way or the other if Tasha was doing that again this semester for another gaggle of mostly gen-ed mostly twenty year olds.

8:01, Lauren B.: So like, obviously I would want to have said it all better, but jokes aside I really am more of a dog attracted person than a humans attracted person. I think humans look icky. Dogs are more my vibe.

8:03, Tasha M.: Right on. Like I said, you sound very sweet about it.

8:04, Lauren B.: Thank you, that's really a comfort to hear.

8:04, Tasha M.: Do you actually want to meet Abeline?

8:04, Lauren B.: omfg yes how soon

8:05, Tasha M.: haha, I'll be free from classes a little after 4PM, if you want to meet us at the dog park that's kinda if you follow the road north from downtown for a couple of miles and then take a left into those parks. I can find the name and address if you have no idea what I'm talking about.

8:06, Lauren B.: I know the ones you mean I will be there!

Lauren tossed her phone back onto the bed, and then whisper shouted to herself, so that the neighbors wouldn't hear, "I did it! I'm doing it!!!"

She was having conversations she was pretty sure could only happen on creepy outdated forums on the less-indexed parts of the internet. It was probably going to ruin her life, but, if the cat

was out of the bag, she was going to take the approach where she got to meet a dog and maybe even make a human friend. And both objectives were going... way better already, actually, than she had thought they would be. Meeting a little after 4 o'clock. Awesome.

←5ψψ~ψ`ψψβ, ←←←`←`←`←`

The chosen one's face was open in a big, uncontrollable smile. Bumping into the table as ti arrived at it, ti set ter luggage down and then crawled up onto the table terself, and laid there flat against it looking at ter phone. The dog human had gotten back to ter about the dog. Ti channeled English words through the device until ti got back photos of the dog. Ter entire body delighted. Ti cupped the front of ter pants with one hand, the hand that already had ter nametag marking ter as horny, and ti began rubbing, getting terself more worked up, readier.

The chosen one informed the dog human of its good work in transmitting these images of supreme sexuality.

The dog human seemed amused.

The chosen one decided to leave the Earth with a farewell of one last joke, something to remember ti by.

I want to make whoopie with your dog

The dog human loved it.

One more, while ti was on a roll.

I want her puppy maker in my face

The dog human had liked the first one better. No matter. The dog human still had the first one, still loved it, it hadn't been erased by the smaller follow up. The chosen one said farewell.

gtg

The chosen one left the device and went to find the pickup location.

→

Lauren rolled up to the dog park, in her red car. Tasha and Abeline were already there, presumably having arrived in the only other car parked in the gravel rectangle, a blue SUV.

Lauren went through the double gates, and as she was closing the second one behind herself, she was approached at speed by a yellow lab. Right away, completely on instinct, Lauren got low onto the ground, meaning to just crouch, but then the dog's quick approach and nudging nose knocked her over, and so she fell onto her ass as the dog ran in circles around her, wagging and sniffing.

Tasha, some ways down the park, raised her arm in a greeting.

Lauren raised her arm back, and then got up onto her knees and pet the dog as the dog ran back and forth in front of her, pausing before Lauren again and again to be petted.

Eventually, the dog ran back towards Tasha, who was walking nearer.

Lauren stood up.

The two humans walked towards each other, and eventually, Tasha broke the ice first, shouting over a slightly larger-than-conversational gap in space between the two of them:

“Bestiality is in Egyptian records!”

Lauren looked around for cameras, like if this was a reality show. Seeing none, she spoke back at a raised voice, “Is that good?”

Now arriving at a close distance they could almost use their normal voices at, Tasha said, “It’s not new.”

Abeline ran around, dashing back and forth between the gap between the two humans, slapping both of their shins with her tail.

“This is fun,” Tasha said to Lauren, and then turned to look at Abeline, who had just dropped a ball and backed away expectantly.

Tasha crouched down and grabbed the ball, and threw it.

Abeline chased after.

Lauren admitted, “I don’t even know what I’m supposed to say.”

Tasha seemed actually perplexed, and asked, “Is there stuff you’re supposed to say?”

“Maybe?” Lauren answered. “Like, I mean, I’m here on a lot of really optimistic thinking that you’re not going to kill me.”

Tasha sounded actually hurt as she responded, “No, what? Is it that bad?”

“Is what, like.” Lauren paused.

A ways off in the park, Abeline had abandoned the ball, and was sniffing around near the fence.

Lauren went on, “I just don’t know what people say. Or like, what people are supposed to say, about. Sorry if what I already said was so bad. Like, I’ve never looked this kind of thing up, what I’m supposed to say. I have tried a few times to look up, like, zoo animal fucker, forums, and not ended up sticking around long enough to learn like anything. I get scared and close it all so fast.”

“Oh my god, you’re fine,” Tasha said, to begin with. “No just. Do you know at all who this dog used to belong to?”

“Um. You said a friend of a friend, I think?”

“Girl, he was a zoo.”

“Wait um what, like,” Lauren began, and really considered if she was going to have to get back in her car and escape quickly here. “Why did it not work out? Was he not good to her?”

“He offed himself.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. Trent, from Archeology 102.”

“Oh.” Lauren had heard that he had died, but, holy shit. “Trent fucked dogs?”

“Well, yeah.”

“I literally never knew that.”

Tasha nodded. “Um, anyways, yeah. Left her with my friend, and then, went home, bullet in the head. No note, but, I mean. Obvious suicide. My friend thinks it was because of. Well. Not because he was a zoo as in, being a zoo is the same thing as being suicidal. Not that. But.”

Hearing Tasha struggling a bit for words, Lauren tried to help. “Yeah I get it though, what you mean. The sense that you don’t belong in the world, that comes with that.”

“Yeah,” Tasha said, and nodded. “Yeah and like, it doesn’t have to, right? He was great to her, no one should have batted an eye.”

Abeline was sniffing back and forth over a patch of grass very intently off by the fence.

Tasha asked, "Can I hug you?"

Lauren, freezing a little, asked, "Um. Why do you want to?"

"So you know I'm here. So you know you're okay and you know that I think you're okay."

Lauren answered, "Okay but I will be uncomfortable the whole time, but, yeah."

Tasha responded, "I understand. I am an icky human."

"Ha."

"Okay. Ready?"

Tasha held out her arms, facing Lauren. Lauren kind of mirrored it. Then Tasha came in, wrapping her arms around Lauren, holding her, for like, a whole little while. Then Tasha gave a couple of last pats to the back, and backed away.

Abeline had come back over, and was sniffing Lauren intently, her curiosity apparently provoked anew.

Tasha asked, "So like hey, do you like, want to try and see if she's into you? I feel like she's being deprived, and like, we're alone out here."

"Oh my god um," Lauren started, and then looked around, and, yeah, it was just the three of them out there. "Real?"

Tasha shrugged. "Up to her?"

"No of course but. She's giving me the signs." Abeline literally was. Tail held firmly to the side, literally backing her thing into Lauren's shin. "Like. I. Literally would, kinda, do sex stuff with your dog, right now."

"If you're a zoo and you're saying that's what she wants, I mean, she seems to like you, I'd take your word for it."

Lauren got down on her knees.

Abeline jumped up on her a couple of times, giving fake-out kisses, and then presented her hugely in-heat cooch, backing it up straight into Lauren's view.

Lauren put her pointer finger into her mouth quick, wetting it, and then she pressed it against the dog's cooch, as though she was getting ready to finger her own, kind of leading with the pad, and it slid right in.

There she was, her finger inside of a dog's birth canal, the passage by which a dog penis entered—or, a human penis probably had before, by the sounds of it—and puppies, in theory, could come out. It was warm, an intense heat holding

her. Abeline was the door of pleasures, and Lauren was the key placed in the lock.

Lauren took her finger out. Stood up.

Lauren said, "That was really great, but, I would want a more private place than outside in public to do more."

Tasha acknowledged, "Totally fair."

Lauren licked her finger.

Tasha asked, "Do you want to come back by my place, and, I can leave you two alone in the bedroom?"

"Oh wow um. Would you do that?"

"That was SO smooth, I never could have done what you just did."

Lauren asked, "Put my finger in?"

"Yes!"

"You never like, with yourself?"

Tasha began, "That is," and then paused, and started again, "The fact that's how you think of it says you're farther along here than I am, I wouldn't have even known it was so close."

"They're like, flesh and hormones and all of the same sex stuff too, I think."

"If you say so. It does seem that way."

"Um yes though please let's go back to your place. She is flagging me something fierce right now, so, yes, I think both of us would really like that."

"Alright. Cool," Tasha said. "Let's do that."

All of them got into the cars, and Lauren followed Tasha back to hers.

Overall it had been a good Wednesday, Lauren would do 100% of it exactly the same way if given a do-over. The day before too, fuck it.

She held her finger in her mouth as she drove.

MEDIA OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Though the pages are discolored from apparent weather damage, all textual contents remain legible. The text reads:

Through history, bestiality has at times been seen as a way of worshiping nature and the gods through connecting sexual energies with the gods' avatars, their animals. Bestiality has at times been seen as a vehicle for human performers to display talented acts of sexuality, fellating the inhuman endowments of donkeys or putting a tongue where others wouldn't imagine being able to. Bestiality has at times been seen as an act so unspeakably perverse that anyone who practiced it was said to have thrown away their very soul. In today's ethically-minded world, the importance of bestiality is not a matter of what it proves about the human, but rather, the importance of bestiality is how it has effected the animal. If an animal is harmed by a human's lack of sexual care, this is a bad act; If an animal gets pleasure and relief from a human's offering of sexual care, this is a good act. The former unethical, the latter ethical.

Is a human now to be completely left to the wind, though? Some of us certainly make no objections to being used by a canine flatmate like their personal toy and having our own needs ignored. But many humans do want something for themselves out of it too: Even when the animal comes first, we can hope that the human at least sometimes comes second instead of not at all. If a human orgasms from being mounted by a dog,

they haven't lessened the experience for the dog, and have gained something for themselves.

Some humans may find great pleasure in bringing kink play into the equation, but rightly wonder whether it will make the partner-of-greater-legginess uncomfortable. Some kinks, like performing bondage and flogging upon an animal, are without doubt the territory of abuse and unethical sexual interactions. But there are other kinks, like wearing a pup hood while you get mounted, where there's no real argument to be made that the animal has been impacted negatively.

Watersports

Consuming urine can be hot for some: One has described their first time with drinking pee—their own—as feeling like their own mouth was a urinal; the taste and experience was evocative of the smell of urinals in a public restroom. In their own continued experiences, they enjoyed the taste, the way it marked them as being in an unclean state, and the intimate sexual nature of peeing on their own person or of having another—a dog—pee on them. If there is a dog who you are already intimate with, who doesn't mind you putting your head under them in any other situation, it may be that they don't mind you putting your head under them when they take a leak. A less intense entry point may be picking up the yellow snow made by dogs and having a smell and a taste, or putting a hand under the path of the dog's stream and tasting one's own fingers afterwards. But experiencing the stream directly at one's own face, into one's own mouth, is a very intimate thing.

Chastity

It's easy to talk about getting pleasure out of cumming, but some humans have discovered that they can get pleasure out of not cumming as well. The idea is that when having sex, or when masturbating, the sex or masturbation is very fun, and the orgasm is also very fun, but the orgasm cannot be prolonged to minutes or hours, while the sex or masturbation can be. Chastity play, in extension, is an act of prolonging the excitement of

wanting to have sexual relief, reveling in the writhing neediness of wanting to get off. With a partner involved, one may engage in chastity play by not allowing their own genitals to be excited, but by using their hands, mouth, and or colon for the sexual excitement of others, stimulating sexual thoughts and feelings in their own mind while not giving themselves their own sexual relief, prolonging the intense feeling of want. A dog, while perhaps at times wanting access to a human's genital organs or expulsions, is not owed them, and will likely take pleasure enough if offered alternatives, licking a human's anus rather than their genitals, having their own genitals licked and handled rather than having their genitals contacted by the human's genital organs.

Costumes

Oh what fun to be a kitty cat in season with our ears and tails and a slinking sway in our steps, on the lookout for dogs who can scratch our itches. Oh what fun to wear a beautiful dress or a dashing suit, and feel highly attractive as we get down with a slobbery animal. Costumes can enhance our feelings of playfulness, heighten our feelings of having charisma to throw around, put us in the mind of our most sexy selves. Getting to share in those feelings with a dog is no cause for distress to the dog, so long as they can find the way into those garments. Dogs make for wonderful playmates, even if they may not fully realize that sexy kitten or formal-wear elite are exactly what we were going for.

There are many kinks that do not pair well with animals, ethically, usually ones that involve violence whether real or simulated. There are many kinks that are in a grey area: food play may be inappropriately coercive if it causes a sexual act which the animal would not have otherwise consented to, but fine if done as good fun to spice things up between an interspecies couple who have already established an ongoing playful sexual interest in one another and cues for enjoyment or disinterest; substance use by the human may damage the human, but not be of any poor consequence to the dog so long as the human has not lost touch with reality or with their morals.

And there are many kinks which a human can easily share in with a dog and cause no harm at all, and through them elicit new feelings of fun for the interspecies playmates, such as the human dressing themselves up. Navigate these things with reasonable prediction, and with deference towards the dog's safety and comfort.

Make those tails wag.

Or, more tactfully put,

Look ye upon a wagging tail and be merry.

POEMS

ghostly, i

I don't write poetry as much these days,
but here we are again.
I'm having a good night.
I was playing around in my butt,
not way in there,
not lubed and going for depth,
just having fun feeling around the outside,
legs apart,
touching around in between the cheeks.
Saliva for lube.
Pressing fingertips against the flesh.
No intention to even get a knuckle in.
Reslicking my fingers now and then
with my tongue
and going back at it
and going back and forth between the two,
groping my own butt
and sucking the fingers that
have been doing that.
I rubbed one out,
the same hand touching my dick
and my ass
and my mouth, any and all
directions of travel.

After I had finished,
shot jizz on myself,
I wiped up some with
the hand and ate it,
just what I do,
and then I took a shower.
A couple of weeks ago I shaved
my arms and my legs.
They're kind of stubbly now
but I still feel nice
not having
thick hair on my calves
you could comb through.
The shower,
putting a soapy cloth
over my kind-of recently shaved
body was a joy.
Afterwards
I put back on the same
shirt I had been
wearing. It still smelled fine,
and I like getting back into
clothes that have been
a little lived in.
I like this shirt too.
It has lots of holes in it,
long sleeves,
it used to be too tight on me
but I've shrunk
and it's loose on me again.
I sit now on my bed
back against some
pillows stacked against the headboard,
knees resting wide apart,
soles of my feet pressed together warmly,
top warm in my cozy shirt,
balls out in the cool air.
I sat down with my tape player
and big headphones,

and started playing a kind of trippy tape.
The light is dim,
moonlight through closed blinds.
It happened that the way I sat down,
once I was all comfy,
the shirt covered my package.
I don't mind having what I do,
but I imagined I had a vagina instead,
and kind of vaguely looked
down at my legs
as I listened to the tape,
and ran my hands
over my inner thighs,
stroking the skin
one way and then the other,
caressing myself,
feeling myself up.
I am without the two things
that were the bases of every
day last year.
My husband
and hard liquor.
I am utterly alone and sober.
My life, these days, is grounded pleasures.
Comedown.
Minding my diet
and making sure I still get out on walks.
I'm having a good night.
My left hand smells like ink
from holding this notebook
and writing on both sides of the
pages.
My right hand, well,
you can guess.
I am alone
but I do like myself.
I'm figuring it all out again.

ghostly, ii

I see ghost
images of us
when I'm out
walking. Across
the street,
coming the other
way, a slouched
over scraggly man
walking quickly
to keep up with
a tall dog whose
nose is driving
him forward
on a mission.
Coming down
towards me from up
the hill, someone
in a skirt that
is completely
inappropriate for
the winter
night's cold,
and her dog
going back
and forth
against
the blacktop path,
sniffing the
small plants
on one side
of the path
and then the other,
checking in
with what critters
have run over this
space, and finding

a good place to
poop on the
crisp grass
between the path
and the trees.

I see us when I am lying
in bed with my eyes
closed, and remembering
the different ways
we used to cuddle:

spooning; side
by side; tucked
into one or

the other's
belly; one

night we slept
under the stars while we
were camping and it
was cold

and the blanket we shared
helped just enough
to where it was still
a little uncomfortable,
but how close

we were together
that night, I hope that
I never forget it.

Sometimes I see the things
that it was easy to take for normal
when I was living it,
but now they seem

like something from an inaccessible other world,
how often I made out with a dog's butt
and he was glad for me to,
how long of walks you were happy to go on.

It is Veteran's Day today.

That wouldn't mean anything to you.

It doesn't mean much to me either,

but it's something that crossed my mind

as I was approaching the part of a trail
where you had sex for the last time.
Earlier on that walk,
we had tried at another spot,
where I still see the both of us often,
a human looking around
while crouched low to the ground
as she encourages a dog to have some fun here mounting her,
but on that day,
at that spot,
you hadn't quite been able to get hard enough,
and of course I didn't want to pressure you,
even as I knew
that was probably the last note for that, for you.
Then, as we continued along
and we got to one more of our usual regular spots,
we passed by it at first,
as I worried others might be out
and I wanted to check ahead.
But when I saw we were alone,
I asked if you wanted to double back
to that second spot,
and you did,
and that time it worked,
you mounted me,
you did your thing.
I'm glad that you got that.
That your last time
got to be one that you seemed to enjoy.

ghostly, iii

There are many moments for which it can be said that
I, now,
am the last one to remember them.
There will come a day
when no one does
and they will be gone.

Awroodrongk

Awooo!
drunk drunk drunk
Awoo Awoo Awoo!!!
drunk drunk drunk
drunk drunk
Awoooooooooo!!!!!!
drunk drunk drunk
drunk drunk

Forward, Forward, Forward

I made a rum and sprite
and it reminded me of our lifetime here
this last era of your life.
I had made mixed drinks since
but this one brought me back so specifically
feeling like I was there again
strong drink in my throat at all hours
and you.
It did not bring you back to life.
I didn't think it was going to.
I had no designs about that.
I didn't know it was going to remind me of you
to begin with.
I miss you.
I think of you so often.
When my first soulmate died
I was younger
more bent to extremes
and I felt immense guilt for remembering
any sexual moments he and I had shared,
guilt for continuing to think of them.
Grave robbing. Desecration.
With you, you were such a pal,
we were so happy to flatter each other sexually,

I still continue to think of our sexual moments
and feel no shame over thinking of them fondly.
All of it is still so on the table to me.
It was the nature of what we were
to be happy to get each other off.
I think sometimes of how you are not in this bed
to cuddle and fall asleep with.
I think very often of how you are not here to walk with me.
I think of your penis sliding through my hand
and tasting it in my mouth
and I think of the smell of your belly,
the solid feeling of patting your side as we were walking,
the taste of your paws,
and so much more,
so much more.
Your time to go came,
there was no way around it.
You are still so much a part of me.
I have learned and improved, grown,
around your knowledge and perspective,
and now I stand alone
but shaped by you evermore.
There is a negative space inside of me shaped like a dog
and the dog is very beautiful.