



Collection ONE

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Preface:

The April Reader is a monthly publication of poetry, prose, and miscellaneous user-submitted content. Initially conceived as a successor publication to the now-defunct Zine Writers Guild, The April Reader aims to become a hub of online writing and content. Operating under the belief that the rise of the internet has allowed the written word to regain parity with mass-media and television, The April Reader hopes to serve as a launching point for the future writers of this generation.

-TAR

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FICTION

Blue

In the morning two men came to visit me. Wearing grey ties and sunglasses, they stuck me as serious and professional men. They were the type of men that always traveled as a pair, the type that referred to each other as 'my associate'. Only one of them introduced himself. He said his name was Mr Slater. I didn't inquire into his first name.

Mr Slater was a tall man. His grey suit fit him tightly, accentuating his long torso and thin waist. He seemed to like pointy attire, like he was making a style out of it. The shoulders of his suit jutted out prominently, and his shoes had such a point to them it was hard to see where his foot fit into them. Even his voice was sharp. Not harsh, but very well pronounced and as clear as the reflection on his sunglasses.

Wearing the exact same outfit, his associate looked as if he were a slightly smaller clone of the man standing next to him.

Mr Slater said they had a proposition for me, skipping any detailed introductions or pleasantries. He described how they had selected me for an important experiment. I was one of those tricky-to-find people that had close to no connections to relatives or spouse- who was still in some way within the bounds of society's visible spectrum. Meaning I was making use of a government service instead of escaping to uncivilized pockets of the world for the my final days of life.

Slater said my participation in their offer would perhaps one day make me famous, on a similar level to the first man on the moon. Yet they conceded that I wouldn't be around to see it, and also due to the same unfortunate eventuality I would not revive compensation in any form- though they would donate a substantial amount of money to a charity of my choosing.

In my days here I thought I would be able to realize something meaningful to do with the remainder of my time; some great cause or masterpiece that would sprout. But nothing came, and I had become marred in the monotony of my bed and my room and this building. I was more interested in the chance to leave this place than any promise of posthumous fame or charitable donation.

After they left I mulled over what I had been told. It was all a bit far-fetched, but Slater spoke about it with deadly seriousness. One thing he said stuck in my mind for days.

“We don’t know what will happen for sure, but chances are you won’t come out of it alive. All we can guarantee is that you won’t feel any pain.”

*

A car was arranged for my transport when the time finally came. After Slater’s initial visit he advised that I would be called upon in a week. I hadn’t communicated with him since then.

The car they supplied looked brand new and expensive, but it was an unmarked and almost completely ordinary silver Sedan. A chauffeur had even been hired to transport me. It was probably for the best, I hadn’t drove in years. I wondered if my license was even still valid.

I was never directly told the level of secrecy under which this experiment was taking place, but information was not given out loosely. I was only told what was necessary for my participation. They didn’t tell me the location I was heading to was secret; but the

windows were tinted on the inside, and both the windows and doors were locked. The ordeal made me suspicious, but at this point in my life I had no reason to worry about my safety. I was happy to have the wind lead me.

We drove for at least a few hours, the driver keeping his silence. I slept through the rest.

The building we arrived at wasn’t what I was expecting. It looked beaten by time - an old brick structure, three stories high that looked ready to be demolished during the next strong breeze. Some of the plain glass windows were intact, but many were absent, leaving only their frames. There were no remnants of broken glass on the ground however, they were just empty. Either someone took the trouble to tidy the place up, or there was no glass to begin with.

The building stood alone on a plain barely sustaining some sporadic wild grass. There was only one road splitting the middle of the landscape, and it disappeared out of view without a twist or a turn. Nothing else but the cracked concrete car park adjoined the road. In the distance were blue stained mountains.

Mr Slater greeted me as I approached the entrance. He seemed to have been waiting for me. His associate was not present.

“I hope you’ll accept my apology for the long journey. It was difficult to find a suitable location for our purposes.”

We entered the building through flimsy wooden doors

and to my surprise it seemed only a façade remained from the original structure. The rooms inside had been completely revamped. They had been re-plastered, and the smell of paint still hung around. They were completely empty beige colored rooms, except for one with a table and some chairs.

We continued to the end of the corridor until we faced a door made out of steel and thick glass that didn't fit the décor at all. We entered through it to a small room that seemed to be an intermediary between the regular building and something more purposeful. The sound of something like a heaving air conditioner started, my companion didn't feel it necessary to explain the phenomenon as we waited in the small room. After about a minute there was a click and the sound stopped. This was obviously the cue to proceed through the door on the other side.

We came into a room wholly different to the others. The walls seemed to be made of some kind of metal. Harsh light came from large fixtures in the ceiling, reflecting off the walls and making the room as luminous as it could be. There were computer set up in a bank whirring away doing something. More men were there to greet us, though they didn't wear grey ties and suits. They looked more like your typical lab suits, only they were grey. They all wore sunglasses, and for once I knew why.

"These are some of my associates, here to oversee the proceedings," Slater said to me upon seeing confusion on my face. I was given some brief nods to acknowledge my presence.

The room was split in two by a thick pane of glass, apt for viewing and protection. In the room was a man in a white protective

suit and something small and blue on a table. It seemed like that was the focus of all this.

"Before we proceed, I'll have to ask you to sign some things. We'll also brief you on what we know. It shouldn't take long," Slater said, maintaining his calm and precise manner of speech. He took me to a room connected to the one we were in and reiterated most of what he had told me on our first meeting. I was then handed legal documents to sign. I trusted Slater's affirmation that they contained nothing I should be weary of and only skimmed them before signing.

I was guided back into the main room and then through the glass divide.

"It should be a quick process. You'll feel some sensation as it enters, but nothing that could be described as discomfort or pain." The handler told me. His voice was distorted from behind his face mask. You could hear his breath pass through it like he was wearing a scuba suit. He said to approach it. It wasn't aggressive.

At first it was a ball; a small sphere of murky blue lying inside a beaker in the center of the table. It looked like putty, or an undersized kick ball. It sat inanimate as I approached. The handler told me to pick it up.

"It's okay, there's no harm," he paused to breathe. "Go ahead and pick it up."

I did as instructed and tipped in onto my palm. At first

nothing happened. The ball just sat comfortably in the cup of my hand. It felt like rubber.

“Stay calm, you won’t feel any pain,” He stressed.

The ball slowly turned to liquid that trickled down around my hands. It clung to my skin, like a spider to a wall. It wasn’t pleasant having an animate slime crawling around my hand, but I didn’t feel alarmed. It surface felt... natural. Like the texture of a plant leaf, only less solid, and warm. It began to explore all the way up to my shirt sleeve.

As it snuck further along, small jolts like static electricity struck along my arm. It almost felt like it was compelling my muscles to move, but it could have been my imagination. It began to feel like it had dug itself in through tiny punctures in my skin, somehow making hard needles from its soft liquid. It was injecting itself in to me, draining itself through its needles beneath my skin. The needles didn’t hurt though, they were like small syringes. I could feel the foreign liquid mixing with my blood. It traveled towards my brain with increasing speed. I began to feel the liquid having an effect on me. I suddenly felt calmer A feeling of lost responsibility, releasing all my concerns to the substance.

I felt it begin to enter my head, the liquid felt like it was bubbling as it gained pace within me, my veins squirming. More of it was entering me, but by now I couldn’t stop it if I wanted to. I was perfectly content to let it do as it pleased. I could relax all my muscles and relinquish control. It felt like I was free-falling backwards, but I wasn’t afraid of the collision with the ground. I knew someone was there to catch me. Then I was floating in the air. All feelings of weight left me. The concept of gravity was gone.

I could still see. The skin on my arms was covered in a thin blue film, pulsating as it sucked more of itself into me. It was moving my hands, feeling the power, feeling the texture and the tingling of its new acquisitions. I watched with a smile on my face; though that was probably just my imagination. I had already begun to lose the feeling in my face. The last thing I heard was a door closing behind me, and then I lost my ears too.

I noticed its effect on my mind immediately. It was a sharp sensation. Like a lot of focused pressure bordering on pain pressing on my skull. But it was so quickly gone I barely had time to feel it. Immediately I lost control over the direction of my own thoughts. Its presence now felt cosy, like a hole had been dug out from my grey matter and promptly filled. The first thing it took was my sense of self, slowly removing the barrier between us. That was okay, we didn’t need it anymore.

I could feel it massaging my neurons and my synapses, redirecting pathways and remoulding ideas to suit his style. We were no longer separate entities. He was a part of me, though somehow he kept me locked out of his thoughts. It was a redecoration, completely understandable for any new home owner. I slowly lost my sense of a divide, between its side of the brain and mine. I was beginning to come around to his way of thinking.

As more sections blacked out, and moved to his control, they felt more and more like mine again, only different. I didn’t control them anymore, just observed. I was the addition, the mutation. I was the little voice in his head. But he never took away from me his sight. I could always see, just no longer feel,

or process the visual information in to meaningful pictures. The things I saw represented nothing. There was no longer a reference to recognize anything by. I saw, but it was only on the surface. The images rolled past me like a roll of film- In one eye and out the other.

And then he smiled, and he let me feel it. He gave me the feeling of happiness, the nice bursts of electricity that traveled along the vines of his mind. All the positive emotions were welling up at once. I was one with his feeling. It was warm and comforting. He was certain, and he was content. He had the motivation. He had the direction. He had all the information he would ever need. And he let me be a passenger to it all. I was allowed to see all he would accomplish. His benevolence was something I found hard to comprehend, but the beauty of it was I didn't have to.

He had everything worked out.

POETRY

Back When we Won Both the Battle and the War

Four years ago
Harold shipped off
for glory
on the cruise ship Mexico.
He returned
on the same vessel.

As it docked, he could
see the sea
of cheering women and children
juxtaposed on the sea
from a day gone by.

Suzy.
She cheered just for him then.

She threw her straw hat.
It was doomed to sink
but a one-in-a-million breeze
lifted it
to safety

Harold rubbed the hat's frayed rim.
She may be out there now
he thought,
But if she is, it's not for you.

The sea seemed sadder,

He hoped it was just him.
“How could we have known?”
Secretly
he wished it wasn't just him.

He yelled
“Cheer up!”

And threw the hat
to the crowd.
it sank into the sea
And he knew
that it didn't
mean
shit

A Feminist Poem

Vaginas are
Like budding blossoms;

They're smelly
And attract insects

Hungering Evening

People mull about
in the parking lot
of stores that sell both
knowledge and furniture,
basking in neon
glow of OVEN BAKED
SUBS

Headlights, floodlights,
and Chapter bound
hipsters wash out
every inch of pave
ment(ovenbakedsubs)
blinding both the
eyes and the mind.

Above, the navy
fabric of the night
is aglow of en
chantingly gar
gantuan full
baked moon, being
awed at by the
crowds of
subs burbia.

My Voyage

The crash of the waves
The roar of the wind
The feel of the spray
My desire to win

Full sail now!
Rudder right!
Not afraid, no fear, nor fright

Come on m'Boy!
We'll catch them yet!

Hurry tie that line!
Rudder Left!

Cannons fired
Boom! and Crack!
Splinters in the air

The smell of sulphur and iron fill my nose
Blood and screams pierce the smoke that clouds my eyes

The boat rocks in response
Suddenly I look about
I search and search
I shout
"Captain!"
"Where..."
The cannons roar once more
"Where is my Captain?"

My eyes they burn
My ears they ring
My mind is shattered
My limbs numb

I lay down across that deck
Some sailor I am
My soul has been scoured
I know now that I
Am a coward

Nostalgia

In the past
things were.
They
dreamt of being us,
in our flying cars
as we leapt
over horizons and explored deep space.

In the present
things are.
I
dream of the past
when men were men
and this was not a post on Facebook.

Synecdoche

Lacking all sensibility
no ability to make sense
and thoroughly non-sensical
but oh so sensitive
when you contest that
the earth may be round
you get a reply like
“that’s blasphemy!
off with his head!
this blasphemous bastard
denies his one true father
who art up in heaven
and his oh holy brother
who so died for his sins
I don’t think you know
what you are up against”
but i ask just one question
if he shall forgive me
for all of my sins
does that not then give me
permission to sin again?

ESSAYS

My War on Sound

Currently, I am listening to Heaven Up Here by Echo and The Bunnymen. As I listen, I experience an inner mind battle with a force that has shit on and been feeding off music, movies, and any sort of industry you can think off since those industries existed. I'm talking about my current enemy, the critics. I'm also crying, because I'm listening to something so subpar as Echo and the Bunnymen.

I believe Dr. Dre told it best back in 1997, when boys could be boys and music apparently began to dive bomb. While giving an interview for a documentary called "Rhythm and Rhyme". He said,

"All the critics need to shut the fuck up until they do or try to do the shit they are criticizing"

Well said, fuck the police...Oh wait, wrong meeting.

The existence of critics is probably some sort of quantum physics polymath equation with properties that bind to the universal asshole. These breathing hypocritical enigmas sit at their computers and listen to music all day. They then proceed to write about this music because they know everything about it. Suddenly, music and sound is gradable. Take a small fraction out of your mundane monkey existence and think about this.

Sound is gradable.

If you did not hear me, you got an A+, cause I didn't say anything. It made me wonder if cavemen evaluated sound the same way. Caveman Ivan was banging on the rocks with such finesse that other caveman decided it was an expression of matter sinking into a inescapable vortex of tree semen. Caveman Brilliant bangs rocks slightly differently, with a bit less finesse and a bit more soul?

We killed that caveman, and probably hayed with his girl mate.

Notice how this essay is formatted. I'm writing short, difficult to read, hard to understand paragraphs that copy the style used by Robert Christgau, the appropriately named "Dean of American Critics", which I suspect he gave himself. If all of the above made sense, then you are probably a critic. It's okay though, because we all are.

Why then do we have critics? Everyone can critique a music, or a poem, or an automobile. I'm critiquing the critic in this article. Why do we trust these people with taste? If an artist makes an album a critic completely dismisses. Is that a mark of an artist with no taste?

No it isn't. Taste is only an aesthetic when related to any sort of art form. It's a mark of foolishness on our part for listening to these critics in the first place. Getting back to my mind battle. I found that I really didn't enjoy Heaven Up Here. It's an album you have to listen to for a while, and then turn it off. Perhaps it is tuneless drivel, and that's what I want right now. The mistake I made

is that I read some reviews after I heard of the album, and then listened. The battle didn't commence at once. It took a bit of time. I started

doubting myself. Maybe I'm wrong? Maybe this music isn't up to par and is a C like Robert from the Village said? Perhaps it's a D+? What is that smell?

Eventually I could just listen to the songs and not be bothered by what I read earlier. I don't hate Robert from the Village, I just dislike what he does, and there is a difference. I never know what the hell he is on about until I see the grade, but maybe that is the sign of my unenlightened self. If you are a band, or a song writer, or the police. Don't worry about critics. Not everyone will like your music. Chances are maybe no one will. How many people bought Van Gogh's paintings when he was around? Also important to note that those dud rated albums usually end up on top 500 lists for a corporate rock magazine, and the business is always right.

What am I talking about? Your music is terrible, and fuck the police.

Afterword

Well, that about wraps up our first issue. From the start this issue was meant to be a proof of concept more than anything else. A test to gauge if we could do this as well as see what kind of reactions we get. Because of the short time-frame between our editors getting together and this release, we weren't able to generate that many submissions and therefore couldn't prune the content down as much as we would have liked. And as a likely result the quality of the content shown has not reached its full potential. We hope to improve this as we gain reputation and experience.

Basically though the success of the zine depends on the quality and quantity of work you submit. The way we handle the construction of that material into a cohesive reading experience is probably of less significance for the time being while we get our footing. So basically the best thing you can do is write the best thing you've ever written and then rewrite a couple hundred times so you don't embarrass yourself and then send it in to us.

If you're not a writer - or just have crippling doubt about the quality of what you produce that inhibits you from submitting - you can still help the zine prosper. I'm going to suggest that if you've managed to get through at least one if not more of the pieces in this zine you're going to have an opinion about it that is unique and worth sharing. The truth may be that it is actually a dime a don and the world would be fine without it, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't voice it anyway! The more discussion revolves around the content the more beneficial it will be to submit work to the zine thus giving us more content to work with. This is vital, so we urge you to start a thread about it, or find one that may be already there. It

shouldn't be hard considering the speed of /lit/.

What you should send to TAR:

- Creative Writing/Poetry
- Critical essay-work and analysis
- Copyright-free or Copyright-expired Pictures and essays to be featured
- Web links to cool internet freeware, websites, or ongoing events
- Offers to run new TAR sections and be involved with the zine

What you should not send to TAR:

- Dilapidated opinion pieces so corrosive that it melts our keyboard
 - Poorly written material you haven't even bothered to spell-check (PRESS F7)
 - KOOL** new images and essays clearly swindled from some poor netizen without permission
 - Long, whiny rants so unimaginative our monitors will have fist holes
- (Almost) Everything else goes

-TAR Staff

Credits & Information

Submit your writing, comments, and whatever else to:
theaprilreader@gmail.com

Website: <http://theaprilreader.org>

IRC: #TAR on irc.freenode.net

Editors:

Prole !XDERDXUpqQ
Wildweasal !FvTu.n1ohA
Luco !/.tVpzN9Qg

Thank you to those who submitted your work, especially those who graciously accepted to become anonymous in the spirit of 4chan and this zine.

And now for an informative word from Wildweasal on

copyright: *Copyright law in the United States states that when you write or create any work, you as the creator of this work, possess ownership of this work at the time of its creation. When you submit something to The April Reader, you still retain the copyright to the work, and you still own what you have submitted. By emailing your work to TAR you are simply giving TAR permission to host this work on our Internet server. There is never a point in time at which TAR becomes the owner of your work and you will always own the work that you have submitted.*

See you next issue,

-TAR editors