Why Haven’t You Killed Yourself?

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By Daniel Um and Hannah Lim

Context

Daniel was listening to a podcast and one person asked the other, “why haven’t you killed yourself?” And Daniel thought that was such a great way to phrase that question. And so after several conversations between Hannah and Daniel throughout the past few months about depression and the world and our personal lives, they decided to textually record another conversation - which is presented here.

DANIEL

Feel like we could just start by asking each other the question - why haven't you killed yourself? OK so who wants to go first? I could go either way.

HANNAH

You were born first. You've had more time to think about it. Maybe I'll rephrase the question: What are you doing tomorrow?

DANIEL

LOL very korean of you….thank you. Tomorrow I'll be having my weekly therapy session over zoom at 1pm, then I'll probably fart around - maybe try and read the millions of tabs I've left open on my web browser. I currently only work Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays - I should also start applying to jobs. I need more money…

HANNAH

I wish tomorrow was a real time. So far, there's no proof it exists. Tonight, my plan is to have a sex dream about my lover and then tomorrow I'll do tomorrow things like go to work probably. My coworker asked me to cover the 6AM so tomorrow actually is pretty soon…Wednesday's kind of cool since it's tomorrow's tomorrow. Have you ever asked your therapist why they don't kill themself? Or is that like bad form?

DANIEL

Sex and work…sounds like you got your bases covered. 6am tho…that's fucking rough. Altho i should try and naturally wake up that early more often. And I haven't asked my therapist that - maybe I'll do that tomorrow - I think we have enough rapport that I think it'd be appropriate, especially since I'm trying to figure out how to not want to kill myself.

I think for me, I should start with a general history of my relationship with suicide. I've struggled with suicide for essentially my whole life. The first time I remember materially attempting suicide was when I was in like 2nd or 3rd grade. I chugged a whole tube of toothpaste because the warning labels would say to immediately call a doctor if you swallow too much - I was in a very very dark period of my life. Very unstable household and I remember that day I got my report card and it had hella comments from teachers saying I was very disruptive and I also had terrible grades - so in my infant child mind I was like, "OK, I'm cooked. I really don't want to deal with the next 24 hours of my life that I was so determined would be utter shit." But then nothing happened - I didn't even feel sick or anything. I also remember experiencing a deep sense of regret and fear - like fuck, my mom's gonna find me dead and what if, what if things just get better? Also there was another time in like 5th grade where I stupidly tried to suffocate myself with a pillow and holding my breath - I didn't know then that it's basically impossible to kill yourself that way lol. I'm very glad I was too stupid to do better.

And I think that general tension - of being afraid of the future, being so certain that my life will have some inevitably bad ending that I'd rather avoid altogether, being tired of the weight of life - exists to this day in different shapes. And I've been very very blessed to experience wonderful joys and growths of myself and my view of the world - if any of the several times I've actually tried killing myself worked - I wouldn't have had the privilege of being here today with the goodness that I've experienced. Granted, there's been a lot of suffering too - but it's a tension I'm still grappling with. Life can really fucking suck major balls man.

Why are you still here?

HANNAH

I was also luckily too stupid to succeed. In high school, my mom and I had this huge fight where I had scratched the car front left tire rim and I tried to argue with her that it was a superficial mark and it wasn't real damage. In retrospect I

don’t think she cared as much about the damage as my attitude about it, because I was rolling my eyes and calling her stupid. She kicked me out of the house around 1AM and I walked a mile away in the snow. For a while I sat on the ground on the curb in front of an elementary school I never attended, and I thought I could die that way. But by the time my extremities were pageb, I realized I wasn’t really ready.

I think successful suicide always requires like one crucial moment where you no longer have the choice to live because it seems like we’re hard and soft wired to turn away from it.

I also think the possibility that life will get better is too real. Ideally, a truly internalized feeling of gratitude can make any moment transcendent (so even if material conditions stay the same or worsen, our experience of it can still improve to some extent) but tomorrow is also really heavy. When you describe your history it makes me realize there actually is proof tomorrow exists which is yesterday.

But I don’t know if goodness is a proof of life. There are lots of grateful lucky people who kill themselves. Were they wrong for that?

DANIEL

Yeah it’s really rough and complicated…there’s also such a huge spectrum of the human experience. Like I don’t know what it’s like to get trafficked, or perpetually bombed upon or live on the streets. But I do know what it’s like to feel incredibly alienated and alone, or to feel like I’m holding onto a sense of sanity. It’s rough - we live in a society and our worlds are arguably the totality of our social experience of it. And that can be both terrifying and beautiful - I would hazard a guess and say that many people are probably very very afraid before killing themselves (minus maybe a fleeting sense of relief for some people right before the Moment). I think as you’ve said, actually killing yourself is really hard to do. Maybe what keeps us here and what enabled people to fully opt out of life is a sense of connection to the world, a sense of curiosity of what tomorrow holds. I know when I have suicidal ideations, all those things evaporate. In those moments, I’m very convinced that I know how the world works, I know and viscerally feel that not only will tomorrow come, but that tomorrow or 5 or 15 years from now, my life will be in the shitter - so why not avoid the pain?

And yet I’m still here. I think I’m still here because I care a lot about the feelings of people around me. I don’t want to hurt them or traumatize them. I

also want to make dope shit and whenever I'm excited about what I have to offer and the relationships with people to cultivate, it definitely gives me hard pause. I don't know if it's right or wrong to kill yourself. None of us consensually opted into life - we were thrust into existence and now we're here. We might be taller and have more hormones and shit, but we're just giant big babies stumbling around.

In my present day, the main sufferings of my life are largely a mixture of navigating the social world and constantly feeling like the rug can be pulled from under me at any moment in a financial/material/mental regard. I've struggled with socialization growing up and still do - I truly think it's a miracle and deep privilege that many of us are able to somewhat coherently interact with each other. But it's also so messy and so many people are living on social fringes in various degrees that I witness in public, my part-time job, or wherever. I really feel such a heavy weight when it comes to socializing - but it's also such a beautiful thing. Am I making sense???

HANNAH

Yes.

I think it's confusing to talk about it because our continued existence proves itself (like I'm clearly here, so there must have been some thing keeping me here which we can choose to call a reason or not — though unclear how much reason has to do with it). It's not an ontological question (do we exist? Or is it right to live?), it's an epistemological question (how do we know we exist? Why is it right to live?)

I think pain avoidance is really interesting. Seemingly, we evolved to avoid pain because it was a desirable trait for continuing to live. The David Foster Wallace essay that convinced me to be a vegetarian (albeit poorly) argues that lobsters do feel pain. Because when they begin to die, they try to escape the boiling pot. For a while scientists didn't think that babies felt pain and we can still argue about whether or not they seek to live. They try to die all the time, fucking morons…

It seems like creatures that are designed to live, are wired to avoid pain. But when we avoid pain by ceasing to live, the suicidal paradox is exposed. The Moment is composed of two moments — the one in which we want to die, and the one in which we have no choice. It's important that the second one comes second. Maybe that moment of fake clarity during the suicidal ideation period is an excise will to live, epigenetically stored in you, like diabetes in descendants

of famined peoples. If you could consensually choose to live (like if you died and could opt into reincarnation), would you? Are we at all different from a tall child? Am I making sense???

DANIEL

Damn, I don't know if I'd opt back into life, especially if I happen to be in a really chill spot in whatever dimension/afterlife I'm in. But I think I'd at least have hesitation, cause then I'd have to consider if it's worth the pain or causing others pain if I want to opt back out again. And yes, you are making sense.

I think so much of "growing up" is really experiencing and recognizing the dance between responsibility and will of movement we have. Like we could technically start going full ham and disregard social fabrics and say every single thing on our mind or whatever, but then there's consequences. There's a responsibility we have with our own lives, assuming we have a general semblance of self-awareness - I feel like culturally here there's been a wave of furthering community-based approaches and destigmatizing mental illness. And that's been great on many levels. But I do sometimes wonder how much of the onus is still on us to examine ourselves and take responsibility for our own decisions. Like yes, the world is fucked. The economy is shit. Socialization is increasingly atomized and we've been trained under capitalism blah blah blah to blame ourselves more than the ramifications of the systems we live under.

But as long as we have our minds, we still consciously or unconsciously negotiate how to approach every single moment with another person or a situation. Am I gonna just fart? Do I hazard a potentially inappropriate question? If someone is being annoying, do I owe it to them to say something? If someone tells me that someone is bothering them, I should approach with sensitivity and check in - but when do we decide that one action is more appropriate than another? And even then, what if we just fuck up? Mistakes are inevitable. Not everyone feels the same way about something. I think in that way, among many others, we're just tall children. We're so sensitive. We want to feel safe. And yet, we need to open ourselves up at least to some degree to the chaos of life.

I also just had a random memory of going to a public bathroom for the first time as a kid - looking back on it, it was a very psychedelically spiritual experience. Witnessing the incredible dirtiness of the bathroom, many other grown adults grunting as they're peeing, toilet covered in shit - I felt like that was such a traumatizing but maybe necessary experience of like….OK, this is the World. We exist together and some people care more or less about the spaces they

inhabit. Or people are really just on desperate fringes and they just don't give a fuck. But yeah, with suicide/living, I don't know if I'll ever have the Answer. If I'm trying to be as sober as I can right now, I think that I'll probably experience more suffering - more of the same, or even novel scales of suffering that I'll have to contend with - but that I'll also have the ability to keep my head out of the sand and be open to gratitude. Gratitude of what could come, the goodness I've experienced with others - and whether or not I kill myself will largely hinge on how securely I can hold onto that gratitude and connection with others. It's probably going to be very hard but I'm open to the moments of ease, too. What would you say to someone or a friend if they actively wanted to kill themselves? I don't know what I'd say other than….just try to keep holding on. You never know what tomorrow holds….which ironically could be why they want to kill themselves in the first place. I don't fucking know.

HANNAH

I guess it would depend on why they wanted to die. The second time I tried to die, I swallowed a bunch of pain meds (im not even sure which ones since they weren't mine) and I was having a horrible argument with my dad. He called me below human. I thought that my best bet at revenge would be to make sure he knew it was his fault I was dead.

I think you're already very aware that you can't really escape pain by dying, you can only transfer it. One of the main reasons not to die is because of the pain it causes the people and world around you — which would be devastating, maybe even lethal, who knows? Not to try to bring a shame complex about it (though clearly D and others at the collective believe shame is a useful/effective tool for behavioral adjustment).

I guess I'd say to myself from back then that…you can't really kill yourself. Part (maybe a majority, maybe a minority) of the thing you call your "self" is composed of the subjects that perceive (i.e. love) you. If the part of your soul trapped in your meat suit left Earth, the parts of your soul stored in the memories and souls of others would continue to be alive, and they would be in immense, immense pain. I remember after the harm reduction meeting (the grief edition) how many people said that Tomàs's death reconfirmed their own gratitude for life. I wonder if that wasn't him lingering on Earth. His name certainly stayed. It's painted on the roof. It's electrically inscribed in our brains.

I think it's so hard to socialize (i.e. negotiate the terms between our self and others) because we are partly contending with the fact that the boundary between those is somewhat fake. An advanced society takes responsibility for

itself as a whole. It seeks to make sure all of its constituent parts are well and loved. I believe that communism is not so different from the principles of laissez faire capitalism…which is to say, the self is ultimate. The self should be preserved. It's just that the model of the self is politically (or religiously) expanded to the entire society.

Obviously you've thought of the idea that once the part of your soul that is trapped in your meat suit were not on Earth (which I'll shorten to meat-soul for convenience), your meat-soul wouldn't be around to suffer from the grief that radiates outward from the sudden absence of your meat-soul. You think it's too painful to let that happen. You'd be in pain long after your meat-soul was gone to perceive it.

Why do some people peepee all over the toilet seat? Why don't they perceive the next pisser as a member of their selves? Hard to say. Maybe they would have an easier time killing themselves. Maybe you could try to kill a lesser part of your self than the whole meat soul. I've asked before, but why don't you leave NYC? I think transplants are so irresponsible to the city because we're not quite alive here yet. Why don't you go somewhere no one knows you, even you? Isn't that close enough to being dead?

DANIEL

I think there's a lot of nuance to the whole transplant convo. Us living on stolen land, corporations/systems causing massive material grief that - if ended - would bring much relief to the material lived experience of everyone here. I've grown up here and experienced displacement. I know what it's like to be really poor and have had numerous instances as a kid of not being sure if I'd actually have dinner tonight. I've also made beautiful friends and have seen wonderful work and actions and lives from people having moved here - it's complicated. For sure many annoying people have moved here. I think I'm staying in NYC because I love the people in my life right now, I love what I feel is a special spirit that lives here, and I'm also just very sentimental. I grew up here and I'd like to die in the here that I recognize as present-day NYC.

But I've definitely had many moments of feeling tempted to just fuck off somewhere, where no one knows me. Or to join a monastery and just escape. But I also don't think escape is possible. I'll always be here with myself and that alone is something for me to grapple with and try to grow with. It's a really kind of bittersweet beautiful tragedy that so many of us suffer and can relate to each other's suffering, and yet we can feel so unique and special with our own suffering. I know for sure I'm not the only one suffering from what I'm

suffering, and yet the lived somatic experience of it makes me feel that no one will truly understand what I'm going through.

I said before that my life was in a very dark place - I'd say my life didn't really start getting better on a broader deeper level until college. Up until then, I was severely bullied by different groups of people - I also moved hella times so it'd even be different people. I had to make new friends many times, and even then, looking back - we weren't really friends. We were just keeping each other company and some of them were also huge douchebags. I had a stepdad for some years who sucked major ass, went to this really cursed korean afterschool program where the guy who owned it would beat us (beautifully even then I had a lot of wonderful experiences there). I was so severely depressed from the transience and simultaneously intensely physically torturous nature of my life that I had many nights fantasizing killing my bullies in some murder-suicide. It's really really insane whenever I think back on all that - I feel like the aura of my self and my life has done a complete 180 over the years. It's really insane and one of my very few concrete sources of reinforcement - like, I really could not have known and I would've sworn to you that my life would never get better. And it's really ironic that I still think this way many times. I share all this to hopefully give some hope to anyone reading this. I know what it's like to hear what sounds like platitudes from someone, but trust that I understand what deep deep emotional suffering feels like. I think that gives me at least a Bachelor's. But yeah I think I'll close out my rant on this zine with that sentiment. Also Hannah you are goated. I remember when we took acid with O and S, I was like, damn Hannah is spitting straight facts right now. So if you kill yourself, I'll be really upset because your speech is so articulate and I aspire to that. You're a good meeting host at 8ball.

HANNAH

Wait we're in a zine right now? Is this a zine? Am I a zine????.....FUCK LET ME OUT. HELP ME SOMEONE ANYONE IM TRAPPED IN THIS ZINE AND I CAN"T FUCKING GET OUT HELP CAN any ONE can ANYONE HEAR ME PLEASE HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME IM TRAPPED IN THIS FUCKING ZINE AND I CAN"T GET OUT HELP ME PLEASE SOMEONE PLeASE HELP ME

HANNAH

Sometimes I think there's no such thing as willpower. I wish I knew why I stopped being suicidal this summer. At times I feel really strongly that I didn't

so much choose to live as just get used to it. I think our dumb beautiful lives are more controlled by inertia than we really think. I don't know if you want to die. The more I read and listen the more I feel that you ultimately want to avoid pain. I think this pain avoidance is an instinct that is potentially mislabeled as the will to live. And relatedly or unrelatedly I do think a large part of the soul of 8 ball is composed of you. I think if you left it or Earth, everything and everyone would be painfully changed, and probably for the worse. What I'm trying to say is…you're also a good meeting host at 8 Ball. Do you want to continue?

DANIEL

(And relatedly or unrelatedly I do think a large part of the soul of 8 ball is composed of you. I think if you left it or Earth, everything and everyone would be painfully changed, and probably for the worse.) - that's so gay….

Thank you. Being a good meeting host is truly an artform. I've been fantasizing about making a zine on ways to be a good meeting host and handing it out to other 8ball members. And hmm…idk. I could end it here or could keep going if you wanna. Do you have any closing remarks if you're also done?

HANNAH

Hmm. Let's pick up some day in the future which appears to exist based on all prior evidence.

DANIEL

K

10/15/26

HANNAH

I've been working on my grad school essay today, and trying to explain the polemical model of desire as it relates to bodily duration or bodily continuity. Desire, as I see it, is composed of at least two states: There is the actual state (let's say, for example, unrequited love), and there is the desired state (let's say, for example, requited love) and in the model of desire, these are two states are opposed or distant poles. The further these states are to each other, the stronger the desire.

In the geometry of desire, Anne Carson writes that desire is actually composed of a triangle geometry, and the third component which needs to exist (besides the actual state and the desired state) is the witness (the person who experiences desire).

I believe my thesis or my analysis will revolve around the idea that: The witness is required to provide a conduit for a possible continuity between those two states. The witness is a hallway through which the actual state transitions into the desired state. Without the witness, the desire is inert (or in fact doesn't even exist!)

The witness is required because the witness exists in a body, and the body endures. It's continuous. In "What Can a Body Do?" Spinoza writes "an idea we have indicates the present state of our body's constitution; while our body exists, it endures, and is defined by duration; its present state is thus inseparable from a previous state with which it is linked in a continuous duration. Thus to every idea that indicates an actual state of our body, there is necessarily linked another sort of idea that involves the relation of this state to the earlier state"

Then Deleuze writes, regarding Spinoza's writing above: "Spinoza explains that this should not be thought of as an abstract intellectual operation by which the

mind compares two states. Our feelings are in themselves ideas which involve the concrete relation of past and present in a continuous duration”

Or in other words, feelings, as long as they exist in a continuous domain (such as my body) are continuous ideas that link the previous state with the current state. I think the implications are huge for us. For example, when you tell someone “it will get better”, you’re most likely speaking probabilistically. As in, life will probably get better for you, because if you’re at rock bottom now, it’s most likely that life will improve. This is a pretty strong argument, but I don’t think it does a good job of countering the idea that right now, one might be feeling unbearable pain. That much is true.

But the fact is, if you can imagine a future that is better than the present, you need to exist for those two things to be linked. Ideas themselves can’t be durationally related. They need to ground in a durational domain (your life, your body, your memory, your soul). Maybe the first step toward becoming less suicidal is to answer that question. Can you actually imagine a future that is better than the past? Your imagination is the only place where a continuous relationship between the present and the future exists…You need to be present for it.

You shouldn’t die yet, not just because things might get better (which they definitely might), but also because without you, it is actually not possible for things to get better. The ability to feel pain, while debilitating, is a result of the continuous domain of the body. In other words desolation is a secondary symptom of the same conditions that make it possible for the future to be linked to the present. And if you can conjure a desire for the future to be better than the past, then the two poles of desire can become continuous through the conduit of your body and its inhabitation by your soul.

Is this anything??? Or am I just saying the same things twice?????

10/21/26

DANIEL

Sorry for taking so damn long to respond…. Continuing to be very fried and I wanted to take some time to digest your message.

I think about this a lot - we are generally forced to witness our own lives, and even then that testimony isn't always the most "accurate". Our memories are so reliable and fallible at the same time - we clearly remember a lot of things, but we're also conditioned to create some sort of narrative of ourselves that acts as some foundation of our identity and sense of self. I'm not just scared of my present pain or that things will get worse, but also that even when things get better, things can get worse again. I think a common thread amongst people who struggle with or commit suicide is that they feel that there's no way out, or that even the prospect of things potentially getting better loses its attractiveness.

We're also conditioned to experience time linearly. One of my biggest fears is developing Alzheimer's and becoming a shell of myself. I shouldn't worry about that too much and enjoy the present as much as I can, because even if an ending like that is somehow destined for me, what's the point in worrying so much that I further diminish the quality of my own current life? And yet I can't stop worrying about so many things.

On the flip side, what you've described - the body as a witness - is also life-affirming. I'm here for the plot. We're all gonna die anyway, so why not just stick it out and experience this potentially only shot we have at life? I don't know.

I think for me, I just have to keep reminding myself that I've come a very long way. I did not think I'd still be alive at this point. I really was at the bottom of the social totem pole my whole life until college, no community, no real friends - I have to really look at that and remind myself that things were so much

worse. I think life is a battle for many of us at this point. There are systems in place and ideas deeply entrenched in our own minds that do not have our best interests in mind - operating from a place of fear and exploitation and desperation and scarcity. I go on the train and everyone is on their phone all the time - I'm not saying anything new, but I think it's important for us to not let that fade into the background and dissociate. We have to really see and examine the sickness that lives in our own minds - we're so fucked in the head in different ways. To be grounded and have the determination to open yourself up to the chaos of life with love and care and understanding - it feels like something to fight for and retain in this day and age. And maybe this was always the case as long as humans have existed, but it feels really concentrated right now.

I'm probably just projecting a lot right now. The social world to me feels so delicate and messy. We want revolution but I can't even count the amount of times people couldn't just have a direct confrontation about something relatively mundane - myself included. I think I say all this to say that many of our collective behavior feels like a macro-version of individual trauma responses/depression/anxiety. We want to feel safe so we retreat further inward, or we lash outward and drown ourselves in vitriol. We dig our heads further into the sand and just hope for the best. And in my own life, I frequently feel the same - let's just give up. I already feel fucked, let's just lean into it and neglect my own accountability or the responsibility I have as a person who exists and is alive. I don't know what's right. I do think that someone like Nathan Fielder is really famous for a reason. We live vicariously through him, he exists as some fetish object - he is so himself and we admire and envy that. We want to be ourselves and be accepted for who we are, or something. There must be some connection between all these things. Like, so many people want to kill themselves or hate their lives - and so many people love Nathan Fielder.

11/5/26

HANNAH

Speaking of Nathan Fielder, I finally saw You Can See Everything. I wonder if that's the correct formatting for movie titles? Anyway, I can't necessarily make heads or tails of it. The story it's telling is quite clear, but there's a lot of tension demonstrated in the movie surrounding common sense questions like...Why in the world would such a person restart Theranos?? I think the sweep of the midterms also makes me feel funny in a bad way about human intentions. For example, this morning we saw news coverage of Melania Trump's conference to broker peace between Russia and the Ukraine, but she has announced publicly and operates from the stance (or at least perception) that Vladimir Putin is a humanitarian leader.

Pookie says, regarding the administration and extreme bad-faith political actors, it no longer makes sense to assume that they think there is life after death, be it heaven or reincarnation or what have you. Such people causing massive chaos on Earth, even after achieving riches, bitches, and power…people who continue to stay and wield the power in complete bad-faith must be existentialists or nihilists.

Think about it: Trump has such an unspecific agenda. He's not really homophobic…I mean he is, in a poorly imagined boomer way, but he doesn't actually hate them, he doesn't give a shit. Is he actually classist? Sure, but what is the root of pleasure that originates from control? Isn't it purely instinctual? I think he loves the attention, and his real calling is being a mean cunt on the judge panel at dancing with the stars. Why on Earth is he being so horrible? What reason could he possibly have at this point, not only, to continue being the president, but also, to not kill himself? I'm not saying he should kill himself. That's neither here nor there from this sentence. I'm saying, why doesn't he?

Only someone who really believes this is the last life they live, and all they have is their time on Earth would spend all that time burning it up with no remorse. You think if he really thought heaven and hell were coming, he would spend his time like this? Although this abandon-all-hope-ye-who-enter-earth attitude also takes a large portion of solipsism. You can only stand the guilt of causing so much pain if you do not believe that the pain of others is real.

I think that's part of why I'm so interested in this question. I spent the large part of my young childhood, and teenagehood thinking of the softest, easiest ways to go — suicidal strategies that could not be misinterpreted as resulting from my parents neglect or abuse. I didn't want them to be stressed about being investigated or whatever in the midst of their grief, even though I did admittedly used to have really strong revenge fantasies of dying to punish them. I decided against leaving a note because I thought it was too macabre. And I wasn't confident anyway that I could say what I needed them to understand in a letter in Korean.

I never got to the bottom of why I didn't kill myself. I wish I knew why, I really wish I did. I think I just got too distracted imagining what the world would be like without me, and how painful and awful and cruel that would really be in effect for the people I leave behind. Although the singleton is the first physically implied conception of self (given that the whole world is known through my body and my body only), we have some creeping sense that other people are real and that they matter. How they feel about us matters. How they love and hate us matters. Their pain is real. It's so real. It matters. I think you're tortured by the question of suicide for the same reason you are tortured by the question of society, or coexistence — in a word, other people. Because other people matter. They have huge wills and destinies that are capable of immense effect on our real lives. Even their whims could kill us. Other people are so frightening that way. And I think, if you are very lucky, and you are well loved, it is the main thing standing in your way. In The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus introduces the problem by writing that suicide is the final philosophical question. The only one that actually matters: Do you kill yourself? And if no, why not?

Do you celebrate the progressive midterm landslide even though voting in this country is occasionally a symbolic activity at best? Even though the dems are corrupted too? I already feel fucked, let's just lean into it and neglect my own accountability or the responsibility I have as a person who exists and is alive. Do I? Sometimes I do. Why, though? Or why not?

I asked my boyfriend why he doesn't kill himself and I think he wasn't sure. I think he was trying to say that if life is meaningless, he may as well be grateful

for it and have fun. I think how he actually said it came off more to me that he's too lazy to really go through with it and to take responsibility for leaving his mom alone here. Basically, I don't know if this is a knowledge transmittable through language. That's a bit bleak, but like I said: It's not transmittable, so this zine can't really hurt you. If I'm to doom you, it won't be through words. And if I'm to save you, it won't be through words either. If anything it'll be my body incidentally in the way of the bullet that was meant for you. It would ping off my shoulder at just the right angle and clip a minor artery instead of a major one. In the moment of darkness before death takes you, you would replay your whole life as you remember it, including the writing on this very zine. And when you return to your waking life, you'll realize that it's still, still, it's not over yet.

DANIEL

You know…speaking of dread and stress and strife….I've been dealing with an extreme amount of stress that's been building up over the past month or so. I'm not going to air it out on this zine, but I think you have an idea of what it's about. But it's a specific kind of stress where I'm stressed for myself but also on behalf of others at 8-Ball. I haven't been this exhausted in this way in a very long time. And maybe it's just because I feel more in emergency/problem-solving mode, but regardless I've been feeling a lot less suicidal lately. I'm going through a lot of BS, but I'm ultimately really grateful to be experiencing all this. It's a chance to learn. I'm trying to continue processing this - I think it's an indication that I need to continue not ruminating and living in my own self-centric bubble. Spending time with people, feeling engaged with others, and also just having goals and problems in your own life that you're able to break down into smaller more manageable problems. That last part - is that hardest for me, I think. I'm frequently aware of how I treat 8-Ball with so much more rigor and care than my own personal individual life. My personal life is a fucking mess. But(t) fuck it….yolo…

I'm afraid of being old. I feel like being old is gonna suck ass in this country. I'm afraid that because of my depression and anxiety that I'll be likely to develop Alzheimer's. I really feel like if I get diagnosed with this, and especially if I'm already old and I have no money (which I probably wont, what the fuck is retirement?) and health insurance is still shit - I'll buy a shotgun and blow my head off. My mom would be gone at this point, and my friends will either already be dead or old themselves. But hey, I was also pretty certain that I'd have killed myself by now and I'm 29. I was pretty sure I wouldn't survive past 20.

There were so many times when I truly thought my life was over. But I'm here and that's pretty fucking annoying and awesome at the same time. My friend was recommending that I channel this into something more constructive, where I develop a strong sense of self and will and not care so much about what people think of me. I'm so terrified of being ostracized from society or people I care about disliking me. My last partner had a lot of social anxiety before they met me, and they said they got over it by purposefully embarrassing themselves relentlessly. Maybe that's kind of how I work through this funk….I just have to allow myself to suffer. The only way through hell is past it.

BIOS



Daniel Um (they/them) is currently a part of 8-Ball Community. They don't like to think too much about what to wear. They are trying to get their life together, and wonder if they might have ADHD. Daniel wants to make dope shit and hopes that they can write a really cool play before they die. They love long silences. You can find them on instagram @danielum90 or contact them via beforeanyonelze@gmail.com .



Hannah Lim (she/her) is a pervert who does not prefer to hyphenate the eight and ball. She enjoys loving and learning and is glad that she never successfully killed herself. She fully eats meat now but is not yet brave enough to admit that. One day she hopes to find meaning between two shreds of bark on Yggdrasil (she is confident this is possible). Hannah is currently a NEET. You can find out more about her at www.hannahs.garden. At the end of this paragraph, she has left a long silence for Daniel's enjoyment:

Regarding copyright

"Liberty favors emulation, instead of destroying it. In social equality, emulation consists in accomplishing under like conditions; it is its own reward. No one suffers by the victory."

- From Proudhon (What is Property?)

Daniel Um
Hannah Lim



www.hannahs.garden