

The alarm clock is ringing. You rise to the occasion.

A search is conducted to locate the finest clothes in the room. Succeeding in this search, you race down the stairs and seat yourself at the dinner table.

Dad is drinking a cup of coffee. You too will have yourself a cup of coffee.

Mom has prepared a hearty breakfast. "Kevin," she says, "here are your eggs. Don't take too much bacon. Save a few slices of toast for your brothers and sisters."

Food is chewed. Food is swallowed.

Hugs and kisses are exchanged.

The front door slams shut.

Cars and buses gracefully weave through a very loose stream of traffic.

The caged animal rattles iron bars with a persistence worth rewarding graciously. Unfortunately, our stocks are low at this time. If you return shortly, we shall have all that you desire. Ah, yes, you cannot return because you cannot exit. Well, those bars are old and rusty. Try hard enough, I'm sure you will find a way.

Time is frozen into periods here. This period only begins and ends for external entities. Internal entities, such as thyself the caged animal, live forever within this period. Escape is possible but not very likely.

Suppose, for a *moment*, the lizard brain takes hold. Muscles twitch in violent anticipation. The difficulty is in realizing all is futile. Now suppose the lizard brain has taken hold and strength has peaked. Suppose the weakest of your twelve iron bars is attacked as the heart beats rapidly and the adrenaline fills you. The weakest, rustiest of your twelve iron bars is attacked, and perhaps bent slightly, but certainly not broken. If it is ever broken, and that is quite as likely as divine intervention, there will be a space slightly wider than that space existing between any of the other bars. This space will not be quite wide enough. Energy will have been wasted.

It is possible. Escape is possible. Remember that.

Time travelers can visit moments. Time travelers can enter and exit moments as if they were buildings. There will be a time traveler arriving shortly.

Shortly. As time passes, the time traveler will arrive. Yet no time will have passed. Yet time must pass, for you are alone. Are you not alone in your suffering?

shortly

*Time Traveler:* This place is dark and musty and rare. Only the rarity of the moment holds my attention. It is a moment divided into an infinity of moments. If I spend too much time here I will find myself caged.

"But wait!" you shout. You are frantic. This is your chance. That is your savior over there. Don't let him get away. You can't break the bars on your own. Suppose you do escape the cage. What then? The moment is itself a cage. It is an infinity moment. You *need* help! So you shout, "But wait! Wait! Wait! Wait!"

Says the time traveler, "I hear a voice yet spy not the entity, the source. Is it the voice of a banshee, signaling my journey into hell? Or is it a siren, pulling me closer and closer to oblivion?"

"The dangers are real," you warn. "However, I am merely a person. Help this person escape this dark moment."

A cheeseburger is hastily consumed. Bits of burger fall from the clumsy maw and its inefficient work becomes an embarrassment.

There is a date. She has shoulder-length brown hair and long legs. Her voice is the voice of Van Gogh's prostitute. Were you to be denied that voice, you would no longer require the service of your ears. And she is disgusted. You eat like a pig. You are a pig. Pig!

"How am I to know real from unreal, flesh from spirit?" asks the time traveler.

"This is hell," you tell the time traveler. "No man deserves hell. Oh, your mere presence is a risk beyond what anyone deserves to ask; yet I ask more. Come, reach out your hand, free this tormented soul."

She smiles, the date. She giggles. Palms, one soft, one hard, slide across the table and meet. Eyes glitter. Warmth fills everything. One moment is exchanged for another.

Build. Build buildings. Formulate plans. Structures appear with or without conscious intervention.

There was once a sea captain. He was a very lazy sea captain. He left things alone and things ran smoothly. He was a sad sea captain because he thought he had discovered the meaning of life. It was grim, his discovery. Fortunately, it is possible the sea captain was mistaken.

There was once a hungry hole. It devoured everything. Having devoured everything, the hole devoured itself. Having devoured itself, the hole and the hole's consumption ceased to exist. Such ceasing having succeeded in being a cease, everything returned to normal.

These are your instructions: Live, motherfucker.

"But I've nothing to live for!"

She smiles, the date.

*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. - 1 Corinthians 13:2*

"Say," you say, "is your middle name Ginger?"

"No," she says.

Says you, "Oh. Okay."

Oddly, the moment is not awkward. Much passion has been tapped.

There is a house. The house has many windows. The house has many rooms. The house has many children and many pets and white paint that never chips.

You are a husband. You live in the house with many windows with a slightly overweight wife who still loves you after all those years. You get up, go to work, come home, spend maybe an hour with your kids. Sometimes, on weekends, you spend three or four hours with your kids. You are a hard-working middle-class father figure. You are living the American dream.

It is a pleasant enough house in a pleasant enough neighborhood. Traffic is low and so is crime. The local public schools do not require metal detectors or random canine

searches. Every classroom comes equipped with five computers. Life is as good as it is supposed to get.

It isn't enough for you, you selfish-ungrateful-stupid-stubborn-bastard-asshole.

"Hey Kevin!" calls your boss man.

"Sir?" you answer.

"Nothing," says your boss. "I just felt like calling your name."

Your boss is an eccentric. Better an eccentric than a dictator.

You wake up and fix a cup of coffee.

The wife whips up a quick and hearty breakfast.

The kids seat themselves at the dinner table. Troy, your oldest boy, pours himself a cup of coffee.

Food is chewed. Food is swallowed.

Time for the kids to go to school. Time for the wife to go to work. Time for you to go to work.

Everybody kisses and hugs everybody else. The front door slams shut. Cars and buses gracefully weave through a very loose stream of traffic.