

I wrote this while living in an apartment in Boston with an ever rotating cast of fellow scumbags. Nothing in here is true, but nothing is entirely false. A painful exercise in accentuating your own flaws. I still occasionally like writing for this crass, self-centered human being who revels in the relative victories.

I like getting mail. It's better when it's addressed to me, but other people get interesting stuff too. There're a whole bunch of people, who used to live where I do now, who are still getting mail. They never come looking for it, which is good because I always take it. Once a month a subscription for seventeen magazine shows up on my doorstep addressed to a fake persona I created to receive subscription magazines. Michael Michaels isn't a name that should fool anybody. Michael Michaels' credit is in a lot of trouble according to a letter that has no qualms about using bold letters. Will they come looking for him?

One of my roommates gets the paper too, or they would if I didn't take it everyday. Scanning the want ads I quickly glimpse certain buzzwords that disqualify me from application: bachelor's degree, five years experience, attractive, reliable, fun, are just a few examples from a seemingly endless parade of lost prospects. My eyes eventually lead themselves to the 'free' section of the classifieds. I've been unemployed now for eight months surviving on odd jobs, savings, medical studies, crafty budgeting, and occasional theft (so that I have a hobby.) Any distraction is a healthy one as far as I can see. Being without employment has its advantages though. Completely free of schedules, sleep occurs when and where it's needed. Most importantly I am equipped with the most malicious tool anyone can ever have bestowed upon them. Time. With it I locate and horde items I theorize having a use for someday. There are 100+ moving boxes, for free, on the curb near where I live. Anything to get me out of the house. I ponder the uses for boxes, finding none I set off to carry back as many as possible.

A particular leap of faith has led me to sticking my arm, full staff, into the foul depths of a trash can. I do not go unrewarded as I pull a large envelope from the recesses of the bin. I use it in a futile attempt to scrape a healthy quantity of milk soaked coffee grinds from my arm hairs, but they are hopelessly encrusted. Mere aesthetics aside, I've really outdone myself. The envelope contains one man's entire anthology of flowery letters to his one true love. Each letter a sonnet, overtly announcing his unyielding desire for her, far beyond the protocol of modern relationships. The lady in question has but one entry throughout the entire epic. The final note is her break up letter to him stating that he should have his love letters back because he might be able to use them with his other girlfriend. It is written on novelty puppy stationary. It truly is a dog eat dog world out there.

Between naps I muster enough false enthusiasm to make it through a conversation with my friend about her new boyfriend. As she's listing off his attributes a car runs over a pigeon behind her. A smile creeps up my face and I work with it to show genuine happiness for her, even though I know this is a cancellation to her subscription of me. When you become obsolete due to another person's relationship you never get a note on puppy stationary. I've got some canning jars under my couch and I wonder how well the pigeon will keep in one of them. A picture is worth a thousand words, but rubbing alcohol is cheap cheap cheap.

Rifling through the damaged goods at the grocery store, I come across a can of chowder that's caved in on one side. It's asymmetrical body warrants the low low price of 55¢. Simultaneously I eye a girl whose face is half engulfed in burn wounds. Maybe she's single. Maybe I've got exact change. As I'm day dreaming about being praised for dating the girl who you can't take to the children's museum, a tall smokey man wraps his arms around her waist and ever so gently places a kiss upon one of her skin graphs. They jointly decide on Neapolitan ice cream; a first date ice cream. I consider the dangers and benefits of contracting botulism.

The grocery store is the only thing open all night. It's kind of how I imagine paradise. Perpetual daylight, plenty to eat, and music is always playing from some unknown source. Sometimes I see how long I can stay. Sometimes I stay all night. Eventually, however, it becomes apparent I'm not wanted anymore, even though I didn't eat any of the apples.

There aren't any cameras in the frozen goods aisle, which is why my walk home is always so cold. Along the way I always pass by this girl's house. I followed her one night because I thought maybe she needed some boxes or something. I always think about leaving a secret admirer's note, but then I imagine her qualifications for a guy: smart, experienced, attractive, reliable, fun. Then again maybe frozen waffles are on that list. I decide to come back on trash night and see if she throws any Eggo' boxes out.

At home a man greets me. He's looking for Michael Michaels. Does he live here? Do I know where he is? Do I know anybody that might know him? Would the landlord know where to find him? If I hear anything will I call the number on this card? The man seems like he's very good at finding people who don't exist. It's a pity really. He should probably take up religion, but I'd rather see him on one of those ghost hunter shows.

The mail has already arrived. I wonder what time it is? One of my roommates never opens his mail, every now and then I sneak off with one, but today I have a letter all my own. It's from the post office and they're letting me know that the price of stamps is going up by three cents soon. I wonder if I buy a whole bunch of forever stamps now and return them after the price goes up if I can make a few bucks? I wonder if I disappear will someone come looking for me, or will I just become somebody else's junk mail?