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Creative Writing

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The Pursuit of Happiness

“Dammit.”

The words poured from my mouth like an ocean being pushed through a hypodermic needle, unable to fully represent the relentless shitstorm going on in my mind; even the idea of trying to find a word that would represent what I was feeling was incomprehensible. “Dammit,” seemed, at the time, to work pretty well though. It wasn’t the first time something like this had happened — my brain highjacking my thoughts for a joy ride down the autobahn — but somehow this time it had persisted. Even today I find it hard to look over the walls of my neverending labyrinth of thought to do as menial a thing as write this paper. This is not, however, a paper about how many metaphors and similes I can come up with to describe my erratic thinking — that alone could fill a book — this is about so much more than my endless craneal sea of random interjections, this is about the origins of an idea that completely changed my outlook in life.

Call it ADHD, call it Anxiety, call it a god damn quarter life crisis, whatever you want to call it I was on the verge of a breakdown. I can’t remember exactly what kicked it off, but I can guess that it was along the lines of my least two favorite things to think about — my life, and my future. I can’t imagine it was a deep thought — deep thoughts weren’t exactly my forte — probably something like “holy shit my life is boring,” from there I dipped in and out of

comparisons between my life and those of fictional characters whose lives and adventures would never be possible in the real world. I couldn't bare the Idea that my life was, had been, and probably always would be the way it was. I had no story to tell, because life — obviously — is measured by how many stories you have, how many adventures, how many sudden and unexpected detours the universe had randomly decides to take you on. I had none. Even if I had had the opportunity to go on these adventures I had no friends to go on them with; what was the point, where was the fun. That's what it was all about: fun. My life had been, and might have forever been, a dull and hollow existence — a waste.

I don't know whether it was scarier to look at my current situation or into my future. My worst fear, obviously, was that I wouldn't end up dying before I entered “the real world,” the inevitable mundane life that i couldn't accept, a life of routine, stuck at some dead end nine to five desk job, sitting on a mountain of student loan debt, until I finally worked up the courage to redecorate my living room walls with some nice warm, dark red “paint.” That had been my idea of what life had to be, it had to be dull, boring, and stressful; that's the way my life had been so far, so why would it be any different. The thought of this, even today, scares the living shit out of me. Then — like a shift — the world got brighter, more colourful, life could be different; life could be more — it's fair to say that I shifted between these two attitudes for the next half hour or so. So maybe life wasn't ever going to be as exciting as a video game, or a movie, or a well written book, but that doesn't mean it has to be boring; life could be fun.

This random spring of hope came to me like a f*cking meteorite, a god damn nuke launched from my right brain to my left in an attempt to get me to stop overthinking so that imagination and creativity could pour into the crater where logical practicality used to be. A voice

in the back of my mind screaming “life is a joke, so make it a good one.” In the confusion a light bulb flickered on, no, a neon sign that read off all of the things I wanted to do, number one: “write this down.”

It wasn't as easy as I thought it would be in the long run — I didn't expect something like that to be — coming up with a list of things that I want to do before I die. It started out easy enough, but after the first fifty things it got difficult. I ended up stopping at around a hundred; it didn't, for the moment at least, regain its ease, it simply continued to get harder and harder to conjure up new things that were worthy of going on it. If I wasn't set on a long list I would've stopped, I would've given it up, but there was more that I wanted to do and I could recognize that it wasn't done, that it might've never be done. It's funny that at the time it was difficult to think of what to put down, nowadays i'm still adding things whenever I find out about something new and exciting: ghost peppers, art exhibits, places i've never heard of. I wanted my life to be amazing and I had all these things I wanted to do and places I wanted to see but I had no idea how I would get the chance to do all of them. Today I don't know what i'm doing, but in that rapidly evolving afternoon I had a very strong want that was above all of the things that I had formulated on that list — I wanted to travel.

The idea had come to me before and continues to come constantly — whenever i'm bored or depressed or stressed — I want to see the world so what better way to do so. Don't think that this was just some wild dream of a teenager that wanted a more exciting life, this was a plan, i've spent a rough total of weeks worth of time just planning out how I would do this, and it wouldn't be easy to say the least, but it would be fun. That's what's important. At that moment the idea started to form in my head that I would just pack up with as much money and clothes

as possible and head out with as many people as there were that wanted to come and just spend the rest of my days — however short that may be — driving, traveling, exploring the world, good people, good times; seeing and experiencing as much as humanly possible. Just getting money as I go, no taxes, no stress, no real responsibilities but that of the people around me; living life for nothing more than life itself.

Looking back on it now, not much has changed; I still don't have much of an idea of where i'm going in life, although traveling nonstop still seems like a pretty tempting idea — better than most at least. My outlook has gotten better over all and I guess i'm just more certain that no matter what happens it'll all work out in the end. The future is still uncertain, and i'm still stressed out beyond belief, but if there's anything i've learned it's that you just need to chill and let life happen. Live life for life. Im still not sure about anything yet but that's okay. Of course this attitude comes and goes and not even my knowledge of this — my own little secret of the universe — will keep me from overthinking and, more times than not, stressing the hell out. All I can do is enjoy the intervals in between, and for those times when I can't, "Dammit" works just fine.