

A

LYME-BRAINED

RHYME GAME

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THE HIGHEST ONE WRITING

Running: How To Torture Yourself And Enjoy It
[The Unvictimized Edition]

Roadtrip
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A Lyme-Brained Rhyme Game

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Flowers

Under the Hood
The Imprisonment of Jonathan Knox

Over the River
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THE HERE AND NOW

The Monksville Chronicles

NOVELWRITER

Untitled Bigfoot Project

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LYME-BRAINED
RHYME GAME

HUNTER OWENS WALLACE

This is a work of fiction. All the characters, locations, organizations, and events portrayed in this softback are either products of the bookmaker's imagination or are used fictitiously. Or both.

Any and all resemblance to Reality is purely coincidental.

...

In other words, it's just words. It's not real. Get a grip.

A Lyme-Brained Rhyme Game

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*To myself, Hunter Owens Wallace,
and every other iteration of the human being*

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Thanks to *Borrelia burgdorferi* for being inherently evil and trying to hollow out my brain. Better luck next time, asshole.

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And the biggest thanks of all goes to The Hillside Commons and myself, Hunter Owens Wallace, for besting all the bullshit and writing all this stuff three years before this book came out.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
I THE HUMAN CONUNDRUM.....	4
II AN EXAMINATION OF ANGER.....	20
INTERLUDE.....	36
III PEACE OF MIND.....	44
IV DIMENSIONALITY.....	56
CONCLUSION.....	80

A NOTE ABOUT THE FRONT COVER

Garden Variety by Hunter Owens Wallace

Taken whilst lying atop a mountain at sunset. The sky is so velvety and colorful while the Earth and her trees are silhouetted, totally featureless compared to the soft ethereal glow of everything else out there.

This cotton candy skyscape reminds me of the latent insignificance of what goes down here on Earth; our daily lives, trials, and tribulations just aren't as important as everybody makes them out to be. Life on Earth is beautiful, doubtlessly, but our planet is one garden amongst many. The rest are probably just like ours, except... different. Maybe their skies are pink and their clouds reflect a blue sunset.

INTRODUCTION

Legitimately Insane

Existence is weird ~ take it from me, if you're going to take it. I've lived an interesting twenty-something years on this planet, experienced my fair share of wacky shite. At first I tried to vibe with the masses, I tried to fit in and act like everyone else, but it never worked. It always made me feel sad, alone, angry, drained of the infinite spiritual energy that constantly floods my body. Also, almost every single other being I have met on this world, human or otherwise, thinks I'm legitimately insane. It's fine, though they're all wrong; in fact, I'm more than one hundred percent sure that literally every single other human being on Earth is legitimately insane, as in mentally ill, and I don't think they're ever going to get better. My cat Milkshake agreed with me... rest in peace, my son.

Hi there. My name is Hunter Owens Wallace, known as HOW to myself and the hypothetical humans who read these books I write. I'm a shaman who finally got back to his roots of communing with the denizens of the astral plane via the ingestion of Psychedelic compounds. You may know me as a once sober runner from *Running: How To Torture Yourself And Enjoy It /The Unvictimized Edition/*. You may otherwise know me as a depraved writer who only ever got to wake up and try drugs because grandMother forced me to drink booze during *Roadtrip: The iGramango! Edition*, and thank goodness she did! Shout to you, G-Mah, and shout to Mango, and you know what? Shout to Jarome, fuck yeah! While I'm at it, shout to all my humans, *and* shout to all my gargoyles! If any aliens are reading this, shout to you, too! Also, when the *fuck* are you going to beam me off this planet?!

Anyway, aside from me putting books out, many strange things have

INTRODUCTION

happened to me during my career on Earth: I felt my third eye open, I died and came back to life only to feel something explode inside my brain six months later, which may or may not have also killed me – came back from that, too. I caught Lyme disease at age ten and successfully cured it just a few months ago via shamanic methods I invented by myself, no less. I also almost died from bleeding out after my foot was cut open by a rock – the only reason I survived is because the Universe Herself whispered into the ear of my belligerently drunk uncle and told him to crazy glue my foot back together. And thank goodness he did, otherwise I wouldn't be able to choose to not run anymore!

All that said, I also fancy myself a writer. Yes, I am the one, single human being on this planet who genuinely enjoys curling my six-foot-tall body into a twenty-nine-inch-tall fetal ball and perching myself on a spiny chair like a crouching dragon whilst I repeatedly press buttons on a laptop which doesn't turn on unless it's plugged into the one working outlet in the dusty attic of Mother's house I repurposed into a bedroom for myself, and... wait, where was this going?

Ah yes, I remember now. So now that you know how I position myself while I write, you can learn that I enjoy the act of writing. I have always loved writing; back in school, I would crush essays like my job *wasn't* to be a manager of the planet Earth. In community college, Composition was my favorite class, and in a psychology class I took, I banged out a ten-page research paper on abnormal psychology (that's schizophrenia, multiple-identity disorder, bipolar depresso-mania, you know the deal) in a single night.

I got the highest grade in the class.

But, I never realized I enjoyed writing until this year, 2019, because of a combination of the majority of my peers vehemently hating the act of writing (thus influencing me to feel the same way) and the Lyme bacteria eating away at my brain over the course of the fourteen years between my contracting of and curing of the Lyme neuroplague which diminished my consciousness to the point where I was half aware of my surroundings and not much else all the time always. No thinking, no moving, no living. Just existing. It was fucking tragic...

...but not all bad. Around the time I became a twentysomething, I started writing poetry, more out of urge than anything else. I listen to a lot of rap music and my brain has a certain proclivity towards rhyming, so I figured, why the fuck not? I had a whole notebook full of my own rhymey jottings, a notebook which often whispered to me in the night, a notebook

which got converted to a folder on my laptop, doused in gasoline, carried up a mountain, and ritualistically burned to ashes beneath the red glow of the blood moon because I can only talk with one voice in my head at a time, thank you very little.

Since then, I have written, published, and un-published two books, formed my own publishing company called *The Hillside Commons*, and re-written and re-published those same two books, meaning I've moved away from the poetry scene. My old poems didn't just go away, though; I have tons of the shits just sitting around in my hard drive begging to be released in some form, in *any* form, *for fuck's sake let us free!* I also have a few short essays I've done (and some short stories, but they're a different story altogether), plus a couple works of photography, one of which I even captured myself. I've been building this little library of content for about three years now, and it has come to the point where it's developed its own consciousness. It refuses to be contained. It must be printed and set free.

So here we are, hypothetical reader, on the brink of taking a dive into a compendium of thoughts and poems written by a human who was once, at one point, meaning he no longer is, legitimately insane. Because that's what Lyme disease does to you, it eats away at your brain until the schizophrenics chilling in that group home up the road start to shoot *you* nervous looks, as if *you* are the one who's a bit out of left field, if you're catching my foul here... but I'm done with fouls now. I'm ready to hit my homerun and you're here to see me do it, just as soon as you climb to your spot in the grandstands. Please, take your time. Don't mind me at all.

Take A Seat

Now that you're all caught up, please, take a seat. Get comfortable, steep some tea. *The Hillside Commons* and I are both very proud to present to you *The Hillside Commons's* third book, Hunter Owens Wallace's third book, *my* third book:

A LYME-BRAINED RHYME GAME

PART I



THE HUMAN CONUNDRUM



THE HUMAN CONUNDRUM

“No one exists on purpose, no one belongs anywhere, everyone’s gonna die. Come watch Tee-Vee.”

- Morty Smith

Surreality

Human beings, one variation of the innumerable lifeforms inhabiting the planet they call Earth, are a very interesting bunch. At some arbitrary point a very, very long time ago, one of these primates (although they hate being called that) figured out that it *existed*, and that it was, indeed, a *living thing*. Eventually it found more living things that looked like it, and together, they eventually figured out that living with each other as a group, while it may get annoying at times, is easier than living alone. From this realization came societies, large groups of humans that combine their efforts to achieve anything they want to while making sure to record everything they achieve along the way (metaphysically as memories and physically by writing). The modern-day human society has proven itself capable of mastering the land, sea, air, *and* the very molecules and atoms that make up the land, sea, and air, and they’ve written up very detailed physical records about everything they possibly can. The thing is, though, the real kicker about these creatures is, they don’t actually know what they are or where they came from.

From the moment a human finds itself conscious, it is immediately perceiving, thinking, doing, and somehow recording the things it does until its body and mind collectively get tired and it goes to sleep. When it sleeps it undergoes a strange phenomenon called *dreaming* in which it

perceives various *surrealities*, or realities that are different in some way from the reality they perceive with their normal waking consciousness. Eventually, and almost always suddenly, the human wakes up from its dream to find itself back in the familiar reality, the only remnants of the lost surreality being the recordings the dreamer may or may not have made in their mind. From the point of recording on, the meanings of the recordings are up to the interpretations of the human who made them; this means, as the interpretations of the recordings change, so too do the meanings ~ until the original recorder dies, that is; then, the meanings of its recordings are left up to the humans who eventually find them, if the original human bothered to make physical recordings at all.

For some of the humans, the practice of meditation ~ sitting still and focusing on one's awareness ~ produces results similar to sleeping. In all literality, a human can sit or lie down and remain still for an extended period of time, focusing only on its awareness, and surreality will engulf its very existence. The surreality can manifest itself in various ways, from trippy visuals of random repeating geometric patterns and fractals to clear, pristine images of physical objects, from entire moments in time to more physical surrealities such as feeling pressure in the temples, or a pinpoint pressure beneath the forehead right between the eyebrows. The human may even begin to feel as if it is floating, as if its spirit has left its body, or even as if it does not exist at all. Or, the human may feel a simple sense of calm throughout its body. Then, it opens its eyes and reality sets right back in.

The human being can also perceive similar surrealities through the consumption/metabolization of various yet specific plants, fungi, and/or pure refined chemical substances. These substances, called *Psychedelics*, allow the being to perceive a perhaps more intense variation of surreality which I like to call *Psychedelia*, but *that* is a different conversation.

We Are, We Think, We Act

To do a quick recap, humans are an intelligent ape-like species with the ability to perceive and alter their environment to suit their various needs. One of these needs is the need to connect and build with other humans, which in turn makes them capable of accomplishing even more than they previously believed themselves capable of. They also have the ability to perceive various surreal and altered forms of reality when they sit still

and close their eyes for extended periods of time, *and* when they consume very specific products of their environment. Additionally, these surreal realities they experience always end at some point, leaving the human to find itself back in a more familiar and stable reality.

Lastly, as humans, we have not only the abilities to recognize all of these patterns we present, to think about these odd tendencies we have, to attempt to find meaning in them, and to draw conclusions about the reality around us, but we also feel an inner urge to do so. These conclusions we draw even sporadically prove to be correct, whether the methods used to reach them are entirely logical or not; Isaac Newton (allegedly) figured out gravity when he perceived an apple falling from a tree and clocking him in the head; Francis Cricks figured out DNA's double-helix structure whilst perceiving Psychedelia via a dosage Lysergic Acid Diethylamide; René Descartes figured out the scientific method after it came to him in a dream; the list could go on.

To summarize more concisely, humans exist in a perpetual state of mystery. We're constantly trying to figure out the meaning of not only everything around us, but also the meaning of what (we assume) goes on in our heads so we can dictate it to everybody else and make them believe what we believe. However, as soon as someone comes to a solid conclusion about reality, someone else is already working on a different one, creating an endless chain of conclusions about reality which will all eventually be perceived as false beliefs by the masses of humans who can't figure reality out by themselves.

I would like to pose a simple question: What if this is the point? Our numerable facets of perception, our thinking, and our attempting to solve each new unsolvable mystery we come across are, generally speaking, the three major pieces of our existence. What if the point of human existence is first *to be*, second *to form a group linked by a belief system everybody can more or less get on board with*, and third *to build a society around that belief system until a better belief system is conjured by someone else*?

It makes sense, yeah? All we do is perceive, wonder, build, question what we've built, and tear it all down, only to wonder and rebuild again until we tear down again. Humanity, like everything else in the Universe, appears to operate in a cycle, and a seemingly endless one at that. To paraphrase Occam's razor, the simplest answer is usually the correct one; following that logic, I believe I can break down the essence of human existence into one sentence: We perceive, we think about our perceptions, and we act on our thoughts.

A shorter version: we are, we think, we act.

Then, we embody our actions until we become too aware of ourselves, at which point we will start to do something different and the cycle will repeat over and over *and over* again until there are no more humans left to carry it forward. That's when the aliens come down, drop off a few more, and the experiment goes on.

I'm kidding, there's no indisputable proof for that last sentence... yet. Anyway, there is another crucial aspect of human existence I have chosen not to mention until now: the tendency towards law. Rules, laws, axioms, commandments; whichever symbol you would like to denote them, they appear in every human society that's ever existed. We have the tendency to set arbitrary guidelines to live our lives by based on whatever sounds good to us at the moment; not only this, but we also show the tendency to enforce these guidelines on everybody around us whenever we are able to because we think it will help to form a stable, sustainable society.

So, if the purpose of human life is simply to be, to think, and to act, what law could possibly sustain such a vague and open-ended existence?

There is only one: the law of love.

WHAT IS LOVE?

When I say *What is love?*
you may think *Baby, don't hurt me.*
Haddaway, to finish the saying,
add the word *purposefully.*

To grow familiar over time, refusing to taste defeat,
only to see your precious sweet turn as sour as a lime.
It's like the Universe putting humans on the Earth
just to see them pull oil and coal out of the fucking dirt.

In order to know love, you must first feel it;
in order to feel love, you must first show it;
in order to show love, you must first know it;
where does not matter, so long as you choose to start.

TITLELESS

A kingdom of clouds afloat on azure seas
cascading shadows upon the ground,
hallowed and picturesque
as if melded by brushstrokes of men
haunted by holy ghosts.

Climbing from burial grounds,
hurried by wails of self-pity and sorrow,
he follows the trail.
How far must one ascend to find shelter,
a momentary end to the sweltering air and bleak grind,
oblique in its design?
Not even the angels know,
swept up in dust clouds of charity and good grace,
running a race not their own.

Let the rabbits dash. He holds his steady pace.

The trees clear as he nears the top.
Below him the ants march in lines carved
through this sublime rock, and above?
They fly with wings meant for a dove.

A breeze, a cool reprieve.

As the wind whisks through the canopy,
it whispers to the leaves:
“Was he turned a fool up on this hill,
or will he amongst the trees?”

THE CALL

I'm woken by the call.

The window's open.

Hot summer air mixes with the conditioned air
floating in from the hall;
the perfect storm of the fall.

My cat crawls up on my bed,
nudges his head against mine.

It's breakfast time.

I follow him downstairs,
out of the lair yet still blares the calling,
the singing of the trees, their screaming like
the ringing in my ears.

We left the caves long ago,
trudged through snow like the ox,
left the woods alone in pursuit of a box;
these days the caves are made of wood,
not carved into stone.

Yet still the trees call to me.

They call to my cat, too.

Fat with food he rushes out the door;
budding with life he dives into the brush;
I follow close behind. I cannot keep up,
the leaves are speaking to me, taunting,
haunting my mind with visions of being high
atop a mountain,
a fountain of youth begging to be found.

The call ceases later on
as I climb the way back down.

HAPPINESS

Happiness; what an unachievable goal.
Like catching a crappie in the Gulf of Mexico
or leaping from a plane, no parachute in tow.

You won't glide like a leaf,
you'll plummet down below.

To always feel happy would be quite magical.
Unexperiencing sadness, no more anger of a bull.
Floating in an ocean without riptide giving pull.

Just salt to dry your skin.
It would quickly get old.

A poor man sits on a filthy city street
as a shitty rich man grips some grub to eat.
Breaking this in half would be quite the feat,
as he looks down on the elf
missing bells from its feet.

Instead he walks by,
stuffing his face as they both blame their happiness
on the fucking rat race.

TITLELESS II

I live in a different world than most,
drink from a deeper pool,
climb up higher hills on my hands,
and come off like more of a fool.
I find that things encountered in life are rarely as they seem,
and I scream at sleeping humans just to wake them in a dream.

I spend most of my time alone,
harboring a deep-seated pain
as I easily tread the waters
which so often drown the sane.
I see the others infatuated
over physical gains;
through my window I peek in at them
from the astral plane.

But who am I,
what is this formless force perceiving light?
What is the ghost in this human shell
who claims to understand life?
He insists he writes some poetry,
but all he does is rhyme words in a predetermined pattern,
splatters symbols on the screen.
The very screen that enslaves him,
the glass that gives him life;
the circuit board wrapped up in metal
keeps the leash pulled tight.
It wheels and deals this poor sap,
telling him how to feel,
all the while making sure reality
never becomes too real.

Even now I can't put it down,
I'm captured by the light.
I guess I thought, I never imagined...
the screen could shine so bright...

WHAT IF?

What if reality truly
isn't what it seems?

What if human life is more
than staring at a screen?

What if humans are just monkeys,
hairless chimpanzees,
except instead of flinging shit
we fling negativity?

What if we lived for spirit,
in harmony with the Earth,
instead of poisoning our rock
and loading up the hearse?

What if the only simulation
is our global society?
What if we have been lied to
by old white men sippin' tea?

What if we lived the Island life,
let true freedom unfurl,
instead of stacking paper
to sustain their Brave New World?

TITLELESS III

As they climb the hill to the start, the fog settles in.

It drifts from the sky as tea does
poured steaming from its kettle.
Jitters, shakes, anxious minds bearing the cold in stride
for one reason:
to cross the finish line.

Do they have what it takes?
The pavement rumbles as the siren blares
and the rabbits run scared to the front.
One by one they're picked off,
pedals by one loved not.

Feet beaten against pavement, all for the love of...
what?

One mile, two mile, nickel and dime.
The time ticks on as the sunny clock shines
through the shroud.
With each step they come closer yet,
sprinting deeper into the cloud.

Though the finish line is crossed,
a new day is abound.

MACHINE

Everybody does what they think
will get 'em ahead in life,
yet I'm over here tryna tote some guns
and *maybe* shoot some knives.

I heard that line sampled by a rapper
who listens to other rappers.
A man who eats looseleaf papers
and sips on animal crackers.
I once knew a man who claimed
sampling other songs was copying;
all I know of him now is taking drugs
and maybe occasionally dropping in.

I think to get ahead in life,
all one must do
is breathe.
Also,
try to avoid
feeding your soul to the machine.

RUINS

These ruins lie dilapidated
catastrophized
barren.

A cavern opens beneath the leaves,
a sinkhole engulfs all but the breathing
as the sands of time turn to mud and funnel in.

A single sapling sprouts from the crevice.
The buds branch out from a blossoming tree of life
to reach through eternity
and breathe the writings scrawled upon the wall.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
The fall of man is graced by the rise of something more,
or will it be less?

Have we failed the test? It matters not.
What remains is all that is left.

BLINK

When I scrawl these symbols down
in rows and make 'em rhyme,
do you read all of my words,
or blink between the lines?

The batting of eyelashes, the biting of lips,
standing here still with your hands on your hips.
What's cruising by on your highway of a mind?
The cops can't catch up,
you just don't have the time.

But time is an illusion,
meant for nothing more than distraction and confusion,
revolving like a door or the cylinder of a gun,
the clerk working the store can either lose his life,
or live a day more.

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.
But what happens after all the sweet 'n' sour's drank?

ME

The ringing in my ears is loud, but I can barely hear it.
Life feels dull like Novocain, I'm truly at one with spirit –
detached from it, this physical game is only as real as it isn't.
I float inside my cloud of doubt and wonder why I lack vision.

Like the wise men love to say, life itself is infinite.
Live a while, fade to black, be reborn an infant.
Nothing's real, nothing's fake, nothing stays, and nothing changes;
you'd think that'd take the pressure off, yet I'm firmly stuck at anxious.

A latent hatred for my surroundings constantly engulfs me;
the who, the what, the when, the why,
I feel like it all insults me.
I'm a ghost that only seems to exist when someone else is salty,
and when they need some hard work done
you better believe they call me.

The one thing that I'm praised for is being a hard worker,
for behaving like a slave and quietly following orders.
It makes me feel cold enough that I think a grave could be warmer,
but I've died before,
I want to survive and live a life of splendor.

But I do not live, I just exist,
waiting for a task.
Maybe I'll do some heavy lifting and further ruin my back.
I'm a self-destructive, self-loathing, selfish lack of self
who pretends there is a me
hidden somewhere in this shell.