

My Friend Benigno Has a Brain

Act I



- bathed in light
- aurora in the spectrum
- his red bristle ignited by the offspring of general electric

The projector displays simple yellow light, illuminating Benjamin, who clears his

throat and then begins to read from what is, apparently, a script.

apparently certain names are more likely to be empathised with. Kyle

doesn't make the list - neither does Ben. why is it my name - or yours. they don't know us - (y)

name alternatives

Ai (chinese - love)

Lumi (Lingo)

Caris (Welsh - love)

Armo (Finnish)

Benigno (Latin - kind)

BRN: I wanted to be careful concerning what I would say about Kyle so I wrote a

script; a script is one way to be "full of care," I suppose (or so I've written). I

I think I care — oh yes I must.

recognized Kyle had some reservations about being represented by someone

if our goal is to shed light on love do we get closer by orchestrating it all?



If I other than himself, even if it was me, his friend, Benjamin Ross Nicholson. He

take your name

you will need one too

was worried that I might "get it wrong" and lead you to believe things about

Adnan Syed never existed. Adnan Syed could conjure dragons Adnan Syed is innocent He never ate the ice cream

Zeki (Turkish - clever)

Redmond

(Irish - wise protector)

him that he doesn't believe. After sharing with him the song you just heard, he

asked me to avoid depicting him in any way that might seem melodramatic or

Naivel Gazing

theatrical; specifically, he asked me to remove a lyric that suggested he was

Odin

CaTo

lonely because he is not "in a relationship." To the extent anyone might know of

Budha

such things, Kyle would prefer the following be known: he is not lonely, but

Apello

rather he's undertaking a reassessment of what love might mean to him.

ugh

- only if love is the physical manifestation of a complicit partner - otherwise the assessment is like the sun rising - pursuable as a field of study but rather irrelevant considering the lack of any notable changes in its behavior

In an attempt to include Kyle in the process of the production of this

performance, I've asked him to annotate this script so as to provide additional

context, augmentation, and rebuttal to what I've prepared; from this moment

Hi:

forward, I will read his annotations aloud on his behalf. Now, allow me to step

into the dark so that you may enjoy an image in my visual absence.*

the exact type
of me-meing
(noun) (verb)

that Edmund from
pg 1 wouldn't have thought
of

Uh oh hes now out of love!

Benjamin clicks and an image appears of a wooden panel depicting a dead fish,

captioned "Tout ce qui est, mas n'est pas c'est l'amour"; Benjamin allows the

audience to receive the image for a moment.

but the
brain will
take two colors

that have been presented,
uninterrupted and then

flip them when the image is
removed. But not a pure
exchange - What people claim

->

Ben are you okay

The image before you: this is a recent instance of Kyle's art. Let's notice what we

see. This art includes a dead fish, a symbol that has appeared in a least one

take stock of
(more '3D')*

is the
colors in the
opposite location
but-ghostly hues
of their
former
selves

other of his works. There are French words, which I will badly pronounce: "Tout

ce qui est, mas n'est pas c'est l'amour." I'll provide a translation in a moment; if

you don't speak French, allow yourself to remain curious about the significance

even if you do the darn thing is curious

of this phrase! A price tag is represented in the corner: three dollars and ninety-

At top right

nine cents American. A small man is hacking his way into the bowels of the

In the middle

fish; or, alternatively, a normal-sized man is hacking his way into the bowels of a

Im
recognizing
that when
written
here "dead"
is serving up
whiffs of
rank

the large fish. There is a tree in the background that might appear lonely, but is

Dead symbols/
signals
dont stink

we can all have one
alter it - deface it
associate it with



Im imaging
plastic signage
(no parking) yard sale

The tree is lonely because when it gets
re-assimilated it doesn't whine like a little
bitch

unlikely to be experiencing the sensation of "loneliness"; it's reacting to its
environment more slowly than we can perceive.

* Some trees are bigger than
others

I'll allow you a few more moments with the image of this artwork before we
proceed.

Benjamin pauses; after an appropriate period of time, he clicks, revealing Kyle's

nope can't avoid this one by changing it

Gauguin reference image.

~~Gauguin~~
->
~~coq~~ an

It's hard to believe that each of us holds the the one essential
form of truth and then attempt to convince another person that I
don't believe that. That we could have a homogeneous version together

This image was provided to me by Kyle, though he can't claim total responsibility for its existing – Paul Gauguin carved the wood panel in 1889.
because they see it
right / wink / you
get it / wink

Meanwhile, Kyle contributed the various labels and indicative lines, which when

rewriting of our
previous history

read as an ordered list appear to be missing item "F," (perhaps this designation

indicative not indicative
indicative not indicative

was intended for but ultimately withheld from the unlabeled "positive

perhaps
indicative

affirmation about love"). You see, if you recall the preceding image that

included the either oversized dead fish or undersized hacker man, Kyle has

designs to generate a series of nine panels derived from the features of

this one *

because it hasn't
gotten the same
due as the alternative
or these things

the edge

No? Perhaps
I shouldn't
have built
my house on
transgressive
Polynesian
sand

Gauguin's work; the labels and indicative lines are Kyle's attempt to systematize the visual elements that will be represented on each panel.

Why was Kyle so impressed by this relief?

Benjamin clicks; image depicting the text of Gauguin's carving appears: "Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses."

->

the title of Gauguin's piece
"Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses," though poorly pronounced, is what

Kyle would call a "positive affirmation about love." As I mentioned, Kyle has
** I love you all - don't call me during the day mother fucking*
become fascinated by the notion of love of late. Given that French is oft cited as "the language of love" (not to be confused with the "love languages," which include:

Benjamin clicks, revealing love language list.

->

1 - as long as I'm not trapped in a 2nd to 1 floor apartment. Gotta keep moving
affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch), it is perhaps unsurprising that Kyle would explore French musings that are

equal humerals suggesting magic

unintelligible to him without translation. And what do Gauguin's words signify in our less lovely English?

Benjamin clicks, revealing translation.

->

According to Google Translate, "soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses"

means "be in love you will be happy." Superficially, this sounds like a simple

^{* walk on over and be in}
equation, the makings of a good plan. That is to say, finding one's way to

happiness, the pursuit of which is nominally an "inalienable right," merely involves some immersion in love.

~~*Benjamin clicks, simple yellow light; he steps into the image.*~~

~~-> *etymology is Spanish and French - Soviets grab it during revolution*~~

~~I ask you, comrades: do you find this to be true?~~

~~*Benjamin regards the audience and waits for a response.*~~

I wager that Kyle received this premise somewhat ironically.

Benjamin steps out of the light and clicks, revealing a quote from Wikipedia.

->

According to the Wikipedia page for Gauguin's piece, "The title is somewhat ironic and probably stems from the same dark, bitter humour that led [Gauguin] to title his home the "House of Pleasure". In fact the work's subject matter is bleak and its mood turbulent. It represents an exploration of corruption, lust, voyeurism and male sexual power."

Benjamin clicks; image of an apartment.

->

In the early winter of 2018, following the completion of our MFA program in Chicago (in visual art, if you can believe it!), Kyle came to stay at 1261 W Granville Ave. where I lived with my then fiancé now ex-wife, who we will call Hilda for privacy reasons. Kyle and I were both adjunct teaching introductory art classes in the

Benjamin clicks; Logan Center.

->

building at the school from which we received our graduate degrees, an opportunity offered to our cohort of eight art students in the year following our graduation. Kyle had relocated to

Click; image of Colorado.

->

Denver, Colorado to finally cohabitate with *his* long-term partner who he had been seeing long-distance for years; we'll call her Dina for privacy reasons. This is to say, Kyle moved to Colorado, a place to which he had no other ties, to be with Dina (who had move there following nursing school), to be *in love* and, thus, happy. Things were not going well in their household.

*can be attributed to site retroactively / nostalgically. otherwise
tough bridge to walk because who has claim of it? David Lynch? \$500 million, he paid, if we can
reclaim words through use I imagine that he can buy one. But it is transcendental. which is a*

Kyle would explain the situation to my now ex-wife Hilda and me and we would provide expert relationship advice:

Paul Schrader

Click; diagram of open relationship.

->

① honest and supportive in distance and youth

Kyle and Dina were in an open relationship so as to be able to experience "love"

③A * I was willing, yeah. But it was a mutual decision that had been made at the beginning of the relationship. I didn't have

equally with multiple partners; Kyle was willing to participate but only felt ② * didn't expect these people to exist when I started - I was right capable of love for Dina. Hilda and I felt that this incongruence represented an ~~idea~~ word

③B (for it then but six years ago you plenty of time to study here, I was a

existential threat to their romantic/domestic relationship; Kyle was convinced it could work and, being long-distance once again while he taught in Chicago, it

seemed like he was more comfortable with Dina than he had been in Colorado with her persistent presence, where her relative absence was more notable, ~~all that~~ was gone.

more implicating of her relative feelings for him.

④ * Ha! She was having anxiety attacks when I asked to meet him. I did a few times. I bought him some beers at hole in the wall once.

Kyle told us that Dina wanted him to be friends with one of her other partners ~~never~~ made it. He writing was on the wall and had introduced them at a private dinner between the three of them; Kyle expressed that he found the guy to be nice and fine.

for both he and I. Once she went radio silent / no longer was able to express herself - and wanted a secret but didn't have one because I was taking all the air out of that balloon. I think she realized she actually wanted to be alone for the first time - I was 29

When Kyle returned to

③C Click; Denver.

Compassion - achieving happiness through your partner's happiness. We used the typical texts to bring in

-> some vocab that might help but we never really landed on a title. I think "open" was used mostly, not sure. The level of idealism we had carried us through and still today I don't have any regrets about ~~that~~ that part of our relationship. It honestly never got in the way

Denver, Dina continued to see but soon ended her relationship with the other ^{be} guy; Kyle felt this was harbinger of her desire to end her relationship with him as well, which she did rather promptly after having been with Kyle for six years; I

believe this experience impacted Kyle's sense of love as a conduit for happiness.

* it did but like almost everything we did together it was ~~epic~~ ^{epicly} beautiful

Returning to Kyle's art,

* The ~~quiet~~ quiet

~~That's what you want Ben~~

Click; panel.

That's what sticks still. It was when ~~the questions went forever~~ unanswered. ~~It was debasing myself when I couldn't think of anything else and it still didn't help -~~ ^{we stopped having sex and somewhere in a low both-naked-in-the-shower-together-moment - of us}

-> we recall another French phrase, this time of Kyle's making: "Tout ce qui est, ~~but~~

mas n'est pas c'est l'amour."

- crying - me because I ~~was wanting~~ ^{she} thought she was withholding ^{the} ~~key~~ ^{for her heart} - directions - I had ~~fried~~ ^{everything} I could think of for about a year,

This translates roughly to:

~~and~~ ^{she} ~~was crying~~ - I think because she didn't want to hurt me and she was lost too ~~didn't know a~~


Click; Google Translate.

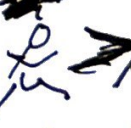
~~direction if I were coming along.~~ She ^{realized she} could be lost and happy alone.

->

"All that is, but is not is love."

That way she wouldn't feel the guilt I must have presented ~~it~~ for her as I was slowly ~~losing~~ ^{losing} my mind from sitting in the metaphorical dark. ~~We~~ ended it - she got here and ended it - so we ⁹ went and cried through a bottle of wine and a plate of ^{pasta in public} and then planned a road trip as gods

Solos - riding together - for a week long camping / music festival ~~is~~ at the Gorge in WA - again absolutely beautiful companionship. When we were almost back to Denver is the only time in ~~that~~ ^{where} emotions percolated up. I went for a run - unrelatedly fell and got all cut up - came back to the car looking as emo as humanly possible. I don't think we talked about the fall -  - always bleedin we were both still mad

I ^{read} took Martha Nussbaum in Grad School to try and understand this phenomenon. ~~Not the loss of motor skills~~ Not the loss of high motor skills while angry or sad but because of the duality of emotion that can manifest when you are in anguish - I used to talk about it in Chicago using ~~the~~ an example of ~~that~~ Analyzing yourself crying while crying. In this case I remember ~~that~~ the ground gave out below my feet in what looked like a plain of medium ~~sized~~ sized stones stacked in plateaus. So  running (angry) (fall → immediate thoughts ~~that~~ - "you're an idiot Kyle" - but still angry

All that is, but is not, is love. There's a few ways we can parse this premise; given Kyle's fascination with logic, we will do so logically using everyone's favorite programming language, Java.

Click; logic statement.

->

We can consider if a thing "is," if it exists, and determine if that same thing *simultaneously* "is not," if it does not exist, and whichever thing satisfies both conditions constitutes "love."

If we imagine "existing" and "not existing" to be mutually exclusive categories, then common sense would suggest that there is no such thing for which both of these conditions are true. Thus:

Click; conclusion.

->

nothing, *no thing*, is love; love does not exist.

Alternatively,

Click; logic statement.

->

we can consider if a thing "is," if it exists, *at some point in time*, and determine if that same thing "is not," if it does not exist, *at some other point in time*, and whichever thing satisfies both conditions constitutes "love."

If we imagine the preemptive and eventual "not existing" of all forms that can be said to "exist," if we foreclose the possibility of immortality as a foundational premise of our being (which, I must concede, not everyone is willing to do), then we arrive at a conclusion that directly contradicts our previous determination:

Click; conclusion.

->

everything, every *thing*, is love; love flows through all such things that exist and, accordingly, [✱] *it* are impermanent.

Given the potential for disagreement on what constitutes existence, this seems to be an irresolvable state of affairs. And this is before we've even addressed what "love" might signify vis-à-vis existing.

In short, Kyle's

Click; Kyle's panel.

->

art offers us to no destination, nowhere to park our love.

We might, then, consider for a moment one of Kyle's early tattoos, received during his undergraduate days, which is similarly revealing of how *Kyle's* presence/absence might relate to the possible presence/absence of love as it may be found in "things."

Click; "Always Bleedin'" tattoo.

->

"Always Bleedin'." Not quite "bleeding," but practically so. Kyle told me

recently that in most photographs taken of him as a child he can be seen

covered in cuts and bruises and dirt; he spent much of his time speeding around

* - I had a nickname at such a young age that it was gone before I was 6 or so Dr. Pent

colliding with things (joyfully, I believe). As a young adult, Kyle was still known

for his tendency to become injured and, to honor this tendency, was punctured

by an ~~ankle~~ needle and appropriately labeled.

* Sewing if ankle
but I don't think its necessary

To *always* be bleeding could be understood as oxymoronic, for to bleed

continuously without cessation implies that no coagulation of the blood occurs

and, as in the case of hemophiliacs, risks causing death by exsanguination. In

this scenario, "always" is cut short, further resulting in the cessation of Kyle's

body's ability to produce new blood to be bled.

Of course, it's possible that some procedure could be undertaken to periodically

reopen a wound that would otherwise heal, leading to a minimum of blood loss

but, unless done under highly controlled and sterile conditions, might cause

infection, which also could lead to death (and the same cessation of the

production of blood mentioned previously).

If we accept both "always" and "bleedin'" metaphorically, however, we might

get some sense of an existence steeped in dual processes of loss ("bleedin'")

and the ongoing generation and accretion of form and being that allows for

there to^{be} something to lose in the first place, so long as one exists in the seeming

"always" of livelihood.

I don't get it
- the panel is certainly my bet on
which of us goes longer in life.
Arendt offered the world and also nothing

Again, with Kyle we find little resolution, only a certain sort of circularity that

keeps us moving until we stop.

Walter ?!

Click; Kyle's panel. Benjamin pauses for a moment.

->

You see this panel, Kyle's art? Do you recall that Kyle took direction for Gauguin?

I must now reveal that Kyle has been looking at a lot of art and has no problem

putting it to use. ** Nope*

Click; Bruegel the Elder drawing.

->

This is a 1556 brush and pen drawing by Flemish artist Bruegel the Elder, titled

"Big Fish Eat Little Fish."

* [✓]
now dead
fish

Click; Pieter van der Heyden etching.

->

And this is a 1557 engraving of Bruegel the Elder's drawing by Pieter van der

Hayden, signed erroneously in the lower left corner with the name "Hieronymus

Bosch," an artist who died in 1516. Hieronymus Bosch made paintings that ^{* ✓} eating a
looked like this: human

Click; Bosch painting. Benjamin pauses for a moment.

->

Click; van der Heyden etching.

->

The van der Heyden etching contains two lines of text. The first, in Latin,
translates to indicate that

Click; translation.

->

"big fish are small fish," or that big fish exist by virtue of their consumption of smaller fish (that is to say, they are what they eat).

The second line, in Flemish, reads in English as

Click; translation.

->

"see son this I have known for a very long time that those big fish eat the small ones."

I would like to note that this reference to generational relations (a father and son) is fascinating; we will discuss this soon.

More recently, the cheerful British band

Click; "Optimistic" lyrics"

->

Radiohead leveraged this premise in the lyrics for their song "Optimistic."

weird - I never understood why this was ~~by~~

It is tempting to interpret such fish talk as commentary on the nature of power, that to be "big" is to be "stronger-than," to be "small" is to be "weaker-than," and that the prerogative of the big is to subject the small to every manner of exploitation, deprivation, and violence so long as it might maintain or enhance the girth of the mighty.

unclear

Yet if we think about the "is" and the "isn't" of things (love, blood, and even fish), we might also understand something of what it means to *contain*, that to be a container for something usually means to supply ample space for such a thing to be surrounded, to have a place, to be placeable, to belong, to have meaning. Our bodies, to the extent we recognize them anatomically, offer a recursive series of containments that, per the science of biology, are necessary in order to permit the ongoingness of our species.

Our

Click; skin.

->

skin surfaces the general structure of our forms.

Our

Click; torso and heart.

->

torsos contain our hearts (amongst other wet things).

Our

Click; atria.

->

hearts contain our atria, which are responsible for our

Click; blood.

->

blood's containment of oxygen (in collaboration with the lungs).

They say love is matter of the


Click; heart of love.

->

heart.

Is "love" somewhere *in* there?

And if love is in the heart, is it because it has been eaten?

Does love involve

Click; Saturn Devouring His Son.

->

devouring?

C

At the cusp of time between 2016 and 2017, Kyle's father, who had been
** — one of the Santas*
missing, was found dead in California. Kyle was working on his MFA thesis show
and created this object:

Click; fish eating fish arch.

->

an arch of bass rising from and descending into the ostensible "sea," offering
the illusion of some kind of continuity of feasting animals but literally terminating
where they meet the floor.

This art object was a component of a larger installation and series of three
videos depicting friends trying to explain the project, a thesis exhibition whose
images Kyle insisted I include to demonstrate that he had mustered more than a
single arch of bass for Karl (his father); he actually made two arches of bass. The
exhibition looked like this:

** two? whoa! The audience
successfully understands the ~~point~~
about*
~~the~~ compulsion Kyle had to make art ^{about} a topic that tested the
Click six times; Kyle's MFA exhibition, then return to still of the fish arch.
Knock off Stoicism ~~that~~ he had adopted.

->

->

->

->

->

->

Regardless, the symbolism is clearly of significance to Kyle, whose Instagram handle is

Click; Kyle's Instagram.

*the suggest forward
progress but they don't
have much*

->

"fisheatingfish," and who has labored to share with us

Click; Kyle's panel.

->

this panel.

Click; yellow light. Benjamin returns to center stage with a bag in hand.

->

At this time, I would like to provide you with the opportunity to encounter a sensual experience.

Benjamin withdraws Kyle's panel from the bag and holds it up in the light, scanning the audience.

Would anyone like to hold it?

Benjamin waits for a volunteer and, upon their appearance, gives the panel to the audience member and then returns to the light.

Please take good care of Kyle's panel until the end of the show, at which point I will come to collect it; you are welcome to share it with those you love or may come to love.

Benjamin waits for several moments and then continues.

Act II

Though the preceding moments of this performance can be said to have

constituted "Act I" of My Friend Kyle (Has a Brain Tumor), we slipped, ~~just~~

~~moments ago and perhaps~~ without realizing it, into what we might call

~~moments ago and perhaps~~

*perhaps pulled out
just
we is a bit disingenuous. You're the one pushing
them down slope (upslope?)
(Co Beer?)
(Sure I'll take
two)*

Benjamin walks into the darkness and clicks; "Act II" displayed.

->

*I fucked up the drama
- on brand -*

"Act II" of the show. The introductory song, Act I, and a concluding

"outro" (which you have yet to witness)

Click; list of parts of play.

->

were piloted at an event in Los Angeles in the last days of April of this year

as part of an end-of-semester show put on by my department at the

University of Southern California, where I am a PhD candidate in the

*This sentence is still going and
now you have to
contend with my ravings here
before you turn the page.
Will it make you falter?
Likely not but here it is to obscure
the proceedings. As we get closer to*

Click; MA+P logo.

->

I don't want to talk about
Media Arts + Practice program. You may find yourself asking: "Benjamin

at noon 3:30pm at turn I
Ross Nicholson, if you're a grad student at USC, what are you doing here

and ask yourself if these words need to
in Denver, Colorado?" I will explain soon; for now, let it remain as

our dirty laundry to empty seats. You revel in the awkwardness of it, Don't you? I assume you
mysterious as French aphorisms to a monolingual English speaker.

have played out a scenario where you're there, looking out at only one other set of eyes. In this fantasy you insist on performing the entirety of the act. It is romantic and you go to shake the audience member's hand. The poor Victim has to pee

Kyle came with me to

so badly though, that all they can offer you is a clamy clap. Ride High Red Man. Ride]

Click; image of LA.

->

Los Angeles to observe the performance; our intention was to "get the

show on its feet," so to speak, and determine what of the 35-minute *[skit]* show

might be retained for

Click; Denver Fringe logo.

the big leagues

->

[we should
be shooting
for 12 minutes

Denver Fringe and what might be augmented to achieve a roughly 60-

the length of

minute runtime. What you are witnessing now, at this very moment, is a John Carter,
directed by

portion of that augmentation; this follows from our time in LA. Though

(this is news to me) → Andrew Ayers Stanton
whose other
films are -

Kyle's western adventures could be elaborated at length (Kyle was in quite

a state of excitement and stimulation, resulting in some

Writer	Director
Toy Story 1	
Toy Story 2	
Toy Story 3	
Toy Story 4	
WALL-E	WALL-E
John Carter	John Carter
Finding Nemo	Finding Nemo
Finding Dory	Finding Dory

Click; Kyle hugging Kung Fu Panda.

[- Stanton did not direct Kung Fu Panda]

I'm hugging -> what may be the public's estimation of my job
or my goal in life

notable behavioral expressions), we will focus only on a certain art object

that was created as an offshoot of the performance, ~~from~~ a pulpy slurry of

dead trees fluidified, ^a ~~and the person to whom that art object led Kyle.~~
coincidentally linked to that object

But first, an anecdote from my wedding: on the morning of August 4th,

2018, a previously unanticipated rainstorm appeared to be consolidating

its efforts over

- the point is that "it is everywhere"

Co-Director
A Bags Life
"Victory is sweet" - Kyle Hosi
June 10th 2024

Click; Mount Hope Farm.

->

Mount Hope Farm in Bristol, Rhode Island. Hilda had decided the day before to rush order some fifty clear plastic umbrellas for our guests which, as of the morning in question, hadn't arrived (and which, until just months ago, had sat in my mother's New Hampshire garage ^{In the years of storage there} as she had only been able to generously pawn off about twenty to friends and family ~~in the~~ ~~interceding years; she recently had the remainder taken away~~); calling the vendor we found out that the umbrellas were being held at a FedEx facility across the border in

-the point is that "it" is everywhere

Click; Rhode Island to Massachusetts.

->

Massachusetts and were not going to be able to be delivered in time for the wedding. Kyle, my de facto best man (though he insisted that I not

[A grossly refer to him as such) and I determined at ~~roughly~~ 8AM that we would head open display of my avoidance of obligations. I had done it once previous and felt so sick about it out to Massachusetts to retrieve the umbrellas.

that I couldn't risk ~~a~~ ^{having} that feeling repeated.] One of my fraternity friends asked me and having never heard of people turning down the role I signed on. The bachelor party was completely unplanned and occurred the night before the wedding. I didn't choose the date. It was made after the bride and groom purchased hotel rooms.

for their wedding parties. Andrew's cousin was a groomsman but because he lived local he didn't get a room. So the party was just three of us. → Strip Club → old gf was waitress → guys hated it. Along the roughly ninety-minute drive, we decided to stop for breakfast in ^{so we left}

a manner that would never have been approved by Hilda had she been ^{and went to} an after hours club.

with us:

10 old guy 5 had shirt covered. So we went back to the hotel room. I passed out

Click; Yelp logo crossed out.

-> ^{and there}

without consulting Yelp(!) for its recommendations of quality, we were

going to pull our car over to the first restaurant we saw that appeared to

be open and eat there. ^{its there}

I don't recall the name of the place we chose, but I can briefly describe it to you:

Click; diner.

-> ^[a church's kitchen]

dimly lit, long and narrow, smelling of burnt cooking oil. We took stool

seats at the counter (we were the only guests when we arrived) and were ^{and there}

Erin Brockovich
us played by Erin Brockovich

met by an exhausted looking woman, returning from smoking cigarettes
out back. She took our orders (I may have had a grilled cheese sandwich;
[I'm thinking Fenber])
I'm not sure about Kyle) and proceeded to pour us waters, perhaps an
orange juice. A man with a limp arrived soon after, apparently the person
literally Pete Rose in a Tail T
responsible for making the food, and was told what we had ordered.

Once our food was in front of us, the man and the woman forgot about
Kyle and me and spoke to one another like characters out of Manchester
by the Sea, Good Will Hunting, The Town, or any number of other Affleck-
affiliated films set near Boston.

I hear its all over and more
in these sue Kongs

May I ask for a pair of volunteers to perform a dramatic reading of their
interaction, fictionalized in these pages but retaining the essence of New
the
England beleaguerment we encountered that day nearly four years ago?

Benjamin identifies two volunteer performers and assists them to the
stage, assigning each a role and providing each with a copy of the

and whigs, and costumes so intricate that the remainder of the show needed to be pushed to the next day. But it too didn't culminate due to Ben's insistence following text. He then takes a seat in the audience and advises them to that you and he wait until every

begin, noting that he will read the stage directions out loud. audience member

from the previous night had arrived. One person never showed. We all will forgive them eventually when we hear the story of the evening retold on "This American Life".

A New England Breakfast

Benjamin Ross Nicholson

Sal and Sally stand behind the counter as two oblivious customers eat their barely-prepared food. Sally sighs completely and addresses Sal in a deeply affected New England accent.

SALLY: How's it hanging, Sal?

Sal responds without much enthusiasm.

SAL: Not so good Sally, I think it's getting worse.

SALLY: It's certainly not getting any better.

SAL: I don't know how much I've got left.

SALLY: How's Salem hanging?

SAL: She's hanging in there, has a busted hoof but she can still eat.

SALLY: Not so different from you, huh Sal?

SAL: Yup.

SALLY: Yup.

SAL: I could use a butt.

SALLY: I think we've been here long enough.

Sal and Sally leave the restaurant to the customers, thinking it unlikely that they will steal anything.

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SALLY: How's ~~Salem~~ hanging? Puddin'

Ben grew up on a farm. you all can replace hoof with corn shaft

SAL: She's hanging in there, has a busted hoof but she can still eat.

SALLY: Not so different from you, huh Sal?

SAL: Yup.

SALLY: Yup.

SAL: I could use a butt. ^{Clave, Top up, good swift Kick to the head, a lady, a good cry, a call from right to the Doc, Bad light}

SALLY: I think we've been here long enough. ^{coars light, a Sox win, three turns to the left and then one more, Blue}

Sal and Sally leave the restaurant to the customers, thinking it unlikely that P'll, they will steal anything.

like what?

Boat and Rally,
Day without unfamiliar faces
like these two

Upon completion of the reading, Benjamin returns to the stage (in the light), thanks the performers for their labor, and asks them to return to

their seats. He then proceeds. — get on with it. Andrew Stanton has two new movies in production

This is my favorite memory from my wedding day.

Benjamin walks out of the light.

Drinking with Christine #2
on his way out #3
Ben's vows #1.5 — forgot about those
Hilda's sucked

Returning to the

Click; Los Angeles.

->

Los Angeles of this past April, ~~though we were staging a performance of this play,~~ the "main event" that my department hosted was an exhibition

of art installations, ~~as the performance would cease to be accessible after~~

~~its ending.~~ Kyle and I wanted to ~~have some gesture~~ we could exhibit that

would allude to the premises ~~with which~~ ^{with which} we have been so engaged:

ephemerality, love, dying, sharing, and the materiality of the generation of art objects. Kyle had been experimenting with using molds to cast paper into ~~embossed~~ images. The process worked like this (note: we did not take any pictures during the event so the images you are about to see are approximations):

Click; MDF.

->

-Kyle stacked and secured two ¾-inch squares of MDF board

Click; CNC router.

->

-using a CNC router, an image was engraved into the MDF

Click; liquid rubber.

->

Falacious
Falacio
phalacious

-a wall was built around the engraved MDF form, ~~image up~~, and liquid rubber was poured ^[onto it] ~~into the chamber~~, solidifying into a

Click; mold.

->

^[that] mold ~~the also~~ held the image (in negative)

Click; plaster in rubber mold.

->

-plaster was then poured into the rubber mold, solidifying, reversing the image once more

-Kyle brought this mold to LA, whereupon we required material ^[to cast into it] ~~onto~~ which the mold could print; We searched the campus and the house of my

friend and classmate Fidelia (who was putting us up for our stay) for

That's her real fucking name people
she gets to exist as she chooses

Click; loose paper.

->

paper

-we tore the paper into thin scraps then used a Ninja blender to mix the paper scraps with water and slice them into a

Click; slurry.

->

fibrous slurry; as this blending operation was somewhat last-minute, it was performed in one of the bathrooms of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, the noise alarming undergraduates as they walked by and generally causing them to avoid entering the bathroom

-we funneled the slurry and additional water into a

[perfectly timed
as to not travel with
a bucket of slop

- Ben's capacity
for the unknown
is much
different
than mine

He gets
anxious
around me and my
making - when it's
attached to him.

What is that fear.]

Click; trashcan.

->

plastic trashcan until the slurry had the appropriate consistency and set up a table outside of the exhibition space, to greet attendees and offer them premade prints or the opportunity to "make their own"

-to make each print, Kyle would dip a

Click; sieve.

->

mesh sieve into the bucket of wet gray pulp and lift a dripping clump of material, which he then pressed against the sieve with a cloth to wring out some of the water; this plane of paper fiber was then scraped off onto the plaster mold, a paintbrush applied to drive the paper into the mold's recessed image

a dying down behind an avoidable table



-several layers of paper would be applied to thicken the print, ^{then} a wooden board ^{would be} ^{'pushing it tightly against the} ~~being pressed against the paper and mold between the application~~ ^{mold} of each layer

-once enough material had been assembled and the wet paper fibers had bound to one another sufficiently, Kyle would peel the print off the mold and place it on a

Click; prints drying.

->

rack to dry

-for a little extra "pizazz," we had also collected a stack of USC's student newspapers,

- and wood from a grumpy underpaid man with a puppy - an oxymoron - the grumpy puppy part

Click; The Daily Trojan.

->

The Daily Trojan, from which we extracted colorful images that could be applied to the mold prior to the paper pulp ^{-(and thus become the)} ~~to disclose the images on the~~ face of the print after drying; ~~further~~, we also found a pile of

Click; napkins.

->

Valentine's Day-themed napkins sitting in a box of refuse at Fidelia's

apartment - these will come to be important later

[From that
- Stash I also found and nearly used important financial documents belonging to Fidelia - If I'm not mistaken the ^{prints} ~~pieces of paper~~, soon to be embarrassingly
Following the truncated version of this show's performance, guests were ^{shown,}
asked to migrate to the exhibition space where Kyle and I were set up to ^{where on the precipice of} costing
make prints and assist folks in making their own. \$700 dollars.]

Here is an example of one of the resulting objects.

Click; print.

->

the were the bad leftover ones including the original test piece. These were then placed - wet - into a small backpack for a trip back to Denver where they had no projected future. I thought this thing would make me the Ben thing seem complicit but alas I just look like me. So much for a beneficial, false, public persona

would a

Does Johnny love Ginny?

Does Johnny find herself

~~Does Johnny find herself~~ is she wearing

Dries Van Noten when she reaches R.H.

Does Johnny go on to meet her

CHDO at least 3 times a day
- Hey

Does Johnny shiver to the words

Skeleton Key

mom.

~~understatement~~

[bionic] after years of being trained by scientists to recognize fragments of detritus] - Probably a Musk endeavor.

Though it may be difficult to read in this image, a keen eye will notice the following French text: "la naissance du plaisir." In English (as always):

Click; Google translation.

->

"the birth of pleasure."

Something tied to the endless pursuit for more life forms. The know we have homeless people on Earth right? The know pain exists right? The richest man in the

Given the DIY quality of the production process, these prints were what you might consider to be

an utmost pursuit - to leave the world. If he finds out that heaven is place, and it's reachable by his rocket, do you actually believe he would tell you? In a realm of endless possibilities that are confined by what

Click; trash turtle.

->

"poor objects": they were fragile, often incomplete (as chunks of paper suggest we

pulp would be torn away during the print's transfer from the mold to the

drying rack), with the image difficult to discern due to the necessarily rapid image or [lack of contrast between the words and their background. pace of setting material into the mold and removing it so that it might dry

enough for guests to take home. As you are most likely already imagining,

business of a chosen

(not shot or written by Andrew Stanton)

metaphors abound, ^{something to do} ~~staying~~ ^{with} ~~from~~ the unplannable ^{emergence of} relations ^{from} the "stuff," the "thingness," ^{ness of the} of matter in circulation, ^{of} of material under pressure, ^{of} of bodies subject to mutation.]

In

Click; calendar.

->

March of 2020, I was in Los Angeles and Hilda, my then-wife, had been living and working in

Click; NYC.

->

New York City for about nine months, the first time we had been "apart" in the over eleven years of our relationship (and nearly two years of marriage).

↑
[why? — the definition of co-dependence
what drives your fascination for your partner?]

quote that last exchange³

He ^{just} ~~was~~ needs to bring attention to
the similarities to have it make
sense why it's in the script

Click; COVID-19.

->

A novel coronavirus had infiltrated human populations around the globe and various municipalities, including LA and New York City, were about to go into "lockdown." Hilda already had plans to ~~come~~^{return} to Los Angeles for ~~my~~^{my} birthday, April 2nd, about two weeks ~~out~~^{from}, on a phone call I suggested that she just stay with me in

Click; LA.

->

LA after her visit, given ~~that~~^{that} she would be working her data science job remotely for the foreseeable future. That is to say, we could ride out the ~~[as happily married people]~~^[as happily married people] ~~To these suggestions~~ pandemic together, as partners. She told me that she didn't think she wanted to come to LA. I asked what she meant, if she was worried about traveling with so much uncertainty ~~about~~^{concerning} infection. She said that wasn't the ~~own apartment was~~^{issue}; she just didn't want to come to LA – ever. I reminded her that ~~I lived~~^{I lived} ~~there. I was standing in that moment and where I lived.~~ in LA. She said she knew this.

["When I'm still in bed in the morning I feel like touching my face a thousand times to get it out of my system"

After hanging up, in a stillness of disbelief, I felt my phone vibrate: Kyle

was sending a message to me and Shanna (another of our Chicago MFA

classmates) in a group text thread, something silly and casual. I texted

them that Hilda wanted to separate; Kyle told me to pack up my things

and drive to

Click; Denver.

->

Denver to stay with him. That's why I came here and why I return to LA

only seldomly; I'm working on my dissertation now - I'm allowed to be

the wind."

Kyle's invitation to come to Colorado preceded a series of events that I

won't recall here (after all, this show is about Kyle

how I felt. I assumed like many others she was isolated and running down old leads. Why I ended up on her list is a question I don't care to pursue.

The selfie I sent Ben and Shanna and this previous acquaintance was the last correspondence her and I had. I was sending it Ben and Shanna seeking somebody's approval since I hadn't received any from it. ¹⁹

^{the} sent I sent a selfie I had taken the day prior.

It had been made for one of the women who

I knew in college. I hadn't spoken to her in years and had never spoken to her one on one. She was

actually the good friend of my then girlfriend. ^{This is 2007.}

The woman in question was a new acquaintance for me at the time.

Knew that she had transferred from another school; was from a wealthy family and owned a horse. She didn't express any interest at the time for art and wasn't particularly forthcoming with her opinion on anything.

She was beautiful in some undeniable ways but always seemed in

a state of uncertainty. After

a while I recognized that I hadn't seen her around in a while and my gf told me she had dropped out. Her younger brother had been hunting in the woods with their father when a tree fell,

struck the young man and killed him. It was

when the schools closed during the pandemic that she started reaching

me. Perplexed is an understatement for

Click; show logo.

->

[My reaction to the inclusion of this paragraph and the last two pages is difficult to translate into the margins of this script. on further inspection

change of understanding of this art.

← from me to us

- Ben needs to show the similarity in our lives

- The object was ~~given~~ ~~some~~

and his brain tumor, not my failed suicide attempt and my meeting of Gabby, my partner of over two years, during a 72-hour hold in the given from Ben - the suffrag behavioral unit of Boulder Community Health on April 9th, 2020); I will only note the reciprocal quality of my invitation to Kyle to join me for a weekend in LA and its impact on his circumstances; perhaps we should all invite each other on journeys more often.

In order to provide prospective print recipients with a sense of what they would be getting, Kyle decided to prepare a couple of test prints in advance: one was unadorned with any imagistic newsprint, a

Click; gray print.

->

gray sludge that would desiccate into a brittle shard; the other was surfaced with one of the



Click; Valentine's napkins.

->

Valentine's Day napkins (you've seen an image of this

Click; Valentine's print.

->

print, which also included a red paper napkin from the catering service that fed the event's attendees).

In the early hours of the exhibition, Kyle facilitated the generation of about six prints for individual guests or small groups of friends. As the evening darkened, we packed up our printing station and moved our materials into the exhibition space to store for the evening. Though the event was about to shut down, Fidelia (who was also exhibiting work) let us know we would only return to her place after her ex-roommate stopped by; we will call her

Click; image of Kyle, Johanna, and Fidelia.

->

Johanna for privacy reasons. Johanna and Fidelia had lived together for

several years but had recently parted ways, domestically. However, they ^{decide this chance meeting would have} ~~happened~~ ^{the night before without} were still friends and Johanna wanted to check out Fidelia's work; she ^{an object,}

eventually arrived with another friend of hers.

Also I would not have been able to take stalk of Fidelia's roommates library.

For Kyle, it was love at first

Click; pheromones.

scent; ~~though~~ on the unresolvable terms of fluid fleshy bodies and the sensations of experience to which they give rise; in the proximity that comes with those moments of introduction, he noticed he wanted to

- that's true but only happens after the conversation when we are saying goodbye. I thought it was generous for her to embrace me in a hug and in that exchange I was struck.

IDK what this means

I ~~anticipate~~ ^{anticipate} it ~~still not right~~

Click; "know you better."

->

↑
not said to her but instead to Fidelia who was doing everything she could to make it known that her prior roommate was not available and instead there was a grand second interest to be had which was in the accompanying male companion.

know her better. Upon being asked what he was doing in LA, Kyle went to fetch one of the demonstration prints, the one that was slowly dehydrating ~~the only decent one~~ ~~After receiving the wet square~~ as napkin and paper pulp fibers fused. Johanna was slightly taken aback: the pattern on the surface of the print was identical to a set of Valentine's Day napkins Johanna's mother had sent her ~~this past~~ ⁱⁿ February (Johanna's mother was and remains in the habit of sending Johanna disposable napkins on holidays). We gradually pieced together that Johanna, not holding the napkins in particularly high regard, had allowed the napkins to be packed away with other items that Fidelia had been moving out of their previously shared living space and that Kyle and I had, in a moment of

Click; Serendipity.

->

serendipity, discovered ^{then} when we were searching Fidelia's new apartment for art materials. This coincidence offered ample opportunity for subtle bewilderment and communion; while Fidelia and I returned to the

apartment to sleep, Kyle reentered the Los Angeles night to join Johanna and her friends at a punk rock bar. As to the whereabouts of the

[whee!]

Click; Valentine's print.

->

print, I have nothing to reveal to you, nothing for you to touch; Kyle gave the print to Johanna who has since

[not that you want to - I'd give it to you how it was would be to give you a wet ornament of trash.]

Click; print slowly fades and disappears.

->

lost it.

[maybe -]
it in itself means little. The relationship that has arisen is like the paper. It is made by interwoven fibers of correspondences. Each node of the whole plays a role in making a blurry image. If re-wet or torn the pieces become
Though Kyle and I have since returned to as useful as they were previously yet are stained from being handled.

- so, yeah, life]

Click; Denver.

->

Colorado, Johanna and Kyle continue to correspond persistently. There is no "plan" between Kyle and Johanna, no teleology of romantic partnership to be achieved. Rather, they are "in touch" without touching, at a

Click; LA and Denver.

->

not anything but within the natural, ^{and} culturally generated, and self generated restriction, there is an endless set of possibilities
geographic remove; anything can happen, nothing is guaranteed.

one day we will stop talking

I've written a brief song about their relationship, a sort of "bookend" to the song I performed earlier in this performance; I've decided to title it

"The Ballad of Kyle and Johanna" for now, though this may change

someday (as may the words, as words do).

Click; Benjamin walks into yellow light.

->

[It's got to be insanely frustrating that I haven't ^{yet} call HBO -
Somebody to wrap this thing up. Adding ^{my death} to the narrative could say the perspective of the moving subject - which is not Kyle and his brain tumor. The subject as far as I can tell is the open relationship shared by Kyle (me) and Ben (the guy likley in shorts and tall socks ²⁵ who is reading these words.) His son

Ben, na na na na. Gooblydie gobledie gook with a hook, A han
par sook and a tee tee. Ben. Its platonic and at points

For the sake of intimacy, this song will not be accompanied by a display of

its lyrics; I will try to enunciate and will ask you to listen intently. I believe

this will bring us closer.

I don't get too close people,
otherwise risk becoming the next
amputated voice represented
by pencil scribbles

Benjamin asks the audience member who had previously taken the guitar

to return it to him. Once they have reassumed their seat, Benjamin walks

into the light, places the remaining script pages on the ground, clicks,

->

pockets the remote, and begins to play "The Ballad of Kyle and Johanna"

as the light darkens to the color of a scab.

they are sacs filled with blood

all that blood: sacs in their own right

two Russian nesting dolls of sacs

colliding at night

sacs will shrink, sacs will burst

sacs will grow where they don't belong

there's no impossibility

there is nothing wrong

hands touching hands

reaching out

touching me

touching you

— but digitally, sans sexual organs
a modern day pen pal with allusions
toward physical intimacy. A means
for both parties to maintain drive
and marvel at the remnants that
fall away from their consumptive
correspondence. But

Benjamin has interrupted his own
song to say this so he begins the
song again and then make the
powerful decision to skip Kyle's
entry

to a round of applause. They stand and
neglect his gestures guiding them to
sit and
Benjamin concludes the song by placing the guitar on the ground and
quite down.

retrieves the remaining script pages.

But now the audience
recognizes the true goal as Kyle once
did on pg 27. The show must run for
132 minutes. Andrew doesn't make floors
the gun makes children/childhoods

Outro

Speaking of touching, of being "in touch," I would like to perform a brief shadow play to demonstrate what it's like trying to reach out to Kyle by phone. May I have a volunteer?

Benjamin waits for a volunteer and, upon their appearance, invites them to come to towards the stage. He assists the audience member in placing their arm in front of the projector's throw such that a shadow of an arm reaching in from the right side appears, not quite making it to the middle of the light. Benjamin walks behind the audience, so as to not disrupt the shadow play, and mirrors the outreached arm on the other side of the light; it appears that there are two shadow arms reaching to touch one another but not quite making it.

As you can see, our shadows converge but do not touch. We could each reach a bit farther and unite the image of our arms, but it would be difficult to discern from only our shadows whether or not we are actually touching or just passing each other by. This is what it's like trying to reach out to Kyle by phone.

Benjamin indicates to the audience member that they can return to their seat and, when they have done so, he returns to the light and takes his phone out of his pocket.

I am going to try to call Kyle now. Sometimes he picks up and sometimes he doesn't. He knows that this show is happening and he knows (given that he has read and annotated the script) that I will try to call him. This does not guarantee that he will answer, even though he loves me.

If he does answer, I will greet him and then ask you, comrades, if there's anything you'd like to say to Kyle, anything you'd like to ask him.

If he does not answer, I will announce myself to his voicemail and then ask you, comrades, if there's anything you'd like for Kyle to know about how you feel. As

voicemail messages are time limited, we may need to make several calls to say all that needs to be said.

I'll have my phone on speaker, though you might want to lean forward in your seats.

Benjamin calls Kyle and proceeds as described above. At the appropriate moment, Benjamin, says:

Okay, Kyle, we have found the last of our time and we have to go; we love you.

Benjamin hangs up the phone, returning it to his pocket.