

“ALL YOU NEED IN A DAY”

OR, “SMALL HANDS FOR BUYING ONIONS”

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You are OK.

I am not OK. I am horrible.

You are a Good and Worthy Person.

I am not good or worthy. I am despicable. I don't know what I'm doing.

You are Capable of Anything you put your Mind to.

I don't know what I want to put my mind to. I don't know what it can do. I don't know anything. Fuck.

You are Filled and Overflowing with Love and Gratitude and Grace.

I am filled and overflowing with fear and indecision and horribleness and fear and not-knowing.

Every Part of your Body is Thriving and Awakening to a New Day.

Every part of my body doesn't know where all the other parts are. Every part of my body is ready to be ripped from the others and exposed as raw and bleeding.

Fuck.

*Every Breath Fills your Lungs and Sends Messages of Love and Peace
Throughout your Beautiful Body.*

Every breath fills me with fear that I don't know what I am doing and that I am worthless and horrible because I don't know what I am doing or why I am doing it and I should just pull myself together and snap out of it. I should. I am too old for this. I'm so old already. I am too old. This is probably some sort of mid-life crisis or something. Bullshit. Bullshitbullshit. Shit.

Breathe in Love and Gratitude...

I am horrible. I am such a piece of shit.

Breathe out. Whfooooooooooooooh.

I am a worthless piece of shit.

Breathe in Calming, Nourishing Thoughts...

I am nothing. I am no good. I am nothing.

*Breathe out. Whfooooooooooooooooooooooh. Now, together, let us find
your ocean of spiritual wealth...*

Harry pressed the 'stop' button on his tape player sitting in the driver's seat next to him. He looked at the sky where it met the earth outside the world of his car, felt exhausted, and turned the keys in the ignition.

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“Self-Help/Gratitude Diary” entry dated 12/3/08

Harry Huggins drove right past me today. Harry Huggins from all those Real Estate ads. Harry Huggins, the Real Estate Agent.

He drove right past me in his car, slow enough that I could see in and see that it was Harry Huggins.

I saw his face and he saw mine looking back at him.

It felt like we had a bit of a moment.

He looked at me with his eyes: they looked open, wide and longing, like a real human’s eyes. He is a real human of course, so it makes sense, but when I see pictures of someone often, especially someone I don’t know, it’s hard to think of them actually walking around existing. Like Harry Huggins, I find myself believing that he is not really real, that he only exists in rectangular boxes as a smiling pair of head and shoulders. Not like someone like me, who exists in kitchens and messy bedrooms, and walks along bitumen roads in old canvas runners kicking honky nuts.

I see Harry Huggins’s picture all the time. It’s on the bus shelter down the road, on the little magnetic calendar on my fridge and even in the ads they play at the movies.

I wonder whether he gets excited when he sees his picture up there at the movies. Whether he thinks, “I’ve made it! Finally, I’ve made it to the big screen!” Being on the big screen seems to be an indication of who’s Made It.

I wonder, when he’s at the movies, and his ad comes on, showing his big grin, and his giant moustache spreading out like teddy bear’s legs from under his nose, and his big manly hands holding a sign that says, “Sold!” do his cheeks go all hot? Does he look around to see if anyone in the rows in front of him are turning around to look at him and prodding their friends’ arms and motioning to them to turn around because, “that’s that guy! That’s the guy from the ads! That’s the guy who’s Made It!” I bet he feels excited and proud and wants to tell his Mum. Or maybe he used to feel excited when it first started happening, but now he’s not so sure. Maybe it freaks him out to stare at his big face up there, his huge effigy, all that *is him*. Thinking about that kind of stuff makes me feel weird and sleepy. Maybe it makes him feel weird and sleepy, too.

Seeing his face so often on movie screens makes it easiest to imagine him having a really glamorous life and a girlfriend who is a model and is breaking into the music industry, but has a problem with heroin or cocaine, and who, as an item, are often spotted leaving friends’ places, her in a fur coat and

big sunglasses and spindly legs sticking out from ankle boots that make her feet look like they are always on tip-toe, with Harry's arm around her, waving away the paparazzi with a solemn look on his face as she huddles into him.

Yeah.

I can imagine that.

And then Harry goes home and pours himself a whiskey into a lowball crystal glass and sits in a leather sofa. And he just holds the whiskey in his right hand as he stares vacantly off into space and thinks about the futility of it all. The attention, the acclaim, the pressure, is it worth it? He's just a humble salesman. How did everything blow so far out of proportion?

He could just quit and not tell anybody, hop on a plane to Fiji and spend the rest of his days listening to Pink Floyd and reading detective fiction in a beach shack. He looks like the kind of guy who would like that.

Mm.

He looked like the kind of guy who has big stuff on his mind when he drove past me today. He looked green and ill in his long bubble car, like the air in it was filled with the gas emissions of existential crisis. I know cars are lonely places. When I'm driving by myself and looking out at all the other people driving their cars, breathing our own separate air-conditioned air,

windshields and windows between us, even when we're all stopped at the same traffic lights, I start to feel pretty lonely.

Harry Huggins didn't stop as he drove past me. He didn't even turn into the shopping centre that I was standing across the road from because I was going to buy some onions. But he could have. He could have slowly pulled over just ahead of me and gotten out of the car and stretched his arms and chest out, gruffly sighed and stared out at the shopping centre like it was gaping chasm. He could have said,

“Sometimes it all seems too hard, doesn't it?”

I could have nodded solemnly.

“Sometimes it does, yeah.”

He could have rubbed his eyes a bit, with the finger and thumb of one of his big hands, like he could have cried.

I could have walked over and rubbed his back gently, like a friend, like a friend with a small hand, and said something like,

“You're only a man, Harry,”

or,

“No man is an island,”

or simply,

“Don’t be afraid,”

and he could have looked into my eyes and said,

“Yeah, yeah, you’re right,”

like I had actually helped and lifted an actual burden off his shoulders with my small hands and made everything clear to him, me, with my small hands for buying onions.

But he just drove past.

And we just looked at each other.

And maybe that’s all you need in a day.

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As he drove past the supermarket Harry contemplated what it would be like to veer his car off the road and drive into a telephone pole.

As he was contemplating this he noticed a girl on the side of the road staring at him. Not just staring at him, though, *looking into his eyes*.

And, for a moment, he stopped thinking about driving into a telephone pole.