

## god i hope so

i got an email  
"you were in my dreams  
i led my friends to a cool hang out spot  
a recently dried up lake surrounded by rad farm houses  
the mud was thick like ice  
i ran into you walking w/ a new lady friend  
she was smart and adorable and dressed like a cowgirl  
then i dreamt i was visiting and we hung out  
you ended up taking a series of pictures on my phone in the bathroom while you cut off your hair  
later i found this amazing birthday cake with a winter scene: a polar bear, an elephant, and a rabbit  
on skis  
you could push a button, a song would play, and they'd all start to move, like claymation  
it was amazing"

let's see here? how to respond? well i said, "thanks for sharing those dreams with me. what do they mean to you? or like, what do they tell you?  
i've had some dreams lately but i can't remember them well. i've been reflecting on my year and i'll send you more thoughts soon."  
that's what i said, but i do have some dreams i remember  
one where i was aj soprano and my dad was my dad but also tony soprano & i saw him die  
another where i was in a job interview, me & young john kerry were both being interviewed simultaneously for the same position  
it was a reporter job for a newspaper in gordon nebraska  
it paid \$30,000 a year & young john kerry, who had really long hair, said it was impossible to live on \$30,000 a year, & i said in gordon you could live very comfortably

those are some dreams

i would gladly make the hair one come true  
cut it all off if it meant i could spend a meaningful portion of my life w/ you  
last night kyle asked me how i would go about picking a girl up if successfully doing so meant i would be given a million dollars  
i said i would start talking to a girl who seemed 'less attractive' than me, then see how she responded to me flirting w/ her, & if she seemed receptive, i would continue flirting w/ her, & ask her to come home w/ me  
i'm a fucking scumbag  
after that kyle asked what i would do if i couldn't try to pick up just 'any' girl, but i had to pick up

a girl that kyle deemed 'attractive', or something  
i said, "i don't know, i'd probably start drinking"  
some things just feel impossible if you aren't fucked up  
this brings me to my second point  
i would cut my hair and start drinking again, if it meant i could spend a meaningful portion of my  
life w/ you  
i've always said i wouldn't quit writing but maybe i would  
i described life as a a maze & said everyone living is lost in the maze, but most people are lost in  
the outer parts of the maze, but i, through writing, have all this experience, thought experience and  
feeling experience, but in order to have had that experience i've had to go deeper & deeper into  
the maze, & the deeper i get, the fewer people i see, then i ask myself, alone, in the deep parts of  
the maze, why am i here? why is my hair long?

last night was strange  
i told mary i was thinking about asking her, instead of amy, to cut my hair, & she seemed excited  
later i asked her bf what his interests were, & he bitterly responded by saying, "did you read that in  
a book?" & i didn't tell him this, but yes, i did  
it's hard for me to interact w/ people, so i read books about how to better interact w/ people  
i remember a time i saw a "how to be a better boss" book on john heaston's desk, & the next day  
he asked me to do something, & then he very assertively thanked me for the work that i do, & i  
felt a warmth, but later i told someone, & they seemed confused, like i was being manipulated, &  
why would i feel a warmth about that?, but i've personally changed my behavior, & doing so feels  
very unnatural & absurd, & i want you, the reader of this poem, to know that, to know that what i  
am saying is, in my experience, true

i'm not sure what to do, but i have more to say about last night, the night of my 29th birthday  
all birthdays pale in comparison to 25, the moment i looked back on my 24th year & summarily  
decided that i did not deserve to live  
every other feeling is like a distant star compared to that moment, alone in the basement of 8060  
chicago street, omaha ne 68114  
i talked to my friend simon kim on facebook chat about the poem that ends "i've wasted my life"  
he sent me a great poem he had written, called "Purfic Hair"  
here it is:

me: what are ya up ti  
benjamin: taxes...  
i think i owe 2 grand  
me: oh shite  
are you gonna go to  
one of those nice white collar prisons  
benjamin: maybe  
god i hope so

eventually mary's boyfriend said "i'm interested in music, man" & i said i was interested in poetry,  
spending time w/ friends, kindness, & the conversation didn't go anywhere  
when he left i wondered if i shook his hand too firmly  
i wondered if all these pull-ups and dips and push-ups i'm doing are unwittingly turning me into a  
"too firm hand shaker", one of the most annoying dudes, seemingly hellbent on displaying  
masculinity

travis was right to say everything is an illusion and life & death are the same  
it was strange hearing kyle talk about sadness & travis talk abt buddhism, & feel completely in  
tune w/ both of them  
in her long blog post heather christle said bill cassidy liked ted berrigan, & she liked russell edson  
on facebook megan schüirmann provided a list of things poets should stop writing about  
(cigarettes, etc.) & i commented, "as long as yr chill w/ death"  
i've been meditating & it's been strange  
i have a lot of thoughts that are like "do"  
i was telling travis & kyle this, said i'm trying to detach from the constant urge to "do"  
i said i don't have to "do" anything & travis said i could just breathe until i died & my life would  
not be any less meaningful

eventually it was me & kyle, & he brought this woman named darylene over to our table & we  
talked with her for a long time  
i wanted to record us talking, to hear it again & again, the way we were inventing every word right  
fuckin there  
i looked up the word "paragraph" on my phone & read the websters dictionary definition out loud  
this guy named jordan came over & seemed disinterested in darylene, like he didn't want to listen  
to her formulate words, like the sound was annoying to him  
she said she didn't have parents to stop her from expressing herself  
her & kyle made motions w/ their hands & arms to articulate varying degrees of absenteeism or  
overbearingness parents could conceivably enact upon their children

such a strange biography

i told kyle all i wanted was, then said something abt intimacy

she said her body is a space suit that's getting older, it reminded me of our earlier talk abt richard  
dawkins, genes, & life, how we are massive systems that exist so genes can replicate, & how it's  
possible that earth, or even our galaxy, is a gene

while we were walking she held my arm & said "i'm with paul" & i felt strange & sad  
she said we were her kind of people, her people, & that it's hard to find people  
she told me & kyle life is going to be hard & it will be even harder if we let each other go  
she said, "you're gonna need each other"

she said "poetry is" & said "is is a verb" & banged her hand on the table  
she said when she was young she was the one who always said what everyone was thinking but was  
too afraid to say  
she wished me a happy birthday

is this a response?  
do you understand me now?  
if i say things to you, i feel like i'm going to be discarded  
or whatever you think, you won't share  
we won't be close like that, i'll never have it  
i could probably write more about my 29th birthday  
when i was running i thought maybe there would be a party, where everyone i wanted to see would  
be there, an impossible party, & i would walk in & start crying

**weirdness has went on between us, or, DEATH POEM (written, in part, while watching a jazz band play, at a memorial service for a man who, the one & only time i ever spoke to him, was very drunk, at my parents' house, on the patio, following my dad's retirement party)**

once i was walking around dundee w/ anna & we were holding hands & talking & at 1 point i saw a real estate sign in the lawn of a house & went on an extended riff abt how i was a real estate agent & how the sign we saw was in the lawn of a house i used to be the agent for, but i couldn't sell it, so a different agent took over, & that agent was the best agent in omaha, & i talked at length abt how i was in awe of his real estate skills  
awhile later i watched american beauty w/ justin, amanda, teal, and tony on a snowy day in late february or early march  
the annette benning character's relationship with the peter gallagher character was the inspiration for the riff i went on while hanging out w/ anna  
im trying to practice mindfulness, & writing this now i realize the kevin spacey character is very ego driven  
i had a sweet conversation w/ my mom last night where i talked for awhile about why i quit drinking  
i told her a lot of things, i said sometimes i'm sad, & that i miss eva, & that i wish i was in love w/ someone & they were in love w/ me  
she didn't know i smoked cigarettes or realize how much i drank, all this stuff abt my life i didn't tell my parents  
she told me she's addicted to food & talked about how when i graduated high school she weighed 130 lbs but eventually she weighed 210 lbs but now she weighs 180 lbs  
i talked about sugar cookies & said if i hadn't quit drinking i'd probably weigh 230 lbs  
some days i sit in front of a computer & look at pictures of eva on facebook & think abt how beautiful she is & i want to like the pictures but i don't because if i do it will show in the timeline that i've been liking eva's pictures & everyone will think i'm a sad weirdo  
i just want to tell you in some quiet way i think yr beautiful  
when i saw you last & we touched, i asked if you thought i was beautiful & felt so afraid of intimacy  
i thought earlier the day doesn't begin until you take a shit  
it's hard to be mindful sitting in front a computer using the internet  
eventually our species will decline, & by the end, a very small number of us will struggle mightily to live, & that's when everything will continue, as if nothing ever happened, because nothing ever did, there is just everything, and it only is  
here i am now / in the mexican restaurant / gna order five tacos  
while i was talking on the phone last night i started crying because i miss being able to listen to someone tell me everything on their mind in a given moment  
i talked abt seattle, the incident in front of the bar when dixson ran his mouth, leading to jose getting punched

later dixson talked to me about an idea for a sci-fi novel & people we went to hs with, as though they're still a part of his mental life, & how strange & sad mentally living in the past seemed to me to be  
i sometimes think abt matt saying grace and jack look weird having lost weight & wonder if he's ever said the same thing about me  
i was going to fall asleep but i started coughing & woke up  
all i could think abt was invisible dust, is it surroundfecting me?  
i like advertisements that prominently feature butts & bodies  
this girl at the adjacent table said, "we're gonna show you how powerful love is"  
dixson said he knows he can sell himself, & that's all sales is, & i feel like people just say things they've heard  
what i'm saying is i refuse to watch tv while everything happens, i don't want to be on the internet while everything happens  
the first song the jazz band played was called ancient memories, the second song was called we will meet again  
i'm just surrounded by death today  
i hate it when i'm sitting w/ my parents & we're all just sitting there, not saying anything, & it goes on for awhile, & i start to wonder how long will this go on?  
then i think about how strange it is, all of us are sitting here, not talking  
then i think about the passage from proust that mike read, how you can know at a very young age that you didn't turn out how your parents had hoped, & how you can know that at an older age too  
the third song the jazz band played was called feels so good  
1 year ago at this time i was in idaho eating a bag of mushrooms w/ a bunch of people on the verge of being high as fuck  
emotions feel good when yr on drugs / or they feel bad / it's tough to understand enlightenment probably isn't real - and if it is, it's only real for the ppl that it's real for  
when i speak on matters of the heart i am in a state of becoming  
eva called the other night & we talked & at one point i started crying, thinking about how much i missed hearing someone talk to me like they were telling me exactly what was on their mind & i could tell them what was on my mind, but i miss the hearing - that strange honesty -  
in the car bandido said i am someone he feels he can be honest with  
the fourth song the jazz band played was called weaver of dreams, a victor young piece  
i thought eva looked beautiful today while we were walking around unl campus, the way her hair was in a bun, the way she took it out of a bun for a second, she was wearing thin black stripes on a white shirt, black pants, black boots, i wanted to touch her butt, & i kind of did for a second with my hat, & i felt excited & turned on, & i couldn't help, just now, after writing about kind of touching her butt w/ my hat, putting my pen in my mouth and sucking on it, while i thought about touching her without clothes on, my favorite thing to do  
the fifth song the jazz band played was called the tree is fallen but the roots will have forever while we were walking through the museum of ancient bones & extinct creatures, i felt this acute sense of how much i love being near her, & how i'll never be the one who is near her

once we kissed on the street in front of the student union  
we would smoke cigarettes and talk all night  
i wasn't meaning to write about this exactly, this wasn't on my check list  
while we were walking i thought about how much i love hearing her speak, like whenever she's  
talking i get to know how she feels in that moment  
the sixth song the jazz band played was called voyage  
i was very open to my first relationship, but it screwed me up and made me terrified of  
relationships  
then i met eva & who would've thought i would've met my favorite person i've ever met so soon  
after getting out of my first relationship when i was so ill-prepared to do anything, be a loving boy, i  
was lost, and still am  
the seventh song the jazz band played was called sweet  
eva's grandma, whose name was also eva, died last night  
she sat next to her & held her hand, she counted her breaths, & it was like, she would breathe  
every three seconds, but as time passed she would breathe more slowly, eventually breathing every  
15 seconds, then early in the morning 30 seconds passed & 60 seconds passed & she had stopped  
breathing, & was dead  
the way she described it made it sound like a very simple thing, like a leaf falling, or whatever you  
want to say, she said it was like watching a star die, or being w/ a dying star, i can't remember her  
phrasing  
after her grandma died she opened the window, so her spirit could leave the room and move on,  
because the night before, or 2 nights before, her aunt had told her mom to open the window after  
it happened, that not enough people open the window, how it makes crazy stuff happen

paul clarkbery

jack spicer is dead  
he drank himself to death  
justin weighs under 200 lbs  
this poem could be just a list of facts  
andrew weatherhead said the best way to read a poem is like each line is the name of a horse  
that way you aren't reading a poem, you're reading a list of horses  
my friend trevor evans was interested in flying planes when the rest of us were mostly fucking  
around  
so much time has slipped through my fingers & this will continue  
phil cordelli wrote a short poem about george washington  
georg christoph lichtenberg wrote "there are people who read simply to prevent themselves from  
thinking"  
ayya khema, the author of BEING NOBODY GOING NOWHERE, wrote that the world does not  
need me to think so why do i do it all the fuckin time?  
i'm paraphrasing  
lisa asked how my brain was then later sent me a link to a podcast abt quantum physics &  
consciousness  
people used to worship horus, a half-man halfhawk who was the sun, sky, & moon  
it is okay to be strange, fucked up, & talk weird  
do you ever, while in conversation, feel like you are being less interesting than you have been in the  
past, & wonder if the person you are talking with likes you less?  
do you ever touch yourself while watching pornography?  
do you ever touch yourself while thinking about someone you like to touch touching you?  
distance is such a crazy fucking thing  
when my friend moss lived in omaha i thought about him a lot  
now he lives in california & i think about him less  
we came up w/ a rule together: don't fuck with the music  
while we were high on acid we stared at a picture of jerod's hands & justin said, "these are my  
friend's hands"  
while laying on the grass & staring at the sky i said, "i don't want to make it so staring at the sky is  
the thing we do, i'm sorry"  
it's funny to see a building as a thing that sometimes people exist inside of & other times is an  
empty shell filled w/ air, light, & sound  
if you think about it, sound is tiny pieces of matter  
pinky & the brain was a program i looked forward to but really only watched a few times  
the house smelled different on saturday, the house smelled different on sunday  
they call that bread & church  
socialization fucking wrecked me a little bit  
i had some fire as a child i felt creative & kind



but i quickly evaporated trying always to become what other people liked or wanted or maybe it  
was just my brain getting bigger  
texted kesley "MY FEET STINK" & felt vulnerable  
not making someone smile all these years has been difficult to bear  
i can be more honest... part of why i've been single for such a long time is i was hung up on an ex  
& also the fact that the horoscope book says our birthdays don't match does scare me  
what is a poem? i'm bummed you didn't text me last night after i fell asleep  
am i just here to make people feel good while they move around america?  
do you mean it when you say you love me?  
are you already forgetting what being near me felt like?  
am i too awkward for your family? is my fear something you hate?  
the cruelest moment was when i said i wish i was less shy & eva said she wished that too  
i'm empty  
i poured everything out down the drain  
ernest hemingway shot himself  
the jd salinger documentary is playing in omaha  
while running i saw a hospital in the distance & thought "this is a giant thing we built to help  
people"  
while running i saw a grocery store & thought "this is a giant thing we built to feed people"  
i saw a bank & felt negative feelings about the economy  
some people want to destroy the schools we've built, burn the books  
i hear sounds from the tv & think i'm hearing the same people saying the same things  
have you never read don quixote? i've never read don quixote  
never read proust but i like the part in the on the road movie where the blonde guy quotes proust  
where the blonde guy fucks in mexico  
where the blonde guy gets twisted & moves his body to jazz  
where allen ginsberg says a bunch of bullshit about poetry  
i wonder how he felt about being a product?  
in my new house, maybe i will decorate it with my own drawings  
or i could have a party & have everyone draw something for me, & those would be my decorations,  
but i'd need supplies  
stankonia is an album by outkast that i bought in lincoln one afternoon hanging out w/ my cousin  
tessa and her bf  
when me & rocky drove back to mccoak we listened to the album  
i've got memories  
i've never ripped the head off a chicken  
i am the poet right now  
i am very facebook  
all these videos floating around about being a millennial  
i feel a-ok about being alive but that's only because i'm sober  
i don't have my work check  
i've learned so much from decay, like what if dinosaurs had twitter?

the planet coughs & spits  
american currency has men on it  
there's a video of conor oberst at a concert saying currency is the only thing in life that matters  
music is dead  
fire is dead  
does it depress you that humans will die & bugs will thrive?  
mashed potatos, gravy, butter, green beans  
& to think that elvis presley destroyed himself  
in a biography someone said elvis found a gold watch in the shit house  
he was speaking figuratively  
i don't like drowning in thought  
"to think is to be sick in the eyes" - pessoa  
"to think is to not understand" - pessoa  
"the world wasn't made for us to think about" - pessoa  
"the only innocence is not thinking" - pessoa  
in my life i've heard the phrase "chechen rebels" many times but have no idea what it means  
al pacino was once one of my favorite actors but now who knows  
bro-ish bros in bro-ish movies  
i've thought abt not watching movies for awhile  
i like quitting things  
i like feeling the air on my tongue  
we are all tasked w/ not protecting the oppressors  
i only have one job to do: be brave  
they feed us lots of sugar to control our blood  
in the video for changes by 2pac they edit out the part where he says "it's time for us as a people  
to start making some changes, let's change the way we eat, let's change the way we live, and let's  
change the way we treat each other, you see the old way wasn't working so it's on us to do what we  
gotta do to survive"  
johnny thunders wrote a song called society makes me sad  
johnny thunders wrote a song called eve of destruction  
"thinking about all this, i become less happy again" - pessoa  
johnny thunders wrote a song called so alone  
johnny thunders wrote a song called born to lose  
johnny thunders wrote a song called it's not enough  
johnny thunders wrote a song called you can't put your arms around a memory  
johnny thunders wrote a song called i wanna be loved

## PAUL HANSON CLARK

**Paul Hanson Clark** is a poet living in Nebraska. He works as a doughmaker at a cookie shoppe and as a web editor for a literary magazine. He also makes drawings and writes songs. He runs an audio zine MERRILY MERRILY MERRILY MERRILY. Please send a recording!!!!  
<https://soundcloud.com/merrilymerrilymerrilymerrily>