

# JUST MIGHT 2

monastery blues



Absence makes the  
Heart grow fonder.

# Life Is Amazing Manifesto

🔍 how to escape pessimism

When thinking about death, the thrum of the idiot quail beating in one's ears like whalesong, drums borne from panic akin to yours, one musn't think of all the terrible ways one may perish, including (but absolutely not limited to):

CAR CRASH

HORRIBLE ILLNESS

HEARTBREAK

FREAK ACCIDENT

WRONG-PLACE-WRONG-TIME (PENITENTIARY-STYLE)  
(STABBING)

FALL FROM A HIGH TOWER

BEAR MAULING

EVIL MEN

MASS SHOOTING

IRON ROD LOBOTOMY

Instead, one must remember this Important message: **I AM SO IN LOVE WITH LIVING THAT I ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WANT TO DIE. LIFE IS AMAZING!**

**REPEAT 3X HOURLY FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT**





## IS THAT NOT MY GOD?



I fear I have found myself in an odd situation. I am corresponding from Verbum Dei Prayer House in the heart of the Mission District, San Francisco, U S of A. I've walked into some sort of Catholic youth group for middle-aged gays. We were asked to introduce ourselves by speaking about the word "hope," and it becomes increasingly clear to me over the course of these thirty or forty people monologuing on "hope" that what they really mean is "God" and they really, truly, believe In It. And they are all quite convinced that this weekend will bring them closer together. Them meaning one and God. It's fucking awesome, kind of, but I have this terrible sense of dread that I don't belong and they all know it because I said Fuck and Shit and Oh My God when recounting my car break-in and the subsequent pouring rain. When it was my turn, I muttered something and stared at the ceiling in a way that usually says "I'm thinking profound and omniscient thoughts" but today said "I'm thanking profound and omniscient God" but really means that I'm afraid to make eye contact while public speaking. We're off to the chapel after learning that one must find a hide-a-key and smash the glass to unlock the gate in order to escape through the front door. It's a room with no chairs, only floor mats spare of stuffing, and my back hurts the second I sit down. Jacket slips off exposing my bare shoulder and I think oh shit oh shit oh shoot oh darn oh fiddlesticks rats nuts gosh darn it. And they light a million candles in front of a life size crucified Jesus and a picture of a nun and a tree log with more pictures on It and a large Jesus in the corner. There's a giant Jesus hanging from the ceiling, by the way, and they made him really hot. A gay accountant brings out cinderblocks and I'm afraid someone will be sacrificed (me) but he places them in the corner. My back fucking freaking hurts. They're singing and chanting and I'm supposed to sing along but how am I supposed to do so if I don't know the words to the song? I sit there and mumble hallelujah and think about whether God is supposed to be there in the church or if we build these structures to pitifully beg It to notice us? I am afraid that we are begging because we are afraid, and I never beg without a thick veil of irony so prayer and hymn and organized religion hasn't appealed to me yet except as a rebellion.

My sister says, "what, you're religious now?" and how am I supposed to know? My religion is basically just repeating my mantra (Life is Amazing!) and being uncomfortable and steeping myself in community and tea tree oil toothpicks and the New York Times crossword puzzle and shit. Stuff. Anyways they end up doing this Russian Catholic method of prayer in which the congregation lays a crucifix on the ground and presses their forehead against It in groups of four to six while everyone else watches and sings beautiful songs. I'm sitting there dripping sweat as I'm afraid that I'm disappointing Someone because I'm weighing pressing my forehead into Jesus and asking Him for world peace or something. Well I guess I waited for too long because as I'm halfway across the room in order to kneel down to Jesus the entire group stops singing. Somehow they all knew this epic chanting hymn that they've been doing for like ten minutes is now over now that I'm sticking my neck out for the Son. So in complete silence I finish my steps to Him and press my forehead to this man I've never met and tell Him that I'm absolutely humiliated by His behavior and why didn't He make everyone sing the song just one more time so I could ask to save all the children In the world from starvation and I really told him off this time I said Jesus I'm really going out on a limb for you here and if you could please just make sure everything's okay I think we would all really appreciate it. But is that not my God (of course It is my God) who would humiliate me in front of these concerningly pious San Franciscans and then force me to my knees to kiss Jesus Christ on the armpit and stay knelt for a fraction of the time everyone else did and then solemnly shuffle back to my spot on the floor with my hands behind my back trying to choke a smile. Freaking, fudging LOL. I'm not sure if you're supposed to drink tea during church but I did. I'm not sure if you're supposed to sneak a peek of your neighbors during silent time but I did. I'm not sure if I was supposed to shed a tear knelt at Christ's Image but I did.



# QUOTATIONS FROM MY DESKTOP

## Ask Me by William Stafford

Some time when the river is ice ask me mistakes I have made. Ask me whether what I have done is my life. Others have come in their slow way into my thought, and some have tried to help or to hurt: ask me what difference their strongest love or hate has made. I will listen to what you say. You and I can turn and look at the silent river and wait. We know the current is there, hidden; and there are comings and goings from miles away that hold the stillness exactly before us. What the river says, that is what I say.



## David Brooks

If you're spiritually open-minded, an agnostic rather than a hard atheist, and you say "It would be nice if something like this were true" and then act (to whatever extent) as though it were true, I'd say you're engaging in a sincere quest for God.

Are you havin' any fun?  
Whatcha gettin' out o' livin'?  
What good is what you've got  
If you're not havin' any fun?

Hello, World!

## HOLZER

EVERY ACHIEVEMENT REQUIRES A SACRIFICE  
EVERYONE'S WORK IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT  
EVERYTHING THAT'S INTERESTING IS NEW  
EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE DESERVE SPECIAL CONCESSIONS  
EXPIRING FOR LOVE IS BEAUTIFUL BUT STUPID  
EXPRESSING ANGER IS NECESSARY  
EXTREME BEHAVIOR HAS ITS BASIS IN PATHOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
EXTREME SELF CONSCIOUSNESS LEADS TO PERVERSION  
FAITHFULNESS IS A SOCIAL NOT A BIOLOGICAL LAW  
FAKE OR REAL INDIFFERENCE IS A POWERFUL PERSONAL WEAPON  
FATHERS OFTEN USE TOO MUCH FORCE  
FEAR IS THE GREATEST INCAPACITATOR  
FREEDOM IS A LUXURY NOT A NECESSITY

## I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340)

BY EMILY DICKINSON

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,  
And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading - treading - till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through -

And when they all were seated,  
A Service, like a Drum -  
Kept beating - beating - till I thought  
My mind was going numb -

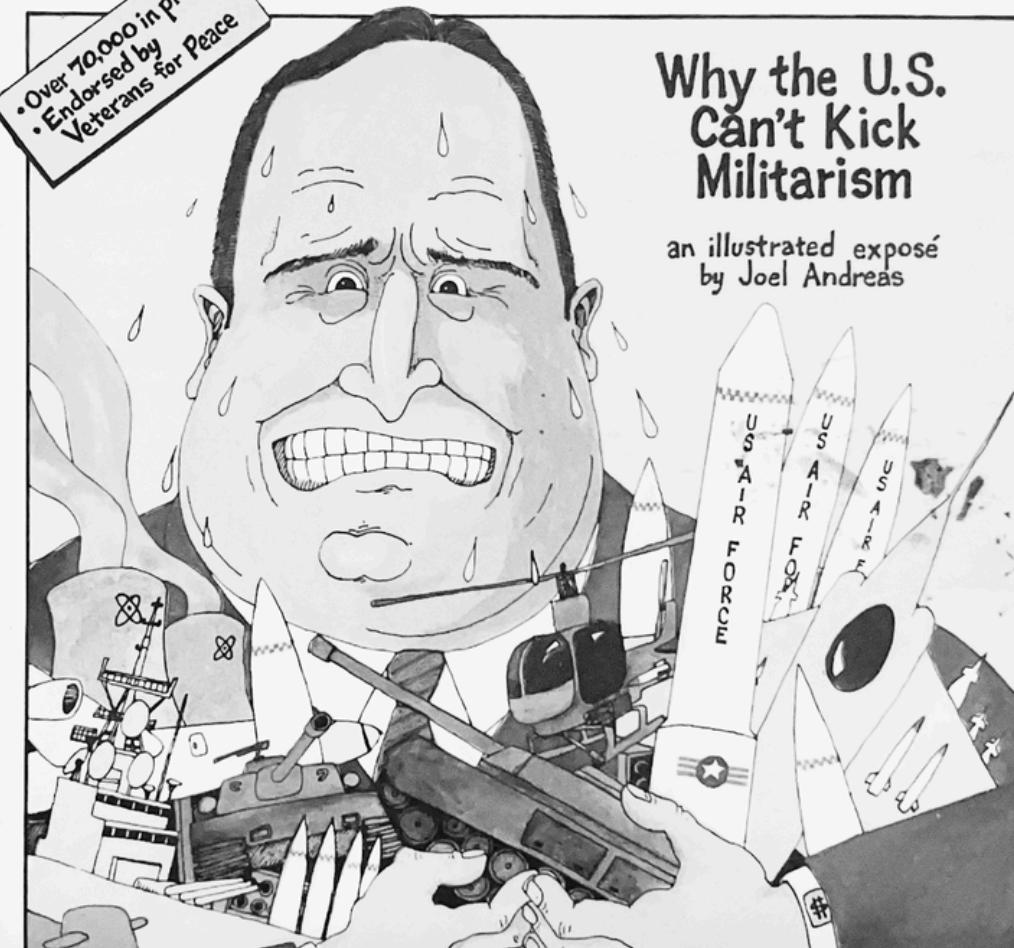
And then I heard them lift a Box  
And creak across my Soul  
With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
Then Space - began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
And Being, but an Ear,  
And I, and Silence, some strange Race,  
Wrecked, solitary, here -

And then a Plank in Reason  
broke,  
And I dropped down, and down -  
And hit a World, at every plunge,  
And Finished knowing - then -

# ADDICTED TO WAR

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Many scholars have sought to amend laissez-faire interpretations of corporate growth to show how a hidden American state facilitated the birth of an economy dominated by large corporations in the twentieth century. Martin J. Sklar, for example, revised the history of Progressive Era trust-busting, showing how antitrust law in the early twentieth century actually legitimated the growth of big business, assigning powers to "extra-electoral experts and administrators insulated from the fluctuations of electoral politics" that did more to "facilitate, legitimize, police, and complement corporate regulation of the market" than to check uncompetitive growth.

Bartow J. Elmore

The American Beverage Industry and the Development of Curbside Recycling Programs, 1950-2000

# SECULAR ANCHORESS

*Ancrene Wisse for the Modern Woman*

## DIVINE SERVICE

I live on a monastery. I'm soon to be nearly alone in rural California. Isn't that enough?

## KEEPING THE HEART

Isn't that enough?

## MORAL LESSONS AND EXAMPLES

An anchoress is pious and chaste, which I am not, but she is contemplative, which I am. By nature of her predicament, she cannot be open and vulnerable. I like this. I take this both out of context and to heart.

## TEMPTATION

I think about it all the time. I think about quitting my job. I think about going to bed later than 10PM. I think about going crazy. I think about downloading one of those farming games on my phone. I'd do anything for you. I want to walk in the redwoods before the sun sets but hold my breath when I walk past the compost bins.

## CONFESIONS

I crashed the car in front of the police station and I coughed with my mouth open. I'm not very good at talking to people. I prefer to send mental messages and hope very quietly. I think about God sometimes but not as much as Julian did, and for that I feel sorry. I am a beggar when it serves me. I can't stop thinking about you.

## PENANCE

I felt most like an anchoress coming back from San Francisco the other weekend after being steeped in prayerful chanting. Imbued with the word of God (which I never used to capitalize but now I do...), returning to my prison, becoming solitary again. I deserve this. I deserve this. I deserve this.

## LOVE

No comment.

## DOMESTIC MATTERS

There are a few ways to look at it. Most obviously, Starcross Monastic Community is my cell and I am Julian of Norwich of Annapolis. I withdrew from the society I've always known to lead a more simple lifestyle. In a less literal sense and more of an English class reading of it the cell is my mind and I am myself inside of my mind. I dwell on things but not nearly enough. I've lost this thread. I'll put away the laundry tomorrow.

# IN MY SOLITUDE

you haunt me with reveries of days gone by in my solitude  
you taunt me with memories that never die I sit in my chair  
filled with despair there's no one could be so sad with gloom  
everywhere I sit and I stare I know that I'll soon go mad  
in my solitude I'm praying Dear Lord above  
send back my love



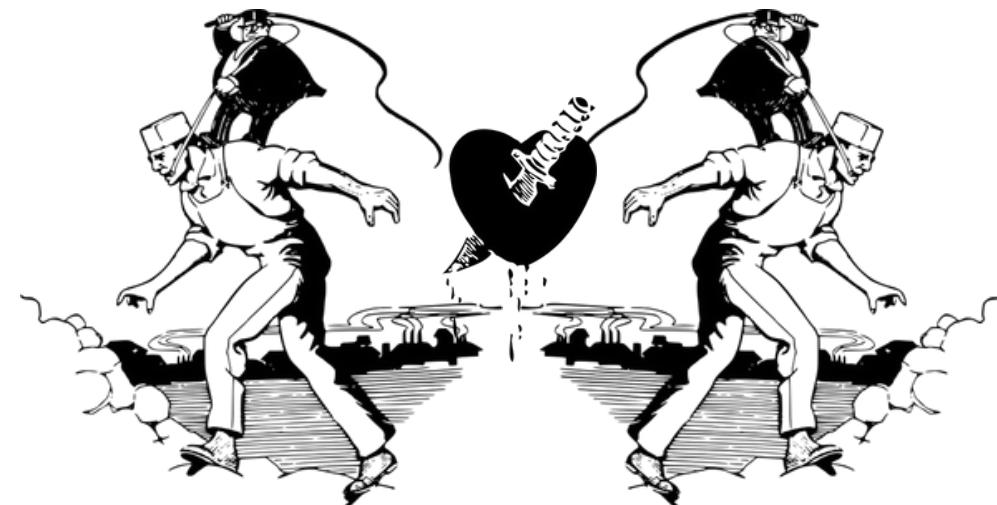
I CAN'T  
UNDERSTAND  
YOU PEOPLE

If you will cling to Nature, to the simple in Nature, to the little things that hardly anyone sees, and that can so unexpectedly become big and beyond measuring; if you have this love of inconsiderable things and seek quite simply, as one who serves, to win the confidence of what seems poor: then everything will become easier, more coherent and somehow more conciliatory for you, not in your intellect, perhaps, which lags marveling behind, but in your inmost consciousness, waking and cognizance. You are so young, so before all beginning, and I want to beg you, as much as I can, dear sir, to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the *questions themselves* like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. Perhaps you do carry within yourself the possibility of shaping and forming as a particularly happy and pure way of living; train yourself to it--but take whatever comes with great trust, and if only it comes out of your own will, out of some need of your inmost being, take it upon yourself and hate nothing. Sex is difficult; yes. But they are difficult things with which we have been charged; almost everything serious is difficult, and everything is serious. If you only recognize this and manage, out of yourself, out of your *own* nature and ways, out of your *own* experience and childhood and strength to achieve a relation to sex wholly your own (*not* influenced by convention and custom), then you need no longer be afraid of losing yourself and becoming unworthy of your best possession.

[Rilke, R. M. Letters to a Young Poet]

# BOSS MAKES A

# DOLLAR I MAKE A DIME



# THAT'S WHY I WRITE

# LOVE LETTERS ON

# COMPANY TIME

use GPS to get to

"A \_\_\_\_\_, I"

It is 2 miles or 6 minutes from Annapolis Road to our house. Descend down [REDACTED]s Road into the forest, cross the bridge, and turn LEFT onto [REDACTED] Road.

Head uphill on [REDACTED] Road, follow the road out of the trees and into the neighbor's vineyards. Cross a shabby cow grate and drive through the mill. There is hay to the left and heavy equipment trucks.

You will feel you are in the wrong place. Look for an airplane hangar ahead and to the left. Our driveway is to the LEFT of the airplane hanger.

You will feel you are in the wrong place.



### Metamorphosis

by E.E. Cummings

[originally published in *The Cambridge Review*, March 1911]

We've plodded through a weird and weary time,  
Called Winter by the calendar alone;  
We have beheld an earth pool-deep in slime,  
Image a heaven of stone.

We've found life hid between the folds of mire,  
Sensed life in every place, heard life in tune.  
The earth-shell cracks with underneath desire;  
Spring crawls from the cocoon.

Her puny wings vibrant with will to grow,  
She clings, expanding like an opening eye;  
More large, more able, more developed, lo,  
The perfect butterfly.

Today 6:16 PM

Tomorrow I think you should start in on booze as early as you want and I'm sure I'll be calling you for things but just go ahead and start the day down there until I call you. Thanks.

..\*~°° ✡☆✡ °~\*  
\*\*..

Of course I get embarrassed.  
Much more often than the average person, I'd wager.  
The only thing I fear more than dying is living.



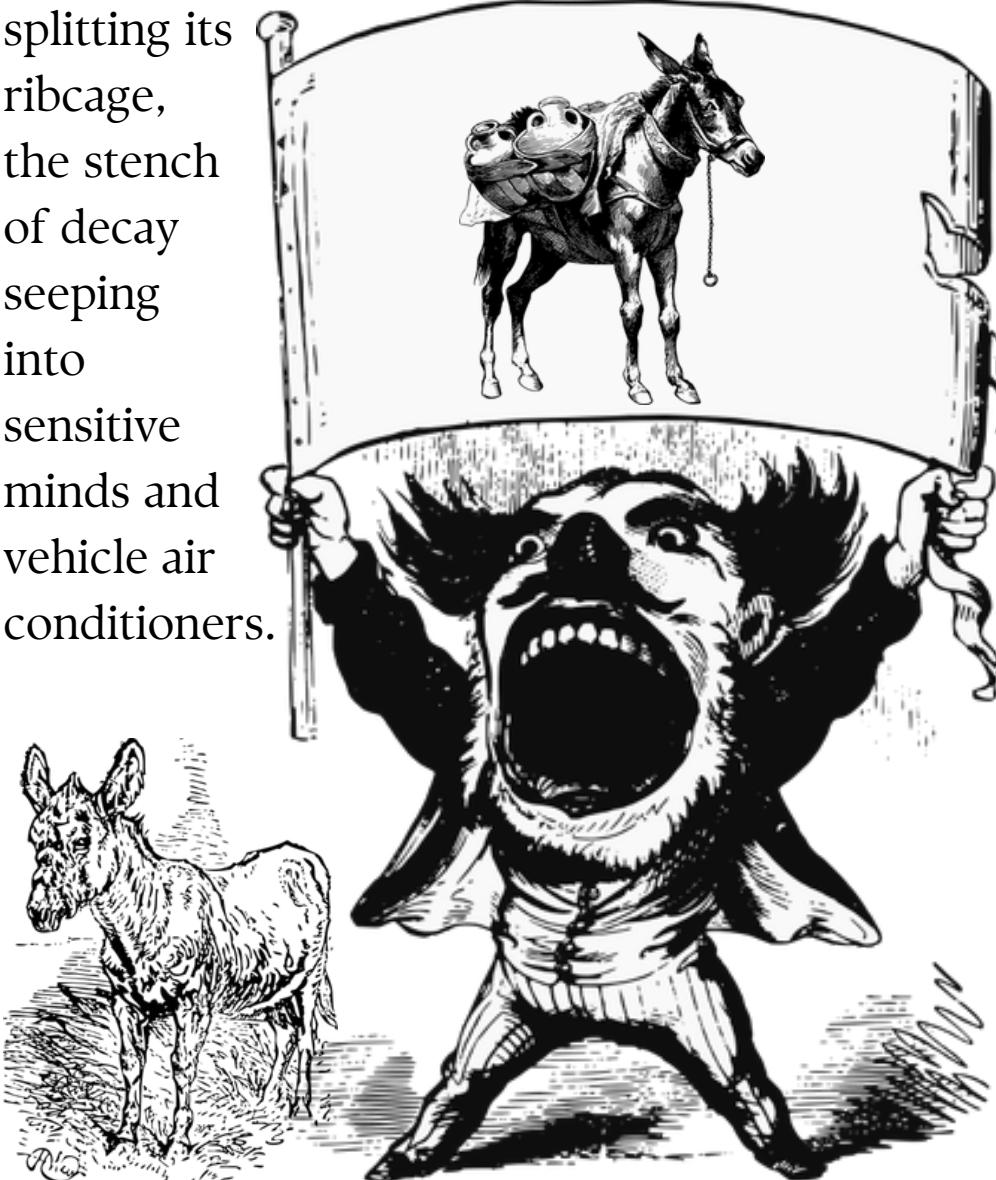
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# Within our Darkest Night / Dans nos Obscurités

Ostinato Refrain

Within our darkest night,  
Dans nos obscurités, you kindle the  
fire that never dies, feu qui ne s'éteint ja -  
way, ne s'éteint ja -  
way, With-in our dark-est night, you kin - dle the  
mais, Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le  
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -  
feu qui ne s'éteint ja - mais, ne s'éteint ja -  
Last time

I saw a mutilated donkey on the road in San Luis Obispo, its cracked teeth leering at me from highway-side. I pulled over and vomited. I thought about that donkey every day for a week, and then I forgot about it until just now. I aim not to end up like an ass with a tire track splitting its ribcage, the stench of decay seeping into sensitive minds and vehicle air conditioners.



Death will be something that happens to me, against my will, inflicted upon me by some terrible and evil force that has universally decided that I served my purpose in the world and therefore must vanish

forever off the face of the Earth, my body with disgusting chevrons smashing my skull on the 101 highway and my soul never to be found again, my name never remembered until God uncovers a huge book of every being that ever lived and shares it with the last citizen of humanity to ever exist, and It will shudder my name and die with my secrets.



Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ  
have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me  
Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ  
have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me  
Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ  
have mercy on me Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me  
Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me and all those in this  
room

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me and all those in this  
room and all beings even the ones that aren't able to make  
noise or think in the same way that I do

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on the children across the  
world and all those who suffer

Lord Jesus Christ why would you allow such terror and  
suffering

Lord Jesus Christ why did you make me like this

Lord Jesus Christ thank you for making me like this

Lord Jesus Christ do you think we would be friends If you  
came to Earth?

Lord Jesus Christ can I be honest?

Lord Jesus Christ I'm sorry.

Lord Jesus Christ I'm laughing in the face of you and your  
disciples and I can't help it.

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me

Lord Jesus Christ I'm rotating you in my mind right now  
while everyone else is probably praying

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me