

LIVING TIME by Jonas Kyle-Sidell

adagio of rocks
the world ablaze
that's the best
for me.

-Charles Bukowski

SHE: *Tagged at the Mount Vernon Stable* _____ He swears he saw me before he saw me, Facebook statuses to prove. Well, I tell him, I saw him before I saw him too, in the back of my mind, where no Facebook statuses can touch. That place where dreams reside, wander on and on like hillbillies. But then what happens. . . to the creative spirit once it finds comfort, closeness? What, slanted against the thunder of time and distance, is there left to wonder?

2 minutes ago

HIM: *Tagged at the Mount Vernon Stable* _____ I saw her before. Sitting here, slipping into state-dependent memory again, I remember I saw her before that moment at the library! She waltzed by this window that very afternoon not two weeks ago, around this same time, sun just like it is now outside, blasting pavement, cool renditions of the fire sashaying into here. Now here we are, sipping pints of Natty Boh inside a brand new way. I say, the creators of Facebook really know how to spoil a good time; they put the distance between here and there in a box, call it genesis and fun. That's a racket. Well not me, and now not us – I wanna make love: rise, 'til we rise apart, then keep rising, even as we let go.

3 minutes ago

SHE: I could feel my body again, through his. Like a stamp of approval, a raucous epiphany. Life begins to feel surreal on your own. Like some floating dream. Like we're at the top of a building looking out over this blasted city – and it all just seems like steam. What are we doing here besides weaving in and out of other bodies trying not to hit them, or vehicles, or shopping carts, or just plain standing in line? With its rutted structures that cast lazy shadows every evening to illuminate these categories of pain – and it's then that it begins to take on some

feeling of history, like this has been going on forever, and won't ever end. So climb with me to the top of the Bank of America building, baby, Pratt and Charles streets, lay with me on the ledge of the 21st floor, one leg of mine dangling off. I'm in my red dress, you casual and sincere. We'll have to do all the rest later on, crawl back down amongst the living and fish our way through fizz-less days without ecstasy, but right now just kiss me like it's the end –

2 days ago

HIM: I started calling her seeing if she wanted company. This is when you really get to know somebody. She's so smart, this girl. This woman. This cat. This wicked angel. We chat for hours. I've started staying over there; my days lighting up with swoon. Her hair in every billboard, legs the length of sky – why ask why, I ask; whiskey, hot summer all around me, onslaught of sexiness, breath on my neck, reckless-lessness of her light, them sweet open legs?

4 days ago

BY RANDOM FACEBOOK FRIENDS: It's like buying a used car off of Craigslist, getting into a fucking relationship. It's so easy to fall in love, so hard to fall in love – the heart seesaws on a branch about to break. Want to want, but the idea that we're being irrational – which we are – seizes us, an unseasonable northeasterner; and we freeze, right then. If one stops, here, beholden to their heart, this cliff crested by the dichotomous, yet parallel angels of love and fear, the answer is ferociously simple: they're in no man's land. So the answer is ferociously simple: go, go, and go. . .

SHE: He kissed me sweetly outside the theater – the earth still here, not spreading over white light, but: taxi cabs and other lovers and teenagers on a Saturday night. The inordinate, very ordinary teeming whirl of life. Saturday nights are still here. And maybe a little innocence is left. In the Harbor East, he caught me as I pulled out a cigarette and stepped onto a plant's ledge, and almost died.

1 week ago

HIM: I love love but I hate the control factor. How we lean into each other so far we forget the color of our own shoes, the consistency of our own blues. I like how we blend into a miracle; as perfect and inexplicable and “really, who put those there?” as the stars. Like eggs on a hangover, I love love but hate how hard it is.

1 week and 21 minutes ago

SHE: I've had three serious boyfriends. Was in love with one. There's a serious part of me, loathes this shit. Half of me is always done. The courtship to the sinking ship, more often than not, I'd rather just slip out and fall in love with the clouds. . . Every guy feigns this shit, the better half don't truly trust themselves capable. But feel as if they have to try! *Try*. And therein lies the problem – no one, love, would blame you you just walked away now.

1 week and 40 minutes ago

HIM: Seeking a Friend for the End of the World. Great movie! And she kept looking at me like a catty-corner street. I wanted to kiss her. When we were fourteen, we worked up things: brush of hands, hug, rabid pecks, sloppy making out; now you're holding hands, the making out is finding its rhythm, like a seal on land sliding into water; then, like any sky changes, you push into the thinning horizon, light madness, slight sweat breaking out on the brow. You're finding safer times to be alone, securing the parameters. She waves you up her shirt; you place her over your jeans. On a rainy day you toy with the idea of what comes below her bellybutton, and almost immediately like a sail on a surfboard she arches her back, blowing you with just the right amount of steam. Again the image of a seal silent slipping below the waterline, but she's moaning from above, and outside another sky is changing. But now, jumping the fence of thirty, galloping unto unclaimed property, shedding heroism like snakeskin, you've more power to wreck pretense. Get to where the air is warm with sex. Still, here – now, I just wanted to kiss her, again, and remember it this time. Settling in instead, for her disarmingly unshackled presence left of me, sandaled right foot, crossed legs, Steve Carell thinking about dying, which was funny!

1 week and 1 hour ago

SHE & HIM: *Tagged at Landmark Harbor East Cinemas*_____ We talked, we got ice cream. Coffee, we talked. Inside the movie theater, sidelong glances become even more surreal – who is this person sitting next to me, flickering 'neath the reel?

1 week and 1 hour and 30 minutes ago

HIM: She had on a low-cut thin white cotton T-shirt, perfect for the weather. Blue jeans reflecting the moon. Had we really ravaged each other last time? Now we're on the innocent side of decadence, where I become weird and she becomes ambivalent.

1 week and 3 hours ago

SHE: He had a slip of wife-beater peeking out a thin blue button down, perfect for the weather. It's a strange system of relief and resistance, meeting / being with someone. Not sure I'm ready for your bullshit, man. No sense in mine.

1 week and 3 hours and 20 minutes ago

HIM: Like Doc invents in Back to the Future – “The Flux Capacitor.” A boxer constantly changing his combinations. Something waits up. . .

1 week and 3 hours and 25 minutes ago

SHE: He told me to meet him here. Yeah, I'm a note on his panoramic floor. Has he heard my Facebook dream? Have I heard his?

1 week and 3 hours and 40 minutes ago

HIM: A year from now; ten; five years before – time is like Jello, but you're stuck in it like a cartoon character at the bottom of a well. But it's a feeling of destiny that swings forth, like the top of the well suddenly whirling into a pool of light and water jettisoning out –

1 week and 4 hours ago

SHE: The night still flickered with the day. Ashes going out, coals dying, fireflies in the desert. Which made the water, up in the harbor, more *galvanizing*. It moves like something with feet; cushioning – dark summer wind! – the bench where I sit.

1 week and 4 hours and 2 minutes ago

BY RANDOM FACEBOOK FRIENDS: People are nice – this is no misnomer. I once went with a woman to look at her '98 Corrolla. She picked me up at the Light Rail Station in Timonium, and we wended our way back to her house in horse country, exchanging lives me-tro-nomicly. She was trying to sell me something and I wasn't even yet buying, but she picked me up and drove me all that way, then back. The interaction broke free of timing at times, as we began to trust each other. The engine light was on; I needed to get it checked anyhow. What could I know from just running it over some road? She texted me back later that night: Sorry, I sold the

Corrola. Wasn't sure you were going to get it and I needed it gone by the end of the week. *I said:* That's okay, thanks anyways! *She said:* Good luck! Car shopping is miserable.

HIM: Sometimes I feel myself becoming my father. If I sleep too late, my back starts to hurt. Only thing I know: I don't ever want to stop being emotional. *Never.* Chase, chase the light! I stop I become a doppelganger. Something saying the same thing twice, trying too hard to prove its point. No – I will say No, and I will mean it. Then I'll say Yes, and fall harder than the light when you're falling.

1 week and 1 day ago

SHE: Sometimes I feel myself becoming my mother, all curls and affectation. One thing I know is I don't ever want to stop – let the good times roll. . . She does alright. Works hard, loves right. There has to be enough time in life for the good stuff: moments where, we're rearranging chairs and choosing the right foods, getting the light and blood just right – we might – sink into ourselves with each other. Past circling us like a pack of greyhound dogs; sitting here, the middle of it, we, who are the future.

1 week and 1 day ago

HIM: Down by the harbor.

1 week and 2 days ago

SHE: Meet me down by the harbor. . .

1 week and 2 days and 35 minutes ago

SHE & HIM: One night
of romance
makes a life
worth
living, again – yeah I said
one night
romance can make

life worth living.

1 week and 2 days and 3 hours ago

SHE: Down by the harbor, sugar,
hot summer night; movie, walk
along the water. . .

1 week and 2 days and 6 hours ago

HIM: Take my money, take my shame,
gimme somethin' to do, honey, I can play the game;
in between the lines, find some time,
me and you. . .

1 week and 2 days and 12 hours ago

BY RANDOM FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I spent a whole day with a twenty-five-year old fellow who was selling his grandfather's '96 Camary. It had only 110,000 miles on it. I found a place called Just Tires up the street from him; they said they could check it that day without an appointment. The hell could I know from just running it over some road? Two hours turned into four, finally they came back to us with the laundry list. The motherfucking bottom was failing: busted fuel pipe from rust, in need of new power steering. . . I could tell from the mechanics' forlorn looks in their eyes that suggested they were not sure who to feel more sorry for, me who might buy it, him who might have to keep it. What was remarkable was how the seller and I warmed up to each other throughout the day, and by the time the sick relative died, we wished each other well and went our separate ways. Our transaction had snapped like a V-belt, what was left to keep us on this same day?

HIM: Her smile was astrological, an ever shifting horoscope. Ass like a notebook. My worry is: she won't stop looking long enough for me to really see her. In other words, will I see you again, woman?

1 week and 3 days ago

SHE: Man, I took him in. First to my place, then to my body, wrapping my whole legs around him. He seemed ready, ha! I must've needed it – after we showered, each going our separate work ways, back to the world, oh back to the world. But everything seems stripped of its gimmick, now, more restful; sweet morning summer breeze shooing up Charles, I'm young forever. I remember his arms, the way they seemed to not exist without his shoulders. He coulda used a trim down there. His smile was meteoric.

1 week and 3 days and 4 hours ago

HIM: I don't remember the best parts. We talked in compounded sweet nothings as an Irish band plucked and controlled the blues. It was weird looking at her, I think, because I had had a whole conversation with her already in my head that afternoon, a muffled fable, but now it was actually happening, psychedelic and surreal. I couldn't remember what I was saying compared to what I felt I already said. Like walking into a bank and suddenly forgetting how much you need, have, or even what your means of making any is – you're just there. . . The Teller smiles, and approaching the window you make a similar comparison, similar number seeming to fit within a reason, motivation you left behind, and she hands you your money. Stickerstruck, blind. Remembering just one thing, though, about who you are, where it is you came from, luckily's enough to kickstart the imagination back from reality; is there a beautiful woman staring at you?

1 week and 3 days and 10 hours ago

SHE: Out on the street this morning. . . Out on the street this morning. . . I'm not sure I can finish a sentence. My hair smells half in relief, strands the hell out of place. A resurgence of disorientation, 'tis the greatest gift! "If you're not lost, your someplace somebody has already found," I heard Junot Diaz say in a Youtube interview. My shoes are bright green, gleaming. Every stranger on my way to work, community activist / organizing / labor union type stuff down by the harbor, has something to say. Only they're not saying it – they're busy keeping it; poeticizing "tweets," charming birds' flight patterns back down to earth, finding ways to exist again, within it, where all this makes sense: outside the blooming realm of interconnected oblivion, communicative madness, i.e. technology, this social networking. HERE, we're not writing lines of code for the machine, we're interpreting ourselves through it: there ain't no other choice. Outfitting, not fitting in. And my god, everyone looks fabulous. . .

1 week and 3 days and 12 hours ago

HIM: It's amazing how we feel we can't do things until we do. Like how I just started working construction again over the summer, in between teaching English classes at the community college, and I'm back, baby. While I taught English in that sterile classroom, I lamented the virile feeling of taping a window for higher, painting on a ladder, or smacking a scored piece of drywall for the hanging. Bang! Talking about things too much steals their magic. It's true. Keep room for an unknown, baby, always: secret nobody knows, and neither do you.

1 week and 3 days and 15 hours ago

SHE & HIM: At an open mic recently, I heard a girl read a poem of hers, talking about the morning after – after hooking up with someone. The poem was beautiful; it said try as long as you can not to think. Keep it going. Don't let the editor come in the room with his salty demands, deadlines, and drudgeries. Begrudge him. Be naked with this person. Watch them as they are naked. Hop in the shower with them! Whatever is awkward, still, act like it's not. There will be plenty of time for that. Plenty of time. Instead, wash each other's hair in the shower. Watch the water as it laminates their body, illuminating it, the body you just discovered yesterday. Revel in the wild waterfall that is this life. And you can already hear the editor ringing his bells at the front door, again, louder and more persistent – touch that person, lightly, and kiss them. Let them touch you back, now. Find each other's cheeks and warm breath and for a moment see the eyes as they reflect your own, the hard won surprise. Let the world wait oh, let the world wait.

1 week and 3 days and 17 hours ago

HIM: *Tagged at Mick O' Shea's Irish Bar and Grill*_____ She a summer gin and tonic, me a winter whiskey – on ice, 'cause clearly it's summer, woman. The night spins, rats on a heat wheel, heat wheel. Her hair seems to have a life of its own. Her eyes disown their integrity. And we? We drink.

1 week and 4 days ago

SHE: *Tagged at Mick O' Shea's Irish Bar and Grill*_____ He's got a shy audacity that's compelling. We drink, straight to the hard stuff! It's been a long afternoon, my man.

1 week and 4 days and 2 minutes ago

HIM: She fucking waved. I was in some head trance, hearing the words to Springsteen's "My Love Will Not Let You Down," the rollicking guitar rhythms working off each other, forming some kind of space-time continuum where possibility lurks impossibly, in fact it's woven right into the very fabric we call "impossible," and that carpet's lifting off! If that song were not rolling through my brain like a freight train on fire when she turned away believing her muted action futile, I'd not have had the guts to tell her it wasn't. Lord, it wasn't. I glide across the street on my magic carpet ride, winking.

1 week and 4 days and 20 minutes ago

SHE: I stepped out into the night and saw him needling his way up Charles St., halcyon wake of streetlight on his wave. I waved back. To what? To the streetlight, the night, to a man who may or may not have ever seen me. It was a mundane move, and I turned to sulk back into the bar, even though I thought I was about to leave, when a deep, dry baritone cracks the bland offering of a drink, and I blink.

1 week and 4 days and 21 minutes ago

BY RANDOM FACEBOOK FRIENDS: On the day I got my car, I had worked all weekend and was foggy in the head, but my soul was fortified. I met the guy at Charles St. and Hamilton, a small side street. He said to get on the highway, get some speed, after flicking the radio on and sitting back. I did. He said it needs a new left wheel bearing, that's the only major thing. I said can I take it to a mechanic I saw just the other day on Reisterstown? He said sure, I grew up around there – but they were going to take too long again, so we found another along the strip. It was the only major thing. He said I have to go to Laurel to get the title. I said sure; he drove this stretch. Halfway there, he turns to me and says, "This is like the ultimate test-driving experience! We ain't even exchanged nothin' yet." I laughed, before we both turned our eyes back on the road.

HIM: How many times have I walked this street and dreamed of a woman who could make my dreams come true? I've forgotten where one ends and the next begins. It's a valley of doors, and I can't find the one that leads me out: into a living time. I need a living time. It's not that I can't imagine a woman's eyes on me, I can't imagine the kind that level me looking back. Love is too real to be imagined. Pluck that string. See what sound it makes.

1 week and 4 days and 50 minutes ago

SHE: *Tagged at Mick O' Shea's Irish Bar and Grill* _____ I am not a feminist. If feminist is for women, what's for men? Chauvinist. At the heart of each is anger. Women have less power – often times more responsibility, so we have a right to be angry, but it's still not helpful. An angry woman is not a strong woman; just like a chauvinist, she's a perfect paradox, and the dregs of our gender: growing weaker and weaker even as she feels big, needing and needing until

all she does is take. She's forgotten how to like, ya know? How to be free with someone. I want to remember that. Be someone like that.

1 week and 4 days and 52 minutes ago

HIM: I walked and walked and walked. Found myself in Fells Point, moon sheen over the harbor mocking me my freedom – at Thames St., Soundgarden glistens something wondrous, and I listen to Springsteen until I'm convinced she wants me, too.

1 week and 4 days and 2 hours ago

SHE: Let me set the scene for you: as he walked away, I followed him to the front of the library, sneakily. I watched him walk out into the late light, hoping he would turn around and see me. He looked limp, defeated. C'mon! Show some hubris, man. As he walked through the turnstiles and then the double doors, past the security guard, I saw him twitch, lift his left shoulder to his ear like a tic, swagger left then disappear, cool and weird. Men give me motion sickness. Won't they step out of their head? See that the anchor ain't real, they're just afraid of stopping.

1 week and 4 days and 3 hours and 27 minutes ago

HIM: It's in the quieter moments, the eerily ones so, that the music really rings out. This arbitrary tapestry of words (on a page), flux and flow, machinery and orbit, finally begins to sing out, as it goes! My mind is in there, everywhere, up where these words meet and part –

1 week and 4 days and 3 hours and 53 minutes ago

SHE: I didn't want him to leave.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 3 minutes ago

HIM: I walked out into the sunset evening, on air. It's not fair – how will I ever see her again? How will I begin? A man doesn't have it in, he's working against every jerk show. Sex changed us from children, but it didn't make us better. We took on alcohol, drugs to mitigate the feeling, try'n be free, but it didn't take care of it. It never does. Until first we become apes, then salamanders; we push ourselves out to sea.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 10 minutes ago

SHE: He's creeping me out.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 13 minutes ago

HIM: Shit. I'm creeping her out.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 13 minutes and 42 seconds ago

SHE: I was reading about the reverse evolution of her lover when I sensed him hanging around.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 15 minutes ago

HIM: *Tagged at the Enoch Pratt Free Library*_____ First time I read you I knew the heavens split the truth like an atom, blowing me whole. (Radiation, like lies, took the city for a while, then cancer took my soul.) But it keeps coming back around to this moment, right here now, when I first see you: on the 3rd floor in the contemporary literature isle. Hair down, head hung over an Aimee Bender book, spinning like a fucking star. Let me be your planet, baby, let me try!

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 22 minutes ago

SHE: *Tagged at the Enoch Pratt Free Library*_____ The first time I read Aimee Bender I could feel the network of my body. Same way I could imagine the places she had been, things she'd read – same way her character came into being. All of that forming a cross of enchantment leading me to this article, here in my hands, stabbing at truth through fantasy, arrow shot up, coming back down, now, killing me. Straight through the heart. Something about holding it, too! The physicality contradicting spirituality, like smoke; and me here, all in one place.

1 week and 4 days and 4 hours and 22 minutes and 56 seconds ago

HIM: I care about carelessness. How the moon shudders like an eyelid, when the day gushes like an opening wound. Bratwurst liver. Wink at me, honey! I want a woman, to hedge my best to the sky with – let her know I'm there: strong and true. I care about restlessness, shoes, and light. How / we fight / them blues? Ah, to the library! To the sound! I feel like getting on.

1 week and 4 days and 5 hours and 32 minutes ago

SHE: *Tagged at The Market at Mulberry St.* _____ Waning May sun like a thin veil of fire, it's gonna be a hot locust summer, here in Baltimore. Vegetables: asparagus and green beans and broccoli. Tomatoes, avocados, grapefruit! Show me one hot man in a suit. . . I'll be beautiful. Undress him to let the sweat shine through, breeze suture me to his bones.

1 week and 4 days and 5 hours and 50 minutes ago

HIM: Doubt is an artist's best friend. Lives right next door to Hope. One row house over, man. Reality – the sounds each hears through the other's walls, their walls.

1 week and 4 days and 6 hours and 10 minutes ago

SHE: These damned high-heeled shoes. Cracks along Charles St. Head downtown – salmon, high jumping upstream. Late afternoon sun blinding me; can't see in this bar – STABLE, a red sign burns – on Charles and Read – late sun afternoon is blinding me – but my reflection off its endless panes is wonderful, as I walk by, into the blue sky.

1 week and 4 days and 6 hours and 13 minutes ago

HIM: *Tagged at Mount Vernon Stable* _____ Like that perfect song on the jukebox. 4pm, *drunk* – only thing later than you: the lost sun, moanin' the melody over the window; world's on fire.

1 week and 4 days and 6 hours and 13 minutes and 6 seconds ago

[YOU are now friends with SHE.]
[YOU are now friends with HIM.]

1 week and 5 days ago