

Box is a Triangle

A box can be many things, but this Box is a triangle. His name is Abacus Boxer, and he's a male right triangle. His existence is a serious one, full of the same tribulations you may experience on a given day, including traffic jams, burnt pierogis, and untimely arson. "Box," we'll call him (this moniker given by his friends, not me), is en route to his abode from his doozy-of-a-9-5er. His job is to occupy our plane of existence in his natural state, that is to say, a 3x4x5 (ish) (inches) right triangle. You'll find him all over the place. He's the broad face of a door wedge, or a slice of grilled cheese. He's sunshine through crossed branches of autumn trees. Any time your occipital cortex registers visual stimuli in the form of 3:4:5 (ish) (inches) Pythagorean ratio of vertices and edges, you are experiencing Box. Box projects himself into our world.

Ever get up, slap your cheeks, get dressed, go ahead and head out, only to be blindsided by a metaphorical fucking sledgehammer to the ol' coconut, existential-style identity crisis, produced by the sight of some bush-league schmuck sporting your exact shoes (year, make, model) and/or hat and/or haircut and/or lingo? It is sometimes difficult to conceive a reality in which one is truly unique and an agent of one's life. It is sometimes easier to conceive a reality in which one is simply an intersection on the spectrums of genes, gut microbiota, influences and cosmic fate. Maybe that's all the identity we can ask for.

Imagine you are a two-dimensional shape, on a cosmic plane of existence outside of our own. Box lives here. Understanding that on Box's plane, infinite shapes exist in infinite combinations of vertex number and edge length, it's just gotta be depressing to know that some

personage out there looks so much like you (that is to say, their vertices match your own, with edge lengths approaching a limit to your own) that the difference between the two of ya'll is literally negligible, appearance-wise. Take solace in this: Since there are infinite possibilities of dimensions of infinite other shapes, the chances of running into a dead-ringer of a doppelganger are infinitesimally small, literally negligible. It's nice to feel unique.

Hedge that thought for a sec. Now imagine again (close your eyes. I am.) that you are a shape on this plane, let's say, a triangle. You learn that your interview at Fractaling did not land you the job, even though you are (or were?) what you thought of as "compadres" with a few members of upper management. You don't get the position because turns out, some dude named Dale is a little closer to the dimensions they are looking for, plus he's probably a real nice guy, and sometimes you can be a little "persnickety" (their words, not mine) and maybe not suitable for Fractaling, which requires team-player attitudes, and maybe you would be best suited for something like Projection? Or worse yet, you find out your S.O is performing perfidious relations with some near-doppelganger ding-dong two doors down. It can't be about looks. You look the same. You are both 3x4x5 (ish) (inches) right triangles. He must be funnier than you. Ouch.

The point is, on our plane, our latent ape instincts have us sizing up the appearances of others all the time. We do this as a means to our end, to replicate ourselves across space and time through our genes. Shapes though, I don't know. Comparison is effectively pointless, appearance-wise. They aren't trying to replicate, outside of Fractaling, that is. Anyways, here's the scoop. Box has been the victim of an unfortunate and rather untimely arson. He's on his way

home from his doozy-of-a-9-5er. As far as he knows, his wife is just waking up in time to cook dinner. She works third shift in Projection as a $2\pi r$ ($r=2$ (inches)) circle. Let's join him.

Box eases his hand from midnight to 9, the 45 degree change in his steering wheel guides his vehicle around a familiar turn. He has charted the course between his vocation and his abode dozens of scores of times; it's details are etched into his cerebellum, therefore: He can zone out. A backdrop of radio-supplied grunge creates an apt atmosphere for his angst.

"Fuck," Box offers to no one in particular.

"Fuck my life."

Zz....Rrr.

*This is **FLT-FM** "The Filth!"*

Zzp!

Gained-out guitars. Sore-throat vocals.

Lyrics evoke Zodiac symbols, metaphor.

"This is the only way," Box mutters, as if refuting some internal entreaty.

"And there's certainly no stopping this now."

Dear reader, I must confess I can only speculate regarding the genesis of these reflections. Did something happen at work? Or maybe it's the traffic. It is within the realm of possibility that Box is voicing anxiety over his impending trip, a trip he and his wife have been

preparing for for quite some time now. Years of saving and planning. The last few months in particular dedicated to the particulars. Today marks the last of dozens of scores of homeward commutes. As of today, he is officially retired from Projection. He's taken out comprehensive insurance policies on his home: theft protection, flood protection, fire protection. There is cause for worry over such a great journey, he'll be leaving his life as he knows it to explore the planar expanse in all of its infinite glory. That's nuts. Let's jump back in.

Hey! Wait! I've got a new complaint! Forever in debt to your priceless advice!

"Hope dinner's ready." A smile bends the ends of his stiff lips awkwardly upward, as if a marble-sized weight was placed on his philtrum and his whole mouth sagged into simperance. The thought of sautéed pierogis sets his salivary glands in action (Triangles have these (salivary glands, and the means to set them in action (parasympathetic preganglionic neurons))). Box's mind wanders to a recent conversation with his wife. Words bounce in and out of his skull (Triangles have these. Skulls.).

"You know, you don't always have to be right."

"I am right though, about a lot of things, actually."

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't be obtuse."

As Box and his vehicle, a '94 Chrysler Lebaron, close the distance between himself and his home, where his wife has presumably succeeded in preparing the evening's pierogis to his expectations (unburnt), he vividly recalls his wife's last words to him:

“Honey. Babe. Please! You need to relax. *Loosen up!* All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.”

“You wish I was better rounded.”

“That’s not what I said!”

“A little less exacting. Less precise.”

“No no! You’re missing the point. Take Dale, for instance-”

SCREEECH!!! The brakes of his ‘94 Chrysler Lebaron squeal in protest as Box’s trajectory halts short of his address. A crowd of all shapes and sizes is gathered around the periphery of his property. Murmurs fill his ears.

“How sad.” “Just awful!” “Untimely.”

A faint smell, burnt pierogis, fills his nostrils.

A distinct smell, burnt everything, is there too.

“They were all set to go. Next week.”

“Next Monday I think, that’s six days.”

“Okay, I didn’t say seven days, did I?”

“No, yeah I know, I’m just saying.”

“Okay.”

Pushing past the crowd, his eyes receive visual stimuli and pass it along. Upstairs he registers charred timber, crumbled cinder blocks. Smoke blocks all sky. The scene is sucked of sound, ashes absorbing already diminished decibels, murmurs turned whisper in response to his presence. The visual stimuli indicate there is nothing left. The kitchen is gone, yeah, but so is everything. A non-comprehensive list on the spectrum of “everything,” with limits set to the dimensions of his abode, a 90x90x20 (feet) house, includes: his sofa, his knife set, his bedstand, his wife.

I assume even after months on the road, remembering that day is acutely painful for Box. It can take years, decades to recover from the loss of a spouse. Dear reader, just imagine the pain. The grief counselors couldn't get through to him that week. They say he just sat there, devoid of any emotion. Like a stone wall. He never moved past shock. Shocking doesn't begin to describe the scene that must've unfolded. The arson inspectors reported the fire appeared to have started in the kitchen, which looked something like a bombed-out house from old WWII pictures. It's as if a pierogi-sized explosive had gone off, possibly triggered by an open flame, they said. I'm told that someone could easily tuck away an explosive of this size, deep in a zip-sealed, meal-sized bag of pierogis, if they were so inclined.