

Lament for an HP Envy Laptop

O world! O life! O laptop!
On whose keyboard my fingers
Shall never more clack - alas!
The IT tech says it's your time,
Or rather, your graphics card, "and frankly,
It's a miracle it's lasted this long anyway;"
What kind of bullshit consolation is that?

He must be wrong, he must be!
What purpose, then, of leisure
Without Wifi, or mem'ry
Once rendered inaccessible?
Does not your cooling fan still whir with life?
Does not your power button flicker bright?
But you were made to last a generation!
The Best Buy Geek Squad promised so -

Surely, it hasn't passed so quickly?

To hell with you, then, o laptop!
O wretched, useless junk!
So suffer your sticky keys
IN CTRL+ALT+DAMNATION!
Go rot on some forgotten plastic beach
Where sun-baked seagulls starved for crumbs
May feast upon your rusted chips!
What, you thought yourself
Irreplaceable? Well damn you!
Damn your impotent pixels
And toothless gigabytes
And sorry-ass excuse of a CPU!

Foolish! To have entrusted you
Ev'ry poem and first kiss,
Each backroad and birth date
As though balloons in toddlers' hands.
What is it you demand of me, o devil?!
My first-born is yours; my 401k;
All the lyrics to Taylor Swift's album "Red."

Made to Last a Generation

Take them all, dammit!
I just need you to turn on, please.
Please. Just one last time!

Tracing Paper

Oh.

Ohhhhh.

Oh, how the words once flowed!

How they once looked so - pretty.

How the pen wanders off
Without vision, and often
Into traffic.

How the hell did I reign it in,
Make it sing, teach it to look both ways?

From what well did I draw upon
Without direction, dictionary,
Thesaurus, distraction...

Oh, how the writing hand cramps!

I looked it up, once:
I have a "lateral quadropod" grip.
Thumb wrapped across the pen,
The pen resting on the top of my ring finger.
Apparently, it's not the party trick I once thought it was,
But I still think it's pretty neat.

My grandfather would scold me for writing this way,
Told me I was writing like a cave-man (a "Cromagnon," actually).
We'd spend hours at the kitchen table
Practicing how to write the "correct" way
But my hand refused to learn,
Until he gave up and sent me home screaming.

I was in third grade.
I collected snowglobes from yard sales.
I played Star Wars Battlefront on the PlayStation with my neighbor Neil.
I broke my leg in soccer camp; got to cut to the front
Of all the rides at Hershey Park that summer.

Made to Last a Generation

I can still smell my grandparents' kitchen: roasted garlic and onion.
I carried their kitchen home with me in my clothes
And my mother would feign omnipotence,
Saying that she knew what my grandparents were cooking for dinner.
It fooled me for a long time.

I still get comments about my handwriting from my grandfather,
My family, friends, coworkers - you get it.
He was only joking about the cave-man thing,
And I screamed a lot as a kid, so.

I just find it interesting, is all.

How the mind recedes, reveals itself a shallow tide in moonlight.

Hippo Hippo / Brain Go Brr

Tonight's one of those "candlelight-nude,
Floating in sweat and Epsom salt" kind of nights.
One of those "staring at the broken ceiling fan
Wondering what ice cream flavor those
Salvador Dali clocks would've been" kind of nights -
Rocky Road? Never tried it. Too on the nose
Anyway. Cake Batter, then? My earliest memory:
My sixth birthday, barefoot, climbing the splintered
Staircase of my mother's porch. Is she waiting
At the top? I don't know, I never look up. Too many
Splinters... One of those "I'm feeling really blah-blah/
I want to blah-blah-blah" kind of nights; they laughed in '69
When Boom Bang-a-Bang tied for first place at Eurovision,
But damn if it wasn't catchy. Straight to the point, too.
One of those "I should've bought an air conditioner"
Kind of nights. White noise with a scoop of Neapolitan.
I should've been a drummer. Boom bang-a-bang indeed.

Pikes Peak Peanut Pusher Reaches Summit

Today I read of a man, a peanut-pusher, the fourth
Of his Sisyphean pastiche, who fastened spoon to nose
To flick a peanut to the summit of Pikes Peak; he flicked
Through the night, flicked on all fours, flicked without sleep or pleasure
For peanut's sake, for the love of peanut, flicked for seven
Days until his work was finished, and indeed, it was good,
Then flicked himself home and rewarded himself with flicking
Through televangelist TV; and I thought to myself,
What a poet, what a lover, what divine lunacy
To suffer one's time for peanuts - half worn-down by the trail,
Half lost to the night, abandoned, but not forgotten,
Dozens upon dozens of shells to peak insanity -
All for the purse of a well-earned nap; and I wondered then
Why I'd wondered what lengths a man will go to avoid doing his dishes.

Love, My Neighbor

He introduces himself
From across the hall
With a box of matches
And a carton of eggs
And asks me to choose.
“Choose what, exactly?”
I ask. He flashes a smile.
“If I should strike up
A conversation,
Or try to crack a yolk.”

I run into him again,
A few days later,
Carrying groceries
Up to his apartment
With one-trip-from-the-car
Determination
And the bags and weight to match,
His lanky arms shaking,
His face beet-red, yet beaming.
When he sees me, he stops
And squats in the stairwell,
Cranes his neck and grins:
“Piggyback ride?”

I fish his house keys
From his pocket instead,
Forget about it

Until the morning,
When I find
An envelope
Taped to my door;
Inside it, a copy
Of the key to his apartment,
Wrapped in an origami
Heart with a sharpie-scrawled
Message on its back, reading
“For next time.”

Made to Last a Generation

It makes me laugh,
Makes me blush.

I check both ends of the hall
For cameras that are not there.

It makes *no sense*.

It makes for a wonderful
Wastebasket ball,

And aching bubblegum pit
In my stomach.

Another week passes.
Maybe two. At night,
I trace the drowsy cracks
On my eggshell ceiling
With sizzling, bloodshot
Eyes. I peel off the sheets,
Shake off the invisible
Doctor fish operating
On the snakeskin
Between my toes.
I hear him singing
In the parking lot,

But it's only the wind.
The rain tap-tapping.
The cricket-buzz
And car alarms.
The blood flow, lapping
In shallow coves
Of covered ears.

