

TAKE THE LATE TRAIN

The platform's just so dirty, the air's rushing by. Why? No train's passed by yet. Cold shudders and tremors. A pain in the back, unreachable with either hand. Walls are too infested with germs and incrustated pee to dare use them as scratch-boards. Just make a face of displeasure.

Why is the breeze still there? And why am I still thinking about it? What divine presence is refusing to let some thoughts escape? A thought of such infinitely miniscule importance that it overwhelms the rest. A wave of nothingness floods out whatever it wants. I'd so prefer to focus on... life – but no, I focus on nothing.

Or so I wish it was nothing. It remains a pain in my back, an itch on my elbow and a throbbing in my forehead. It's an alarm clock at four in the morning, an anti-anti-depressant, a hot shower when what you need is a cold one. It's a lifeless battery for your broken phone and a heartbreak for a machine; and a short circuit to your heart.

It's all those things, and yet it's nothing. And *so* it's nothing.

And so the train hasn't arrived yet, and so the fear of Mister Gleckman of rapid forthcoming death increases. "When will Jerry arrive?" the worried voice cries out to the not-giving-a-fuck secretary, "when will Jerry come?". The generosity of the secretary limits itself to a sigh. My generosity limits itself to impatiently tapping my foot on the platform expecting the late train.

“He should be here by now” Gleckman’s interior monologue thus begins. “Future rests upon *his* shoulders. How does that Beatles song go again? Uh... For well you know that it’s a fool who plays it cool by making his world a little colder. Where are you Jerry? Where are you? What has become of time and its consequences on life? I need you here. I need a presence and it needs to be yours.”

Suicide on the tracks – the body has been removed, the tracks washed, bits and pieces picked up, train’s clear to go. Another unknown person modifying my life. The butterfly effect is more present than I thought. What has become of Gleckman? Has my rhythmic foot tapping helped in any way?

“He’s abandoned me, with a guiltless conscience he left me, I’m sure of it. Here I am, sobbing on my desk and Jerry’s away – forever. Forever and ever. He’s the comforting presence of a friend I’ve never had.” The antidote to suicidal depression, but now, he is the absence of a fix of a crack addict. And that’s worse than suicidal depression.

What a drag! The confidence of a man onto me must be delegated to my confidence of a train. Whose responsibility is it? Jerry? The conductor? God? The Beatles? Tom? Maybe a mother who enjoys complaining about her bad fate. Find a masochistic soul to gulp down guilt and punishment. He will blame me and I’ll blame the train who’ll blame the man who committed suicide who wrote in his farewell letter about his mother’s mah-jongg appointment. Delegate, delegate, delegate.

“Don’t do this to me” says Charles Foster Kane, says Mister Gleckman, “You will be held responsible, Jerry”. The clock has ticked and tacked many times now, drops of sweat flowing down Gleckman’s forehead. The facts he has at his disposal are quite minimal: I need Jerry! Jerry’s late. What would he conclude from more facts? Such as the trials and tribulations of the kid on the tracks, such as his father alcoholism, such as God’s will? Why blame Jerry for what is about to happen? Because Jerry is easy.

And so Jerry will be blamed, and so Mister Gleckman will die, and so the not-giving-a-fuck secretary will be on the streets once more having to-give-fucks, and so the mah-jongg rules will be forgotten.