



Meet the Wrens

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Collin's Birthday

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Djinn Skye

## **NORMAL**

Outside, through my cell window, there is a metal awning (I'm on the second floor) roughly five by ten (or so) feet that covers the entryway to this prison building; and in this awning's gap--between itself and the building--live the ankle-biter hatchlings of a pair of mated ... wrens, I believe. I'm no aficionado. I mean, I like birds, I've just never learned their exact aviary attributions. Right or wrong, I'll call them Mr. and Mrs. Wren. (The bird people)

I'm reading Haruki Murakami's, "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle", and of course each of the wind-up bird's own existential exerts shine the Wrens outside my cell in a new light, with eerie familiarity. I don't mean to suggest there's any peculiar winding sounds--although, the Wrens as a family unit, are the very exemplification of life and the meaning of which human's yearn yet fail to see within their own mental and physical grasp.

To me, the meaning of Life: is life.

Of course the Jrock playing on my Walkman could have a little influence on that at the moment.

Life.

Simple sounding: one of the most complex groupings

of simplicity in the Universe. The lives of the Wrens, this family, stand on the encoding of their ancestry. Each member before them that simply lived, and did what their body was designed to do: reproduce.

Like me :)

To keep the Arrow of Life in forward motion like a self writing AI that grows in code simply because it's the natural course. Evolution the tool; a by-product of the status quo of Life that is unavoidable for continuity in a universe adherent to entropy.

An interactive work of scientific art.

A dance.

Right now, Mrs. Wren is standing guard outside their nursery's entrance and Mr. Wren has just returned with a piece of prison biscuit. Mrs. Wren is carefully—but quickly—inspecting it as he holds it up for approval. She even took a little tentative nibble before letting him pass. Within a second or two, he's already taken the bounty into their little abode and re-emerged without the prison food. She went in, came out, and he left again. More sure of himself now.

It all transpires so quickly.

She's all puffed up in size, it IS misty out, but not cold. There's another bird perched up on the corner, another female, and Mrs. Wren is not about to step back from her charges; her share of the status quo. I seriously doubt she questions the how or the why, only the now of what she knows takes up the bulk of any existential ponderment she, Mr. Wren, or their hatchlings may have. Mr. Wren returns, the judgmentally cautious Mrs. Wren responds to his empty beak by leaving herself. They must have fuel for the Life machine that eats away at her hatchlings.

The single female, the potential homewrecker, watches this domestic exchange with intense interests. Catching a glimpse of her self-imposed "rival", unpuffed. Now, with Mrs. Wren gone, she moves in, does a little wiggle and exchange with Mr. Wren—and off they go, together. The large crow on the security light isn't close, he must have mused, otherwise he would've stayed. Right?

In nature, it IS that simple.

Birds and humans alike, in most cases.

In life, we always appear to be surrounded by potential homewreckers. They'll do a little wiggle, and off some of us go—like a sickness. Yet, an unspoken status quo is working through us in our genetic sequencing: an unquenchable need that many will never escape, at least not easily. It works both ways, females stealing males and males stealing females. And thanks to modern American/Western Philosophy and moral: we even have females stealing females from males and males stealing males from females. Further complicating an already complex "game". A perpetual suffering of the family unit, by theft of spouses.

Sure, Mr. Wren is responsible too. But still....

On the ground, just below their home's threshold, it is hard not to take note of the unmoving remains of a too-curious hatchling. The invading female, however, pays it no attention as it holds NO sway over her own empty nest. She can see that Mr. Wren is fertile, and that fills her own status quo.

The prison birds, here by choice and reason, have built their offsprings' very genetic structure with the elements of matter within reach: the worms and bugs of this forsaken ground, along with an even larger quantity of biscuits tossed aside from prisoners on their return from the "chow hall", the notorious "meatloaf", and other items of carcinogenic delight that animals refuse to touch. Not even the rats will eat the "meat" here, only the maggots and prisoners are forced to endure it in the face of starvation. Unbeknownst to this new generation of birds that fly off into the world to perch upon your feeders and windows, they do so with bones and feathers constructed from prison ingredients. With a mix, perhaps even, of the ashes from prisoners that have died, or been murdered (by the state or other prisoners), burned, and scattered about--after being unclaimed because their family either did not want them or could not afford the fee. These birds; something good, from something "bad."

It's like this: Earth, in spite of humans, whether we're here or not, WILL revolve and move through the Milky Way as the galaxy rides its own waves out to no place in particular. All just part of what is. Zooming, for now, back into the awning outside this prison cell window--that is ironically cell 208, like the hotel room in Murakami's tale: with an inescapable window, door, and walls ... where imagination can free you, or at the wrong time, get you killed--it doesn't take a philosopher (or the like) to know the hatchlings aren't too concerned about any of that.

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**NOW**

My youngest son, Collin, is now NINE, and since I'm ten years a slave to this circular system, he doesn't know me; but he does--I'm sure--struggle with our shared existence. No lie, no matter how ingenious, could ever hide from him that he is not quite like his surroundings, or those in it. I went through the same thing as a child.

I didn't think like the herd. I asked questions that adults had no answers for; I questioned their societal status quos. I felt pain, physical and mental pain, for the world's selected blindness and self-worship. I didn't understand the needless sufferings, the wasted resources, the separation of classes; all produced by the delusions of adults. Things that were a blur to them were crystal clear to me! This stemmed into everything in my world. I was glad not to be like them, but at the same time being different had many

drawbacks when it came to peer acceptance. Or getting along with my teachers.

I've always been mechanically inclined--electronics included--and understood the workings of practically everything. I would disassemble things, fix them, modify them; and couldn't always explain why I could. It just made sense to put this wire here or that cog there. One time, at the age of ten, I climbed up near our rented house, and installed free cable (and in a sly way that was hidden, a wire behind a wire behind a wire) because we were poor, and I was tired of EVERYONE at school having it and not us. I could have "been electrocuted," my mother screamed; yet, she enjoyed those stations.

My "peers" absorbed everything presented to us like sponges; but not me, I already had an underlying feeling that the world was not quite as the grown-ups presented it. That there WERE answers to those questions.

Today, it's a different kind of world, and with the Internet, we have access to the digital equivalent of the total sum of all human knowledge! Collin, like his four Mahaffey-bred siblings, have my DNA, and with it many of the same predispositions that are dissimilar to the conformity in which he finds himself. I don't speak of his immediate family, because there he's lucky: his mother is a mostly non-conformed anomaly of great potential. She will not raise him quite like those around him ... and she will always be there for him with love and understanding. When I knew her, she was the Lydia to my Beetlejuice, and my memories of her are both fond and kind, even in the light of my current circumstance, and in spite of what I wrote about her in my book "No Air." In fact, I'm a little envious of my son, for having her: a mother proud of his existence since the moment he was conceived, and there is absolutely NOTHING he could ever do to lose her love ... or mine. With her, he also has her family. I don't know them all, my time in their family was unfortunately short; I had a natural connection with her father, I adored her mother to the point that I looked forward to my wife reaching her mother's age, and her sister was a walking work of art. I wish I'd had more time with them. My son is very lucky.

I believe he'll grow into his potential with them; and in a way, they themselves will be better because of him. This might sound peculiar, but I felt that with that family, I contributed a missing element. Presumptuous? Yes. But, maybe it's my son that more properly fills it, and in him will be (is) collective pieces of who THEY are. Creating a better Collin Mahaffey that could have otherwise existed. One that I can only consider myself lucky to have fathered.

I may be gone, dead to the world; yet, here I am, tapping my typewriter keys around in your heads. I'm like a big cockroach that's crawled in as an idea, a link, or a click, that's undergone a metamorphosis! I still breath and love my five children, I am human, and that cannot be denied.

No one knows what the future may hold. People think—as May Kasahara put it—they know what they'll be doing in three years; but that's just that, they THINK they know, when very few of us actually KNOW....

One inescapable Law of the Universe, and thus Life, is that the growth of one new life, feeds from the decay of others. This is in many forms—most unnoticed—such as animals and plants consumed, fuels made of past lives spent, parent's expending themselves ... like the Wren family outside the barred window of cell 208 here in the Murray unit (the Character Based Unit, CBU) of the Broad River Correctional Institution, busily protecting and gathering. Entropy feeds from me, and I'm okay with that; I'm still feeding too. Something I will continue for as long as there is breath in my body, I will be a consumer of Earth, and when I'm no longer ME, and I am reduced to my elements, I will still be part of the Universe's entropy, recycled over and over and over, every atom. All I can do now is try to give back, contribute what I can: that's why my little self-rant of my childhood does have purpose: to give a window to my children—one with a slight mirror tint—so that they can be better than me.

If Collin takes something apart, don't worry—he'll most likely figure out how to get it back together; and this applies both literally, and metaphorically.

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### Hex on the Ex ... Me.

On March 22, 2016: I was standing in line waiting for "chow" call, and luckily I was near a wall, because If I had not been, I would've fell flat on my face.

Apparently, I lost consciousness, fell back against the wall, and as I slid down, my whole world centered around an image: my ex-fiancee blowing out a birthday candle, getting her wish—my death. The joke was on her, because I forgave her a long time ago—sort of how Mr. Okada (Mr. Wind-Up Bird) forgave Kumiko after the spell of worthless Norboru Wataya was broken—and for her too, my memories are both fond and kind, even in the light of this current circumstance of cell 208 in which I am trapped with knowledge of days past.

As she blew, she was happy; we both were.

The moment was due to an overwhelming amount of pain that suddenly hit me on the inside of my abdomen. Now, for the record, I have nearly died twice in my life due to such a complication, and this pain is familiar to me, being the third time in my life I've felt it.

Soldiers are programmed in war practice, to fight with a bayonet in close quarters before hand to hand is absolutely necessary without it. First, the blade is thrust into the abdomen just above the stomach. Then, it gets twisted and run in a deep circle, to stir things up. Finally, before

withdrawal, one final upward thrust is made in an attempt to puncture the heart.

I had felt the equivalent of those first TWO steps! Needless to say I didn't go to lunch. I sat down on a bench in the common area, "the rock", and got my bearings before going back upstairs to cell 208, careful to hold onto the rail, because I was still not quite myself. We're not suppose to sleep in the middle of the day like that, and usually at that time I'd be at work in the school, teaching the GED/high school students in my English/science/social studies class; but school was closed, so I had the day off, luckily. I didn't even bother to take off my worn-out New Balances, I just hit the plastic mat and my body screamed for a rest that came to it easily. I knew also, at that moment, it was where I might die—but that was okay, I'd rather die like that than how some of the other guys in here have been dying lately. They've been having gang wars, and race wars. On the anniversary of the assassination of Mr. Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, the black prisoners attacking white ones solely on the basis of color—chasing them around with makeshift knives and AXES! The state's prison SWAT team was called in, the Rapid Response Team, RRT, they're called, and we were put on a full lock-down.

It's been one incident after another.

Death after death.

What difference is one more? They think. Each death, in this place, seems to equate to little. We're on lock-down now. Again and again and again ... race this, and race that. I never really cared for race, we are who we are, that's it. Plain and simple. Whether someone is good or bad, has NOTHING to do with what color they are.

I did not die, as you can guess; I only slept.

When I woke, to—as usual my autographed photo of Alison Brie smiling at me, and I was suddenly in the mood to draw, to create. So, "The Beauty of Days Remembered" was born. I am determined to get through this prison experience intellectually, creatively. I fed a piece of French watercolor paper (cold press) into my typewriter, and what I tapped out was to simply frame an image that I had in my head. When I see a movie with Kristen Bell's smile, I think of my ex, so in the drawing, its a kind of mixture of them, and the .... Ahem: light bondage? Consensual. Obviously. The poem, wasn't intended to even BE a poem, but a kind of, well, I don't know. It just came out. I typed it as I thought it. My composing of poetry is not adherent to any kind of punctilious regularity—the stanzas either come or they don't, all I do, is when they do, I let them flow onto any paper within reach.

Much like these posts.

Any one of which, could be the last. 