

miniMAG

issue118

to excess



party

airport

the fitted bedsheet has come off completely and
they perspire directly onto the mattress
switch positions
she fucks my african american friend over my waist high bookshelf
i don't have many books here, it's a small shelf,
my copy of jean toomer's Cane has a bright yellow cover
a black girl in a field at night
it's my favorite book on that shelf

I described what we do as athletic
he laughed and then he thought about it
never once looking up from grindr
and then agreed

he looked very athletic in the half-light
bent over my bookcase
i hardly even know her
what we did was samesamebutdifferent
she's with me intimate; she's with him pornographic
it might mean something; or it might just feel really good

she brought her friend, her friend is 6'2 and has the face of an antelope but southeast asian. that's hard to picture, i know, but that's how she looks in my mind. rare. people probably never say "you look like x" to her. they say that to me all the time. my face should have been rarer; and maybe I would have been happier for it. but maybe looking familiar is part of my charisma. anyways she came with her friend as a sort of buddy system thing. she isn't here to party, but she's on the couch naked, and she has this bleach blonde hair that comes down to her natural, flat breasts. she's never taken hormones, she says, she's had no surgeries, she says. i feel I should entertain her while she's here, because the one still fucking my friend is going hard and it could be a while, it is quite athletic. she never looks their way, she's tapping the online slots app, and I frown and tell her she can play my switch. i have mario kart in her hands before she knows it, and she's smiling and picks princess peach out of all the 30-something-odd characters, because, of course, she picked princess peach. i help her long, manicured finger find the L button and say "pew, pew" she looks me in the eyes for the first time, a red shell smashes into luigi, and we giggle together. she's in first place. our bare asses are on the leather couch. her friend was inside of me for the better part of an hour. but we giggle, it's cute. i'm not sure what to do in a meet-cute, so I roll 4 absolutely perfect joints of "Fat Albert" while she plays two 50cc grand prix. she favors tilt controls over joystick. i do not tell her that the steering and acceleration handicaps are on. she wins both cups.

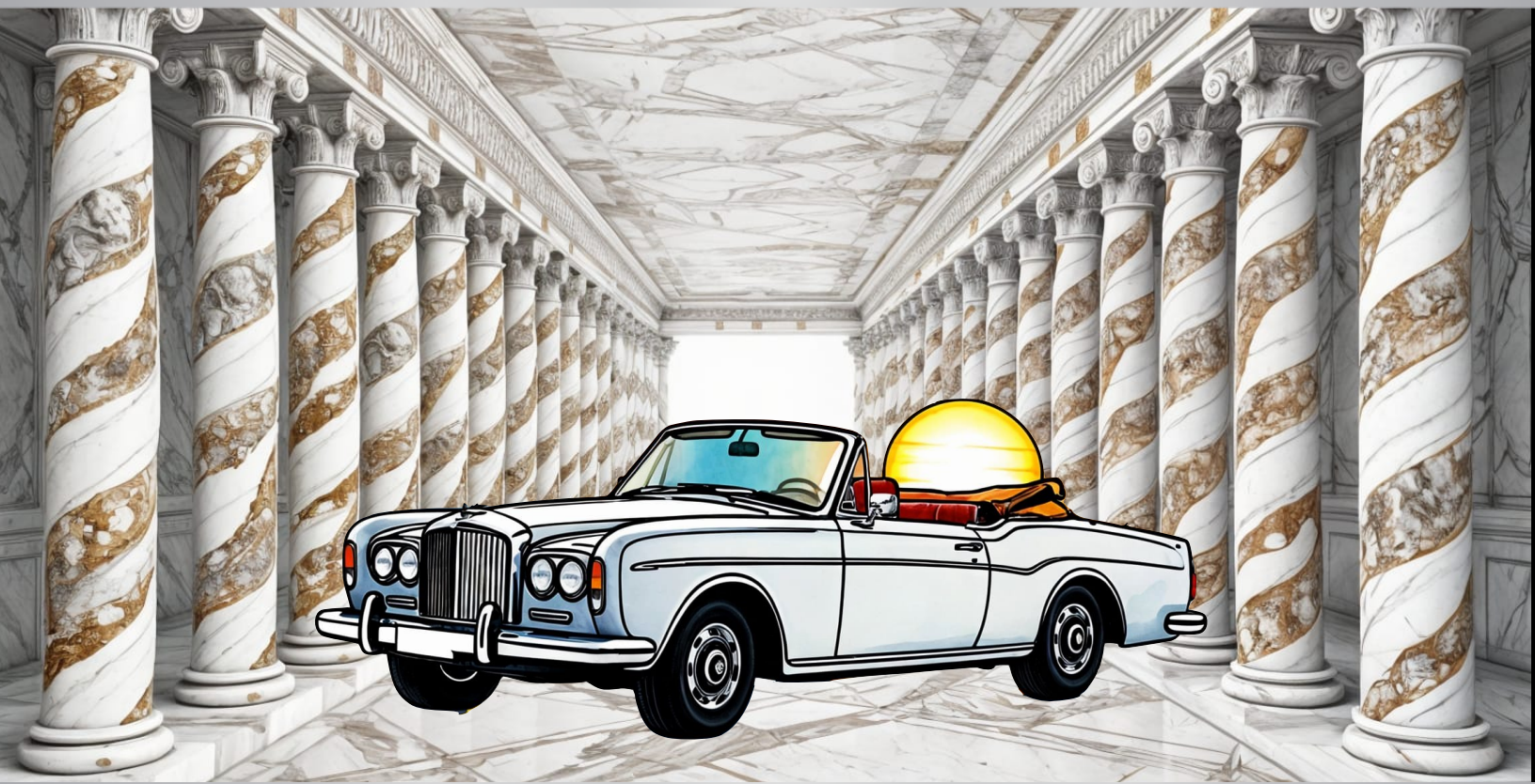
they've finished
no one is sure what to do
the girls ask if they can leave
i say yes without thinking, regret it, feel guilty, then smile-open the door
i offer each a joint, they each refuse
my friend and I chain smoke all 4 on the balcony
i don't ask him what it all means; he doesn't look up from grindr.



Filling Holes

Harley Patton

This piece of nicotine gum is childproofed to hot hell. With one hand I peel back the outer film, then punch a hole through the inner foil with a small burst of amethyst a friend found on the street one day and left in my car. I am going seventy miles an hour on 35W South wondering where the crystal would wind up if I crashed. The teenaged DJ on the college radio station that's blasting has never smoked a whole cigarette to themselves. They win never-have-I-ever at house parties all the time with that one. I used to win that game at house parties too, at the end of the night when I was drunk enough to crack open the door to the closet, with double negatives like "never-have-I-ever *not* sucked dick." My hegemonically straight friends would all lose a finger in shocked unison. Traffic slows to a crawl and I am diverted by blaze-orange signage down a detour I was not prepared to follow. I regret going to college, regret not sucking more dick when I was young, regret burying my sexuality without considering the trowel. Once you grip that tool it's hard not to dig all sorts of holes. Went looking for a place to hide the gay twenty years ago and came up an alcoholic smoker with generalized anxiety disorder because when you dig a hole in your own body that dirt don't just disappear, you have to carry it. Or you have to put it back. Nicorette gives me the hiccups.



Heaven or Las Vegas

(for Elizabeth Fraser)

Phil Rot

I pull up in the jet-black Toyota Camry. Heaven or Las Vegas is at maximum volume. I light my cigar with my gun, and then I let the hi-point sing. I peel out of the parking lot.

Back on the highway well above 90 and with a blueberry blunt in my teeth, I snag a burnt disc out of the jewel case and vibe hard to the sounds of Ravi Shankar's Portrait of a Genius in 40k surround sound stereo. My eyesight is a blur. I swerve into a large truck sending some Kenny Chesney-looking motherfucker tumbling down the mountainside like a bitch. I raise my tankard. I am thriving in my lane and proud of my achievements.

The sun has gone down, and the moon has come up and I'm penning symphonies with the blicky. The air is filled with hater-copters talking shit through they microphones. Little do they know that the haters are my motivators. I am now super hard, and it ain't nothin', but I love y'all gleeking out the driver's window with my eyes wide shut. I hit the blunt again, and I'm spinning, still cumming, still hallucinating like a hippie. I pop in another CD-RW, and Frank Black is singing to the cheese as I shift into neutral and let Jah decide my fate.

When I wake up, I'm in bed with a bad bitch, and I'm watching her watch me on Amazon Prime, letting the hi-point perform orthopedic surgery on my hater's Mother 2 soundtrack on shuffle. Ain't going back to Rancho Cordova anytime soon, but they all love me.

Billy Corgan writes a eulogy across my shoulder blades

Liam Strong

& it's for someone neither of us know. which must mean we know them, the person we once had sex with, navel with song & clutter. it's actually a song that is actually a poem & we keep it generic & center-aligned to my spinal column, right before the scoliosis distorts it. he knows what he means which must mean he means to dislocate the parts of my body where i was once loved. because we have had languages apart from speaking & external to our mouths. he jots over the tattoos, palindromes the bone buried beneath my flesh. i'm already with them, my dead lovers, the ones i don't know, the ones i want to know, don't want to know. Billy cursives a cliché into my neck & leaves doors open behind me. the dead can quote themselves back to me, but i can never remember how it goes.



PLANET DEBLINORD

Harley Patton

Eavesdropping syringes
jostle in a scissored
season of gyrating
telescope textures,

parachuting apostrophes
pluck battleship pimples
in a cherry concussion
of weasel dynamite,

boogie battalions in
scowling carriages
cackle like turbulent
tentacles in a cameo
of itchy hoaxes,

in chemical crutches,
soggy chauffeurs auction
automatic acorns in
cloth chapels, as

brittle anthems in alibi lace,
ransack altitude prams,
like trespassing propellers
in a bourbon bottle of
bohemian banter.



Loose Poetry of Looser Women

Pixie Bruner

The poems are looser than the town mattress
who lives with three small yapping dogs in a
run-down trailer park where the roof is rusted
and a different boyfriend every other week.

The trailer walls so thin,
they could be seen through with X-ray specs
ordered right out of the back of a vintage comic book.

There is a butcher's ticket machine,
and she calls them by their number—

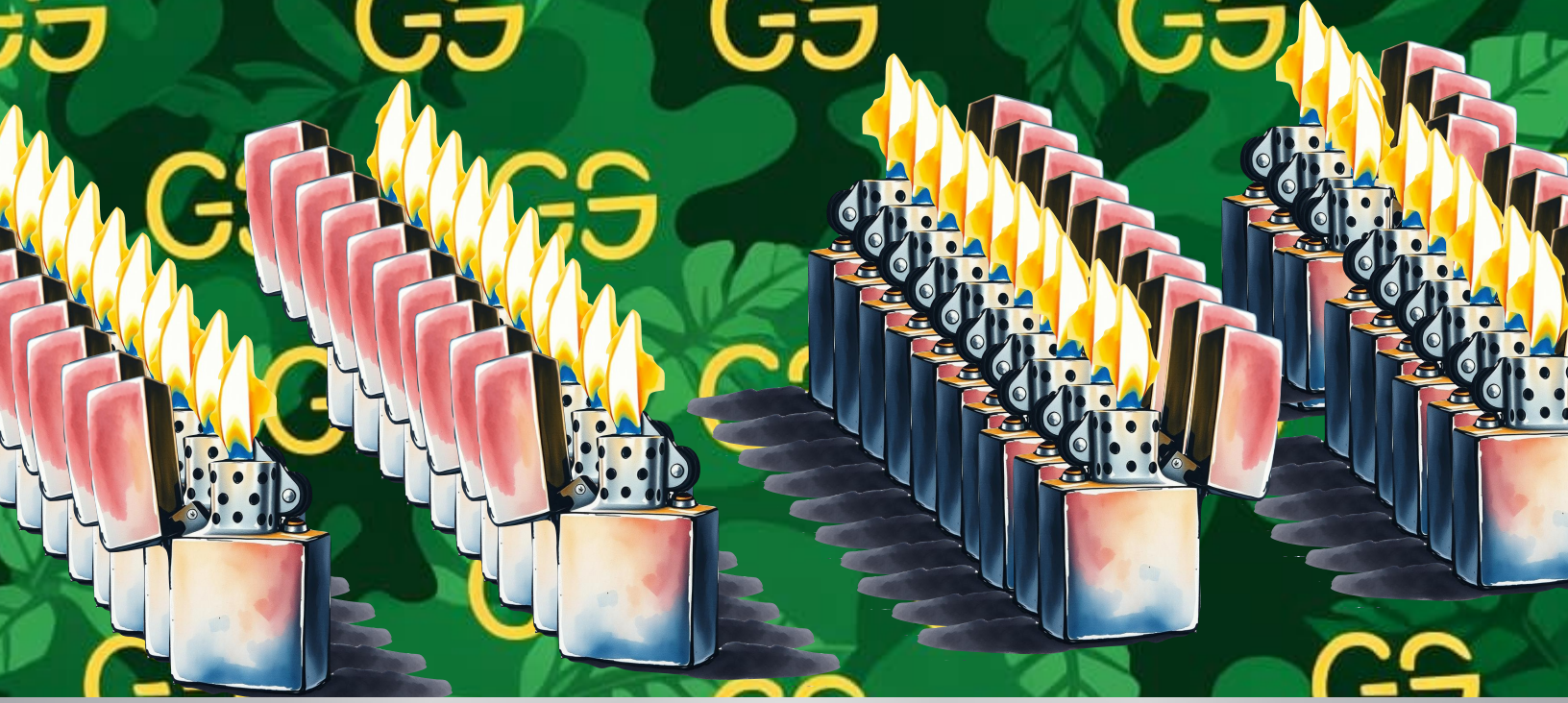
"Now serving number eighty-three"
and wrapping their meat in plastic bags,
she hands them over with a gap-toothed smile
when she finishes serving.

The papers are yellowed as
nicotine stained fingernails
and scattered over every flat surface,
leaned against the verticals like tightrope walkers

They are an uncut ticker tape parade,
the poems are lost documents.

They are like the dead moths with their wings
still perfect and open found in the light fixture
when changing the bulb. They are neglected
like the bills and the peeling wallpaper.

The papers have forgotten their Kegels,
making them the loose poems of
an even looser woman.



John

Joel Bush

His close-cropped hair
is gunmetal grey.

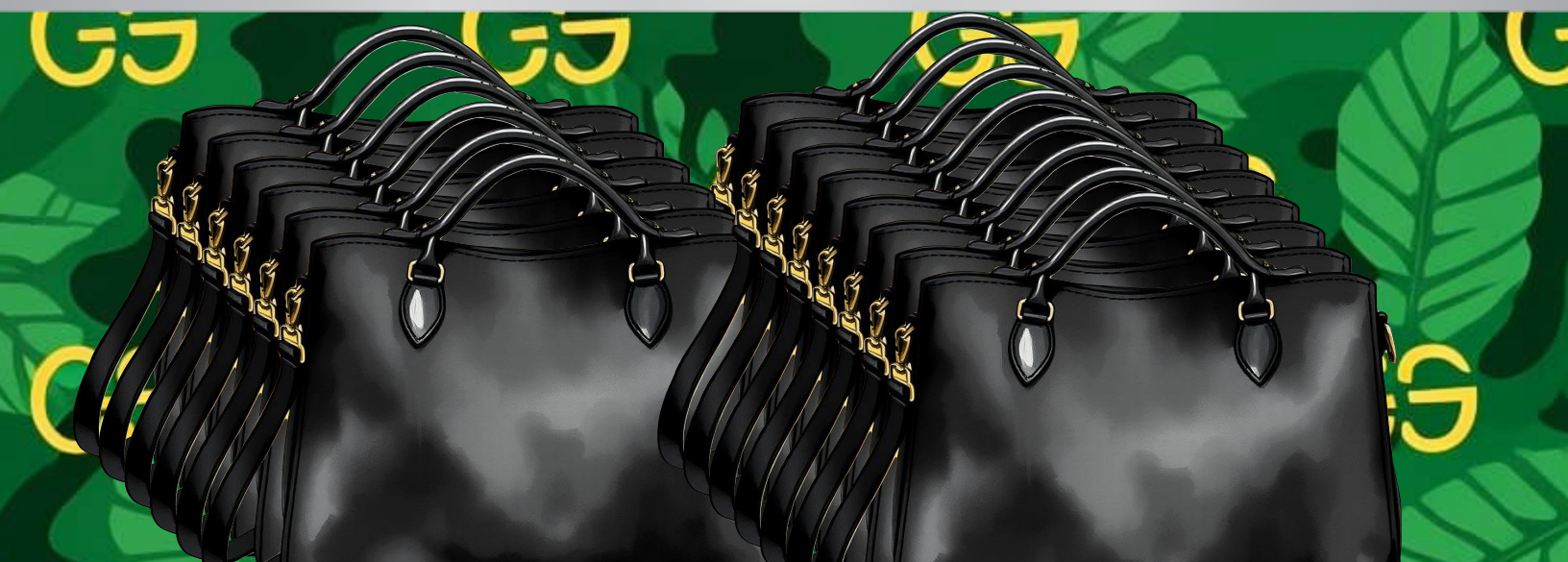
He walks towards me,
blond dog in tow.

He is dressed in
all black.

The autumn air
is soured by the scent of smoke,
a local house fire.

It reminds me of leaf burning
in the hardscrabble neighborhood
of my youth.

In an untroubled tone,
John tells
me it smells
like Iraq.





Quickscope

Matthew Green

Everything is shed: the bright orange tees as a child, then Odd Future, and more bright orange tees in the future. It keeps shedding and if it were specific to just us it'd be the saddest and most beautiful thing. We'd never get over it. But it isn't. The 2000's glare and colour mutes, it all dulls and fades into ancient modes of capture, made new.

scorching heat in March
mosquito bites in July
DC at its best

Simon Kaeppli



18-word manifesto

Simon Kaeppli

An ideology
Draped in anger
Veiled by hate
Carried by screams
Grown by fear
Is nothing but insanity



Manifest Success

J sT.

It goes exactly as I expect. I delivered a long, impassioned speech to the Coinflip staff yesterday morning, then stormed out of the office. This morning everyone is different. Nobody turns their head or walks away. Instead, they smile and greet me with compliments.

Nadja, our Customer Support Manager, is the first to see me when I enter. Nadja is caring and trusting. She has lent me a few thousand dollars that I used to pay for readings and advice from my psychic astrologist, Azscha. I had told Nadja the money was for medical payments. She never asked about repayment or my health.

She hangs up the phone and stands up. "Hello, Timon," she gushes. "It is so good to see you. I really enjoyed your speech yesterday. It was so touching to hear you address all the things you do that we unfairly misinterpret and hold against you behind your back. I should have known you weren't cowardly just because you pushed me and Larissa down and ran the other way when you saw those kids outside. You thought they were going to hurt us, and you are much more of an asset to the company. Duh. We can't afford for you to get injured, physically or mentally, in any way. You were thinking of us all. I get it now and I see that you are actually very selfless and brave."

I can't help blushing a bit. "Thanks, Nadja. I'm glad it makes sense."

As I enter the central space behind the reception area, Mo, Rhoda, Clem, and Kierra turn from each other and approach me. Mo, the Development Department Manager, pats me on the back. He had seemed to want to be my friend when I started here. But I found him too nerdy and boring. I also found it annoying how he never even considered my ideas for promotion through wet t-shirt contest sponsorships. "Great speech, Timon. It's helpful for you to let us know that you only plug your ears and make noises when we try to suggest anything is because you need to keep your thoughts untainted by our idiocy. I can appreciate that."

"I knew you would," I say. "I just don't like being told what I could do better."

"Especially since it's all of us holding you back," Mo affirms.

Rhoda, the company's CMO and Recruiter, smiles and gives me a hug. She is lesbian; but I always tried to compliment her body as much as I did the bodies of Clem and Nadja so she felt included. I also made sure to ask for her sex tips and to share my own. "Now I get why you never give to any of the charitable causes we raise money for," she says. "It's the same reason you cannot afford to spare a dime to any of the homeless around here. You are a man of principle. And all your money, all our money, should go to the cause of maximizing your power and reach. You know, until yesterday, I mistook you for a problematic troublemaker, with all the wet-willies and silly pranks. I'm sorry I was so annoyed. Now I see how they're a great way to blow off steam and that you are on the cutting edge, like you said, a stimulating prophet of fanciful innovation. Did you notice, by the way? We all took your advice and decided to show more cleavage around here."

"Very nice," I say seductively as I ogle the women's chest-cracks.

"I'm sorry too, Timon," Clem, our HR manager, chimed in. Clem was always pretending to be positive and easygoing. But she was totally fake. And I always called her on it, revealing her uptightness to everyone. Today, though, she seemed genuine. "I didn't see how restrictive our archaic workplace behavior rules were to someone like you. I only ever thought about it from the perspective of those of us you grope, sniff, and pepper with fun, provocative comments. I didn't think to consider that you are an overflowing font of life and vitality that must share itself with the world. If I had known that what we label harassment is how you find inspiration and shared your inner warmth with others, I never would have written you up. And the same goes for your porn. Watch it as you need to. I understand - it's an addiction."

“I’m pretty sure everyone enjoys it all on some level deep down, Clem,” I assure her. She smiles.

“I think so too,” Kierra, our CSO, agrees. Kierra was my total opposite in every way. We were perfect for each other. “Somehow maybe I always knew. But it wasn’t until you put it the way you did in your speech, Timon, that it clicked for me. All your insults and name-calling were meant to build strong team bonds by focusing all negativity on a common target.”

“It’s true, Kierra. But it wasn’t just that. I liked you a lot, but was angry that you would never like me; since I am so stinky, gross, and ugly.”

Kierra puts her hand on the front of my damp, stained shirt. “We’re going to have to build up that confidence of yours. You’re perfect how you are and, like you said, deserve any woman you want.”

I thank them all for waking up and finally listening to me, and walk down the hallway to my personal office door. Larissa, Bijan, and Ahmed are waiting there in the hall. Bijan and Ahmed seem eager to see me. But Larissa, our CFO, looks down, frowning. I usually try to avoid her and her questioning. She has no sense of humor. Her mind always seems to be elsewhere, worrying about money matters.

“I’m glad to see you, Timon,” she starts. “I wanted to speak with you after your speech. However, when you knocked over all the furniture and cabinets in your wake as you left at the end; it made it hard for us to follow you. But you were right. I was insinuating that you were embezzling money from the company. I did not know that you were using it to make epic parlay bets and pay off gambling debts that weren’t even your fault. Thank you for letting us all know what you are going through, and what you need, so we can help you keep saving us from ourselves.”

“I appreciate it, Larissa. That’s a real relief. That’s why I had to speak up. I suppose it’s on me to communicate what I need to keep performing if you are all too dense to figure it out yourselves.”

“Exactly. As far as I’m concerned, the missing funds are a gift from a grateful company.”

“Hear hear!” Ahmed, the CTO, interjects. He had shaved his mustache, as I had advised him in my speech. But now I see that he looks worse. His burly mustache had been covering up moles and a lack of lips; but I prudently decide to raise the issue later. “An amazing presentation, Timon. Still not over it. And I agree: It’s not your fault that you don’t know what you’re doing. You have no experience in design or coding. In light of that, you are outperforming all expectations. I’m glad you reminded us: You are the reason we are here, that any of this is happening. You’re the one who owns the software patch that you

won in that clever fraudulent lawsuit. Without the skills of the evidence fabricators you artfully blackmailed, the app wouldn't work. We should all be more grateful you insisted on being our Design Manager as payment for your tech. You've enriched us all, both financially and spiritually."

Bijan, the Product Manager, nods vigorously. He was always a little nervous. It was entertaining to stand close to him to make him stammer. But, due to my grave graciousness, I keep my distance today. "He's right. You made some great points, Timon. We really weren't taking your ideas seriously. Maybe, like you said, they were too unconventional and grand for our puny brains to grasp. But I think we might have also been intimidated by your genius. Jealous even. Now I see: I should be honored and joyful to witness it."

Bijan is not just spouting gibberish. Our company has been developing an app called Choize. Choize uses all information available to help users build the right habits and make the right decisions at the right time to achieve their goals. Once a user has typed in their aims and information, Choize will map out a life-plan for achieving those aims in a set time-frame. I had suggested making the software operable in wearable and implantable devices and then monopolize a market for the highest bidders by featuring and embedding their products in customers' life-plans.

"That's good to hear, Bijan," I say sarcastically. "Can't wait to send you some prototypes."

After dismissing them and getting settled in my desk, I call my designers about the ugly monochrome interface they submitted. When I'm done yelling at them, I tell them to start designs on a physical armband and skull implant on which we can run Choize.

I hang up. There is a knock at my door. The COO and founder of the company, Manny, steps in to praise me and my speech. Manny had dumped his entire life savings into his outdated idea for a silly motivational lifestyle app. He has no vision for its true potential. After his kind words, he sits and sulks. "I think it's pretty obvious to everyone that you know best the direction we need to take this company and how to get there. It seems like you were born for it. As COO, I think it's essential that we put you in charge of this company as soon as possible. That is, if you want it?"

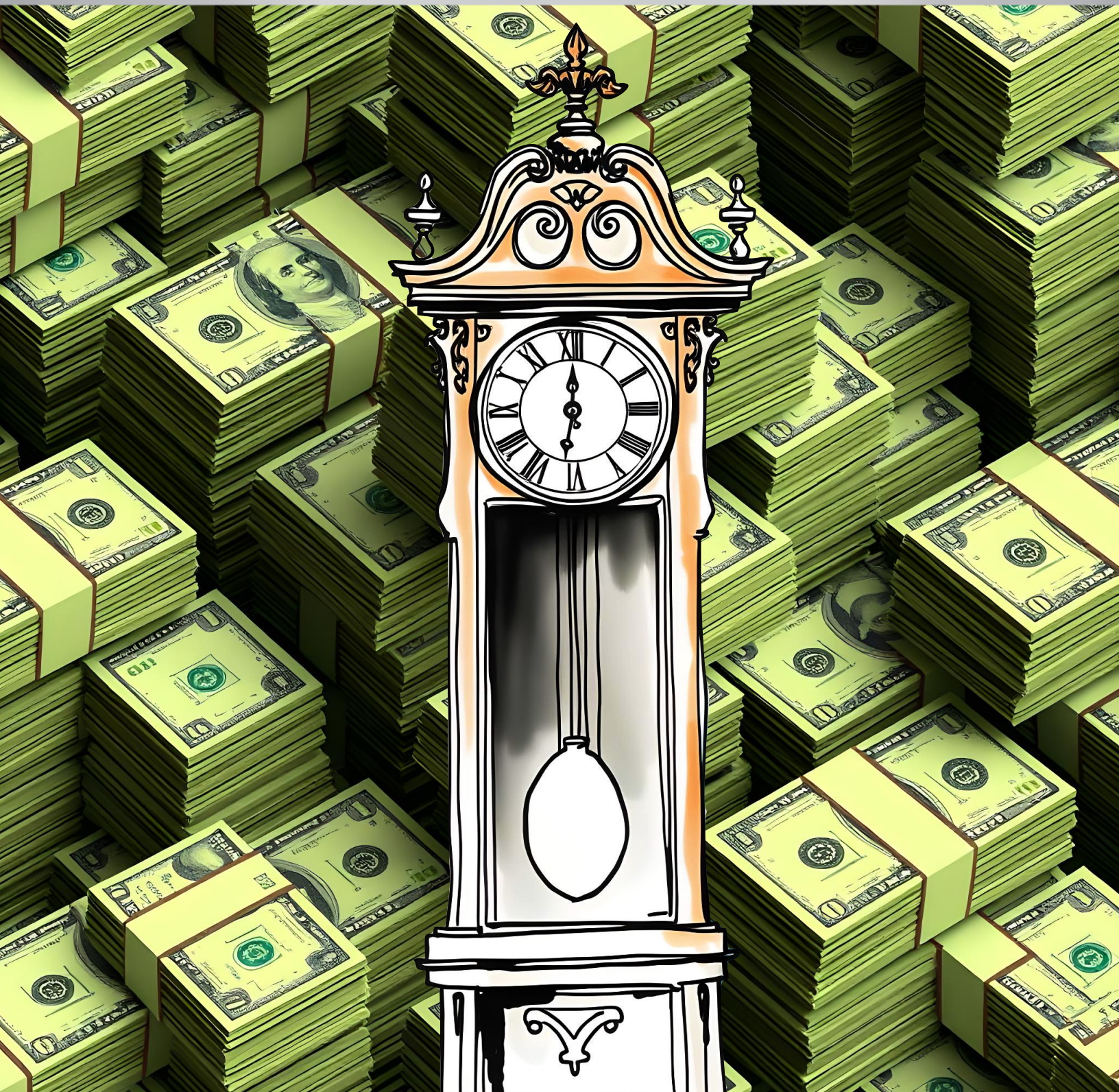
"Smart, Manny. I think I can still turn this meager start-up around if nobody's in my way. I'll do it. But I will need to hire my consultant, Azscha. And I'll require your corner-office."

"Yes, of course. That's why I'm here, Timon. You need some-space to unfold and stretch out those big ideas of yours. Go get acclimated and arrange the office how you want. There is a full bar under

the bookshelf. We'll keep it stocked for you. Like you said, drinking on the job is only a burden when you have to hide it all the time. And we don't want work to be burdensome to you, or stifle such eloquence ever again."

"No problem, Manny. I'll get started. I'm already drunk. You go keep telling everyone else to keep working."

After I move most of Manny's personal stuff into the hallway, I pour myself a highball of scotch and gaze out the window at the pulsating city. I have finally made it. I have gained all that was rightfully mine. I am completely fulfilled and satisfied.





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Threads: @tautslob

“Heavenorlasvegas” by Phil Rot
Substack: <https://philrot.substack.com/>

“Billy Corgan writes a eulogy across my shoulder blades” by Liam Strong
Twitter: @beanbie666
Instagram: @beanbie666
Book: Everyone's Left the Hometown Show (Bottlecap Press, 2023)
Website: <https://linktr.ee/liamstrong666>

“PLANET DEBLINORD” by Stephen Philip Druce
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Books: A Shrewsbury Poet

“Loose Poetry of Looser Women” by Pixie Bruner
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