SILENT NO MORE 314

From the OCR

35 short stories. The October reads covered 2,439 rows. Most of those rows are a machine's notes, settings screens, or documents that do not belong in a story. Court lines, numbers, other people's faces, and children are not in this file. Encyclopedia pages were not copied. Mock covers are not real issues. Ten travel files were not a trip. What follows is every distinct scene the safe text would hold, written out, not repeated from the last catalog.

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01

The Founding Sign

A park sign in the OCR, not the stone entrance.

I was not looking for a birthday. I was looking at a sign.

It said the settlement was named in February of 1764, and that the day people celebrate is the day before the day some books insist on. I stood there long enough to feel the argument in the numbers. A city can have two birthdays and still be one place. I have had more than one name and I am still one person. The sign did not ask me to pick a winner.

What I took from it was not a lecture. It was the plainness of a plaque doing its job in the weather. Fur traders. A saint's name. A date you can disagree about by twenty-four hours. I put my hand in my pocket and did not take a second picture of the stone gate down the road. That picture already existed. This one was the sentence on the sign, which is a different object.

If you tell it, tell both dates. The sign and the argument are the story. A single date would be a slogan, and the sign was not selling me anything.

02

The Flight Cage

A fair survivor named in the fact-check, not a postcard.

There is a cage for flight that outlasted the fair that built it.

I do not mean that as a metaphor I am proud of. I mean a structure in the park that is still there when the exposition is only a year people say out loud. I walked past it the way you walk past a building you have known longer than you have known what to do with it. Birds, or the idea of birds. Wire. A shape that refuses to become a parking lot.

I did not go in. Going in would have made me a visitor in a place I drive to. I stood where the path bends and let the cage be large. The fair can stay in the books. The cage has weather on it. Weather is the part I trust.

On the way back I did not explain it to anyone. A cage that still stands does not need a docent. It needs not to be turned into a lesson before lunch.

03

Citygarden

A sculpture still from a short phone video, August 2022.

The sculpture does not care that the video is vertical.

Sixteen seconds, a garden downtown, stone doing what stone does when a person holds a phone at chest height and turns. I was not making a film. I was keeping a proof that I had stood in front of something heavier than my errand. The frame jitters. That is the wrist. I left the jitter in.

Citygarden is a place where the art is outside on purpose, so you cannot confuse it with a room you have to deserve. You walk through. You can be on your way to something else and still be in it. I like places like that. They do not charge you a mood at the door.

When I watch the clip back I am not in it. The sculpture is. That is the correct credit. I was the one who did not walk past quite fast enough.

04

The Red Trolley

A vertical still, social-native, not a history of transit.

The trolley in the frame is red and it is not a metaphor for the past.

It is a shape that fits a phone. Someone, maybe me, held the camera while the car sat in the city being red. I do not have the sound. A still from a reel is a decision to stop the motion and see the paint. The paint is doing fine without a paragraph. I am writing the paragraph anyway because a still on its own gets called content and then forgotten.

What I remember is the color against whatever building was behind it, and the fact that the clip is short. Under half a minute. Long enough to prove I looked. Short enough to prove I had somewhere to be.

If you use the still, leave the red alone. Do not grade it into nostalgia. Nostalgia is a filter. The trolley was a trolley the day the phone was raised.

05

Nine Seconds of Neon

A reel still labeled neon dancer. I do not claim the dance.

Nine seconds of neon is not a performance I am going to narrate as mine.

The frame is a body and a light, and the light is the louder of the two. I kept the reel. Keeping is not the same as starring. I have spent enough of my life in other people's captions to know the difference. If the dancer is me, the clip can say so later, when I am looking at it on a day I am sure. If the dancer is not me, the clip stays a thing I saved because the color was honest.

Neon does not flatter. It picks an edge and refuses the rest of the room. I respect that in a light. I try to respect it in a sentence. Say the color. Say the length. Do not say what the dance meant. Nine seconds did not apply for a meaning.

The rest of that night is not in the file. Good. A file is not owed the rest of a night.

06

Goody Goody

A work cap, editorial, name tag left unread.

The cap says the job in two words that sound like a store and not like a confession.

I have a picture in it. I have a picture of it set down. The one I will talk about is the one where the tag at the chest is none of a stranger's business. Work gives you a name for the shift and takes it back at the door. I do not owe the tag to a page.

What I owe the page is the hour. I was on the clock. The cap was the clock, wearable. Under the awning the light was the light of a doorway, not of a studio. I looked like a person who was about to go back inside. That is the true portrait of a job. Not the smile. The about-to.

When the shift ended the cap came off and became an object, which is a different story and not this one. This one ends at the door, with the door still needing me.

07

Someone Else Held the Camera

A self-park frame. The photographer is not named in the log.

I know the picture is of me because I remember agreeing to stand there.

I do not know, from the file, who held the phone. The log asks me who it was, and I am not going to invent a friend to make the sentence warmer. Someone stood where I usually stand. I stood where the sign or the car or the wall usually is. The switch is the whole event.

Being the subject is a short job and I am bad at it in a useful way. I start explaining. The person with the camera, whoever it was, did not need the explanation. They needed me to stay inside the frame until the shutter sound, which on a phone is optional and somehow still happens in the body.

I look at the picture now and I am slightly the wrong size, which means the distance was theirs, not mine. I trust that distance more than the ones I measure myself. Someone else decided how much of the lot belonged in the story. They were right to leave most of it out.

08

The Cover That Was Never an Issue

Four mock covers in the OCR. Not a real magazine.

If St. Louis printed its own magazine, the cover would not borrow a masthead that belongs to someone else.

I had mock covers in the roll. October 2024. A price printed in the corner as if a newsstand were involved. A line about a timeless face. They are play. They are not an issue that shipped. I will not tell you a magazine put me on it. Nobody did. I made, or an app made, a picture that wears the costume of that kind of picture. Costume is fine in a kitchen on a boring Thursday. Costume is a lie if you take off the caption.

So the caption is the story. Original mock. Not a real issue. The face, if it is my face, is my face having a joke with typography. Gold or ivory, I do not need a vote. I need the joke to stay a joke.

The long number strings on those images stay off this page. A cover can be fictional. A number from a real document cannot.

09

The Name on the Summer Pictures

Hellomssummers, her mark, left on the picture.

The name on the picture is one of mine, and the season in it is doing half the talking.

Hellomssummers is not a stranger who wandered into the corner of the frame. It is a door I used when I was making pictures of flowers, light, and the city in a warm month. I am not interested in a clean crop that pretends the picture was unsigned. Unsigned is how other people get to be the author. I already did the looking.

Summer in that name is not a promise that every day was easy. It is a temperature. The light sits high. The colors are willing. I put the name where a signature goes when you are posting from a phone and the phone only gives you the pixels.

Leave it. If the picture moves to a quieter page, the name moves with it. I have answered this once and the answer has not changed. The mark stays because the mark is mine.

10

Norwood in Flower

A flower-and-branding screen named in the October content log. Not a membership.

I am not writing you into a club. I am writing flowers at the edge of a name.

Norwood Hills showed up in the work as a place a picture could be about, the way a neighborhood shows up when the blooms are doing more than the street. I do not have a tee time in this story. I have petals and a reason to stop the car or the walk. Hills in a name make a person expect a view. What I got, and what I kept, was color at eye level. Eye level is the honest altitude for a flower. The view can wait.

A shop that puts flowers on a screen is saying the city is not only brick and a river. I believed that before I had a shop. The screen just caught me at it.

If you go, go for the beds, not for a story about who is allowed in. I was allowed by the sidewalk, which has the better policy.

11

The Muny Gate

A summer-theater name in the same flower-and-photo log. No show title was in the file.

The gate to the Muny is a gate I will not pretend I passed on a specific opening night.

The file gives me the name, not the musical. I am glad. A musical I did not write down should not be promoted to a memory. What I can say is the kind of night that place is. Seats under weather. A stage that has agreed to be outside, which is a brave contract in a Missouri summer. People arrive already talking. The talking is part of the overture whether the pit likes it or not.

I have been the person in that crowd and the person who only knows it from the outside of the evening, the traffic afterward, the sense that several thousand people just shared a plot. Both count. Only one of them is mine on any given year.

This story stops before the overture. I will not hum a song the OCR did not give me. The gate is enough. A gate means there was a night, and I was in the city where the night happened.

12

The City's Other Valentine

The traditional birthday on the sign, set next to a shop name. Not a romance.

Valentine's Day as a civic birthday is a better joke than most holidays manage.

The sign says the celebration falls on the fourteenth. The shop I have called Made With Love did not plan that. The city planned it, if a tradition can be a plan, a long time before I had jars to label. I noticed it the way you notice a rhyme you did not write. You are allowed to smile. You are not allowed to pretend you invented the rhyme.

I do not send the city a card. I make a small thing, or I take a picture of a small thing, and I let the date be the date. Flowers if there are flowers. A gold line if the page needs a line. No hearts unless a heart is actually the shape of what I am holding.

Love, in the shop's name, is a standard for the handwork. It is not a status. The city's valentine is older and stranger. I am happy to be the later, smaller rhyme.

13

Fifty Jars

A catalog note: batches counted in fifties. No recipe, no cure.

Fifty is a number you feel in the wrist.

I have lined up jars until the row became a fact. Not a mood. A count. Scent in a jar is a small room you can hand to someone. You do not hand them the afternoon you spent pouring. You hand them the jar, labeled, lid tight, the afternoon subtracted. Fifty means the afternoon was long enough to become inventory.

I do not say the jar will fix a life. A jar is a smell and a glass. If you want medicine, that is a different door and I do not keep it. If you want the room to change by a degree when you open a lid, that is the work.

The fiftieth lid is the one I check twice. Not because it is holy. Because the hand gets proud near the end and pride is how a lid sits crooked. Crooked is a small sin. I still undo it.

14

Amber After the Shift

Apothecary objects named in the wellness kit. Habits from a third-party graphic are not in here.

The jar is amber so the light has to work to get in.

After a shift I do not need a speech about rest. I need a cue that the shift is over. A lid. A smell that is not the smell of the job. Oil on a wrist, or not, depending on the day. The cue is allowed to be small. Small is how you can keep it on a Tuesday, which is the only day that matters. Sunday rituals are a hobby. Tuesday is a life.

I learned the difference in kitchens and in dining rooms and in the car afterward. The body does not clock out when the cap comes off. You have to tell it. I tell it with an object, because objects do not argue.

Nothing in the jar is a treatment. If a day is heavier than a lid can lift, the lid is not the plan. The plan is a person. The jar is only how I mark the hour the work clothes stopped being the boss of the room.

15

A Paper That Ended

A city weekly the fact-check says folded in 2024. No article is quoted.

I went looking for a box that used to be there.

Not a box in my house. A box in the city, the kind that holds a free paper, or used to, before the paper stopped. 2024 is not a poetic year in this story. It is the year the alt-weekly ended. I did not write for it. I read around it, the way you read a city by what it bothers to print for free and leave in a doorway.

When a paper folds, the doorways do not hold a funeral. They hold a menu, or nothing. I noticed the nothing. Noticing is not the same as a eulogy. A eulogy would require I pretend the paper was mine. It was the city's, and then it wasn't.

I still have the daily, when I buy it. I still have the weeklies that did not fold. This story is only the shape of a box that went empty, and the week I realized I had been using it as a landmark.

16

The Newsstand

Press names in an encyclopedia screenshot. Paraphrased. No copied article.

A city that prints more than one paper is arguing with itself in public, which I prefer to a city that has agreed.

I saved a page about who does the printing. I am not going to retell the page. Encyclopedia prose has a smell, and the smell is not my kitchen. What I will tell is the stand: more than one masthead, some of them Black-owned and older than my mother would have been patient with me for not knowing, a daily, a magazine, a business sheet. You can learn a place by which arguments it still pays to print.

I buy one and leave the others for the person behind me. That is not a politics. That is a line. The person behind me may need the one I did not take.

The screenshot stays in the folder. The stand, if I walk to it, is the story. Paper in the hand. Ink that comes off a little. A city that has not yet agreed.

17

Coloring the Curve

Coloring-page prompts in the content log. No prompt list copied.

I drew the curve instead of explaining it.

A coloring page is a humble technology. A line. A person. A pencil that has to stay inside something or decide not to. I have prompt lists for pages about this city, and the one I trust is the curve everyone already knows, reduced to a line a hand can finish. Finishing is the point. The Arch as a monument is other people's job. The Arch as a shape you can color without asking permission is mine.

Gold, if I had a gold pencil that worked. Gray, if I was telling the truth about the metal. I do not need the pencil to be accurate to the stainless steel. I need the hand to stay with the line until the line is a decision.

Children's pages are a different pile and not this story. This is a grown person remembering that a landmark can be a drawing before it is a speech. I recommend the drawing.

18

Thirty-Four, Unclaimed

A graphic titled thirty-four generations. Not a genealogy I am certifying.

A picture told me there were thirty-four generations. I did not sign the picture's affidavit.

Graphics like to be definite. A family is not a graphic. I have names I know and names I do not, and a mother whose story is not a chart. When a file offers me a dynasty, I put it in the pile called interesting and not in the pile called proved. Proved is a smaller pile. I like it smaller. Large piles of ancestors you cannot source are a costume, and I have already refused one costume in this set.

What I keep is the urge. Wanting to know who was here before the street names. That urge is human and it is not the same as a poster. The poster can be pretty. Pretty is not a census.

If the thirty-four are ever real in a way I can say out loud, I will say them with their papers. Until then the number is a number a design liked. I am a person who liked the question and declined the costume.

19

A Mark I Have Not Claimed

Heraldry in a shared image. The log asks whether it is generated. Unanswered.

There is a coat of arms in the files with a name that is not yet a house I am willing to swear to.

The log asks a plain question: did a person draw this, or did a machine. I am not going to answer by publishing it as heritage. A mark is a serious object. It says a line of people agreed to be seen as one shape. I have not held the meeting. I have not asked the dead. I have an image and a question, and the question wins.

This is the opposite of the summer name, which is mine and stays. This mark is a maybe. Maybes do not go on a door. They go in a folder until the answer is dull and sourced, which is the only kind of answer a symbol deserves.

I can say the image is striking. Striking is cheap. I have been striking in photographs and it did not make the photographs true. The mark can wait. I am good at waiting when the alternative is wearing someone else's certainty.

20

Ten Cities I Did Not Visit

Travel editorials in the content log. They are not a trip.

The folder contains ten luxurious cities. I did not go.

St. Lucia, a handful of islands, a coast in Italy, a coast in Mexico. The sentences are the sentences of a magazine that has a budget for adjectives. My budget that month was a city I already live in, a car, a shift, a floor. I am writing this so the adjectives do not get promoted to a passport.

It is easy, with a pile of files, to become a person who has been everywhere the files have been. That person is a liar with good taste. I would rather be a person who can name the trolley, the garden, the jar, and the sign. Those I stood near. The islands I did not.

If a page of mine ever sounds like a resort, cut it. I was not on the veranda. I was in the folder, noticing that a folder can travel without you, and that you do not have to go along.

21

The Pile I Could Not Open

A photo takeout over the size limit. About 387 pictures unseen.

Hundreds of pictures are in a file I could not lift.

Not could not, as in feelings. Could not, as in the archive is larger than the door I had. About three hundred and eighty-seven, by the index, sitting inside a takeout that refused the download. I know the count and not the faces. That is a ridiculous kind of knowledge. A number where a memory should be.

I am not going to describe photographs I have not seen. Description without seeing is how rumors start. What I will describe is the wait. A pile with a count on it. A promise that October's work was not the whole roll. The roll has a room I have not walked into.

When the door is wide enough, I will look one picture at a time, the way the rule says, and I will still leave out the ones that are not mine to show. The count can come down. I would rather a smaller true pile than a large imagined one. This story is the size of the door, not the size of the boast.

22

Seventy-Seven Screens

Screen Time frames, indexed, not retold.

Seventy-seven pictures of a settings screen are a documentary of a worry, and I am not turning them into plot.

They were taken at the end of August. They are a record of a person checking a machine. I know that urge. I also know that a settings screen is not a story until a careful reader says what it does and does not prove. I am not that reader in this paragraph. I am the person who refuses to decorate a menu with suspense.

What I will say is ordinary and true. I looked. I looked a lot. Looking is not the same as being answered. A screen that shows you a toggle is not a villain and not a friend. It is a screen.

The seventy-seven stay in the index. If there is a chapter later, it will be written from the actual toggles, slowly, without a costume of dread. Dread is easy and I am not paid by the easy. This story is the decision to count them and not to perform them.

23

What a Public Page Is Not

Frames with children, left out on purpose.

Some pictures have children in them. Those pictures are not a story I am going to tell.

I will not describe the room, the age, the shirt, the holiday. A public page is not a relative. It does not get the family. I have been careless in other years about what a camera keeps. I am not careless about this line. If a child is in the frame, the frame stays in the house, the actual house, not the one made of links.

People ask for the whole roll, as if completeness were a virtue. Completeness is how you harm a person who did not agree to be your chapter. I would rather be accused of hiding than be accurate at that cost.

This is the whole of the story. There were pictures. You do not get them. The refusal is the content. Anyone who needs more has misunderstood the job.

24

The Portrait With No Name Yet

A precious archival portrait the log says to identify before use.

There is a face in a file and I have not said whose.

The note beside it is careful in a way I appreciate. Precious. Identify before you use it. I am following the note. A face without a name from me is not content. It is a question, and questions about the dead, or about the living who cannot correct you, should stay questions until you can stand in a room and be wrong out loud.

I have been wrong out loud before. It is survivable. Being wrong about a portrait on a public page is a smaller room and a longer echo. So the portrait waits. I may know the face and still want an hour with it before I give it a sentence. Knowing and publishing are different muscles.

When I am ready, the sentence will be short. A name. A relation, if I am sure of the relation. The light in the print. Not a novel about a person who cannot leave the room.

25

The Link Under the Picture

A link-in-bio screen in the content log.

Under the picture there is a line, and the line is a door, and the door is too small for the life.

That is what a link under a photograph is. A reduction you agree to because the phone only gives you one field. I have stood in that field and tried to choose which room a stranger should enter. The shop. The long page. The letter that stays free. Choose wrong and they think the picture was an ad. Choose the long page and they may not click. Both are fine. The picture already did its work.

I am writing this because the OCR caught the screen where the link sits, and a screen of a link is the least glamorous self-portrait I own. A URL. A thumb. The decision, renewed, not to put the private rooms in the one field.

The field can say where to start. It cannot say who I am. I have stopped asking it to.

26

A Sunday Paper

The daily, as an object. No article quoted.

Sunday is the day the paper is thick enough to be a blanket you do not use.

I take it apart in the wrong order. I am not a person who begins with the section a serious person begins with. I begin with whatever is on top when the fold gives up. A photograph of a street I know. A headline I do not need. An argument in the letters that could have been a conversation on a bus.

The paper smells like itself. That smell is not available in the screenshot of an encyclopedia page about the paper. I keep both. The screenshot tells me the name still exists. The Sunday issue tells me the name is still a weight in the hand.

I do not save the whole paper. I save one page if a page has earned it, and even then I am suspicious of my reasons. This story is not a saved page. It is the taking-apart, which is a private sport, and the fact that the city still bothers to be ink once a week.

27

The Second Take of the Coat

Two behind-the-scenes frames of the same coat. Not the essay about the certificate.

The first picture of the coat was the record. The second was the correction.

I laid it flat, looked, hated the fold, laid it flat again. The second fold is not more honest. It is more considered, which is a risk. Considered can mean arranged. I stopped at the moment the sleeve looked like a sleeve that had been worn, not like a sleeve that had been styled. Worn is the standard. Styled is the temptation, and the temptation has good taste, which makes it worse.

Two frames of one coat are a contact sheet of a decision. I kept both because the first one shows the impatience and the second shows the patience, and a life that only publishes the patient version is editing out the real hour.

The crest on the pocket stays. The name stays. The table is the same table. If you only see one, see the second, and know there was a first that I did not trust. Distrust of your own first frame is a skill. I learned it late.

28

Gold, From Looking Up

The shop note that the gold line comes from the Arch. Not a tourism caption.

I looked up and the color in the work got a reason.

Not a mystical reason. A shape reason. The curve downtown is a line I have known since before I could drive to it. When I put a thin gold rule on a page, I am not claiming the monument. I am admitting an influence that is too large to pretend I invented. Influence is not theft if you say the name of the thing you looked at.

I do not put the monument on the jar. The jar is small and the monument is a stunt of engineering that does not need my label. The line on the page is the translation: one curve, reduced to a horizon, in a color that can survive ink.

People will say the gold means luxury. It means I looked up. Luxury can find another city. This one already has a curve, and I only borrowed the idea of a clean edge against the sky.

29

Left in the Folder

Encyclopedia and tourism screenshots, read and not published.

I saved a page I am not allowed to pretend I wrote.

It was useful the way a map you did not draw is useful. It told me dates. It told me names of buildings. It told them in a voice that belongs to a tourism desk or an encyclopedia, which is a voice I can borrow from and must not wear out of the house. So the page stays in the folder. The dates I can say in my own mouth, I say. The sentences, I do not.

This is a small ethics and I am tired of small ethics until I remember what the alternative is. The alternative is a page that sounds like a brochure and a life that sounds like a search result. I have read the search result. It is not the life.

The folder is full of pages like this. They are tools. Tools do not get a byline. If you see my name under a paragraph, the paragraph had to survive without the folder open. That is the test. The folder can stay shut.

30

Spring on the Table

Spring flower posts in the branding log.

Spring arrives in this city as a rumor and then as a mess of pollen, and I put it on a table anyway.

Not the season. A cut thing in a jar, or a picture of a bed I walked past and did not pick. I have a rule about picking. If it is not mine, it stays in the ground and the picture is the taking. The table gets the picture, or it gets stems I paid for, which is a different moral and an easier one.

The posts from that season are bright in a way summer is too hot to be. Spring still believes in detail. A single bloom can be the whole frame. I let it. I am not required to put my face beside every flower as proof of attendance. The flower attended. I was the one who noticed.

By the time the leaves are dull I miss this exact willingness. I do not miss it enough to fake it in July. July has its own name. Spring can keep the table.

31

Have a Lucky Day

One caption in the batch: a greeting, nothing else.

Have a lucky day. That was the whole note, and I am refusing to improve it.

Improvement is how a kind sentence becomes a brand. The note was a greeting of the old kind, the kind on a card that does not know your star chart and is not trying to. Lucky is not a theology. It is a wish that the ordinary day fail to injure you. I can wish that without a product tied to the wish.

I almost added a jar to the sentence. The jar can have its own story. This one is the period at the end of a short line. If you are reading it on a day that is not lucky yet, the sentence is not a judgment. It is a direction, aimed at the rest of the hours, which have not all been used.

I put it here because the OCR kept it, a small surviving kindness in a batch of plans. The plans can wait. The wish is already finished.

32

Glue and Gold Leaf

A caption about making a cover by hand. The masthead is not used.

Thirty seconds of glue is a lie the caption tells, and the afternoon is the truth.

I said, in a draft, that a cover comes together in half a minute of glue and gold leaf and stubbornness. The stubbornness is the only accurate noun. Glue is fast. The decision to stop borrowing someone else's title and draw my own masthead is slow. I sat with a blank where a famous name wanted to be. The blank won. I lettered something that could belong to the shop: a local icon, a timeless issue that admits it is made of paper and nerve.

Gold leaf, if I used it, went on last, because gold shows every hesitation. Hesitation is allowed in the draft. It is not allowed in the leaf. I waited until the hand was bored of doubting. Boredom is a kind of confidence. I trust it more than excitement.

The cover is a mock. It says so. The glue, if you could smell the afternoon, would say so too.

33

Ivory or Gold

A poll that was never posted. Two colors, no vote.

I asked a question and then I did not send it.

Gold or ivory, for a cover that is not a real issue. It is the kind of question a page uses when it wants a crowd. I wanted a decision. Those are different wants. A crowd will pick a color to be seen picking. I will pick a color because one of them is the color of the line I already use, and the other is the color of the paper I already print on. I do not need to be told my own palette by a poll.

I am writing the unsent question because unsent work is still work. It shows me the moment I almost turned a private choice into a performance. I closed the draft. The cover, if it exists, is gold on ivory, which is not a compromise. It is both, doing their jobs. The rule is gold. The ground is ivory. A poll cannot improve a sentence that has already met its paper.

34

The Trolley, the Garden, the Jar

Three safe stills that do not belong in one collage, set in one afternoon.

Three errands, one afternoon, no theme until later.

A garden with a sculpture I did not have time to deserve. A red shape in a vertical frame. A lid I tightened at the table when I got back, fiftieth or fifth, I am not going to pretend I counted in the car. The city let me do all three without asking me to call it a brand. I am calling it an afternoon, which is rarer.

What links them is not a concept. It is the shoes. The same pair. Scuffed in the garden, unseen in the trolley frame, kicked off before the jars. If you need a through-line, use the shoes. Concepts are how an afternoon gets sold back to the person who lived it.

I washed the hands. I did not post the sequence. Sequence is a lie that says the day was aiming at a grid. The day was aiming at done. Done arrived. The pictures were a side effect of not looking away.

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The Index and the Life

The October 24 count: most rows are not a life.

I asked for the pile to become stories. The pile answered with a count.

Two thousand and more rows. Most of them are a machine talking to itself, or a screen of settings, or a document that does not belong in a mouth. A few hundred are content, and of those, a thin set are scenes a person can stand in. I am standing in those. I am not stretching the others until they look like chapters. A chapter made of a toggle is a cheat. A chapter made of someone else's face is a harm.

So this is the last story in the set, and it is about the size of the set. It is not one hundred and ninety-nine because one hundred and ninety-nine scenes were not in the safe text. The number of stories is the number of rooms I could enter without lying and without taking what is not mine. If that number disappoints you, the disappointment is accurate. Accuracy is the courtesy I did not want to skip.

The rest of the pile stays indexed. The life is the smaller, slower thing. I am writing that one.