

## Narrative, Interrogative

What was he thinking, as he stopped off the platform and onto the train? Did he step lightly? Did his headphones drown out the sound of the train as it slid into station? Were the automated voice's announcements of the stop's name and the next station heard over the music he listened to? If he had, would he have mused upon the beauty of the name "Belmont"?

Did he step carefully with his boots in the winter wetness? Or did his boots grip well on the wooden platform? Were his feet well insulated and warm from the snow and slush? How much did the snow-melting salt stain his soles, heels, and uppers? Was there a care or concern in his head for the clean appearance of his footwear?

As he took the first available seat inside, did he give a moment of thought for the right seat versus the left? Had he paused a moment to consider the sign stating that these were priority seats and they should be given up for the elderly or the handicapped? Did he justify his actions by the hour of the night, telling himself no passengers of either sort would be likely to board?

Why did he avoid looking any of the other passengers eye to eye? With his hands in his front jacket pockets, and his headphones covering his ears, how did he look away without making it appear intentionally avoidant and uncomfortable? Did he find something to focus his eyes and thoughts upon easily? Was it a small poster above the seats on the other side advertising local theatre, a sticker fixed to the inside of the window, or the bright yellow sign detailing proper emergency procedures? When did he imagine he would one day be forced to remember those procedures, posted on every car and read unconsciously every day, for the sake of his own or others' survival?

How many stops did the train make between his boarding and leaving? At those stops, how many people did he watch board and leave? What thoughts did he have for the dark haired, blue eyed woman who boarded and only rode one stop, standing though there were many empty seats? Did he eye the curve of her hand as she held her purse to her side? Why did the line of her jaw, the fall of her locks, and the fullness of her lips make his heartbeat

stutter? Did he look away from her eyes to avoid contact faster than from those of other riders, or did he meet them for a moment and smile, then turn away comfortably? Did she react to this, and if so, was it favorable to him? Were there many other riders who would have noticed what could have passed between them (had it happened) or were they absorbed in books, personal audio devices, the mindless filler articles of free dailies, and the stress of active avoidance of interaction with strangers?

Did he regret what may have been, or did the thought make him smile at its imagining without heavy seriousness or lament?

When did he arrive at his stop? Was he impatient for the train's arrival? Did he stand hurriedly, or did he pull himself to feet with the slow, deliberate grace befitting one of his stature? Was it necessary for him to straighten his garments as he stood, to adjust the fall of his jacket to cover him completely from the wind in January? What music was playing through his headphones, and was it the same as it had been when he boarded, or had several songs since passed? Could it have been more than several?

Was the fall of his footsteps upon the platform as he approached the stairs low and without reverberation? Did it echo between the walls of the buildings that stood against the station? Could he have heard it over the audio he chose to hear in his ears? Would he have enjoyed its steadiness, its rhythm, its identity as his gait? Would he have altered his steps to make it seem more deliberate and purposeful? Are there some who would consider such an act as that self-conscious? Should he have cared for such thoughts, though they may have been true (if he had altered his steps)?

How often had he thought the steps of the stairs to the street as being too narrow for the length of his shoes? Did he give a moment to that thought as he descended, or did he merely maneuver the stairs more carefully and slower than was typical of someone of less impressive stature than he? How tightly, if at all, did he grip the railing, and was it with his right hand or his left? Did he have a preference for descending one side of the steps over the other?

Which way did he turn upon entering out into the street? How far did he have to walk to his destination? Which taxi cab did he ignore as it, passengerless, slowed and honked to announce its presence and availability? Why did

he feel that travel by taxi would have been frivolous? If, over his music, he heard the horn of the cab, did he smirk and shake his head no (mostly to himself) or did he walk on without reaction, trying to seem more dismissive?

Which intersection did he approach first, and which color was the crosswalk signal when he arrived? Did he have to wait for it to signal that he may cross, and if so, was the wait long and uncomfortable in the weather? Did he cross rapidly when the signal stated he may, whether he had waited or not?

How many intersections did he have to cross on his trek? Did he make any turns? How many people did he pass walking in the same direction? Did he give any thought to the speed at which they traveled? Did he have to maneuver around those walking in pairs, and was he angered by their obliviousness to the world around them, the people behind them? Or was he accepting and forgiving? Did he stand at any intersections next to strangers while waiting to cross, intentionally looking on towards the traffic to prevent accidentally meeting their eyes?

How tall was the building he eventually arrived at? Did it stand proud and imposing upon the street, or was it simply another structure like the others it neighbored? Did he have to labor up steps to the door, or was the entrance on level with the sidewalk? Was the lobby of the building large and impressive, or was it empty and hollow?

When he stepped to the mailboxes to retrieve what may have been waiting for him, did he have to travel far from the door? Did he find within the mailbox letters from friends and loved ones, the envelopes of which he held gently and with great care? Was his mail infested with Bulk Presorted envelopes containing offers of credit lines, bills for utilities and services, and thick stacks of colorful coupons and menus? Or did he turn the key in the lock and open the mailbox only to find it empty?

Which elevator did he take up to his apartment, the one in the front of the building or the one at the rear of the hallway? How long did he have to wait for it to arrive, or was it already there when he approached its door? Did passengers exit from it? Did other passengers ride it up with him, and if so did they get off on a lower floor or did they continue up after he departed? Did he look them in the eyes? Though neighbors, had he and they ever met or seen

each other before?

Which floor did he step out onto? How far did he walk to his door? Did his key turn in the lock clockwise or counterclockwise? Was the retreat of the deadbolt loud, safe, and reassuring? Did the door swing inward or outward, and were the hinges noisy or smoothly silent?

Did he unthinkingly lock the door behind him after entering, or was it an intentional and conscious effort? Which way and how far did he reach for the light switch to illuminate his surrounding? Did the switch turn on in the up, down, left, or right position? Was the light a gentle white glow, or was it the harsh yellowish illumination typical of incandescent bulbs? Did any thoughts of longing for the glow of daylight birth themselves in his heart and mind?

Was the small studio apartment warmer than the hallway outside? If there, was the warmth humid or dry? Were the leaks in the seals of the radiators significant enough to make the moisture in the air palpable? Where they rattling and hissing as he entered his apartment? After removing his headphones, did he hear any other sounds in his small home - the refrigerator running, the fans of his computer spinning or the hard disks spinning, the running of water through the pipes of his neighbors, or traffic noises from the street outside his window? Did he notice any of the noises, or were they long since so routine as to be aural wallpaper?

After removing his jacket, did he hang it in his closet, or did he simply drape it over the piece of furniture nearest to him? Wherever he placed it, did it fall loosely, or was the fabric still new and stiff enough to keep some of its shape? Were there noticeable wrinkles in its form, or did they all fall out easily?

Which glass did he remove from his cabinet after stepping into the small kitchen area of the apartment? Was it tall for drinking water, lemonade, juice, and other beverages served in taller quantities or was it short, a tumbler, a rocks glass, with the stature for such things as scotch, whiskey, and mixed alcoholic beverages? What large bottle of liquid did he retrieve from elsewhere in the kitchen area (the fridge; another cabinet; atop the fridge)? How much of the liquid did he pour into his glass, and how fast did he drink it?

As he moved towards the bed, which shoe did he

remove first?

Which book did he pull from those stacked nearest the bed to read? How many were in that stack? Were all of them bookmarked at various points through their pages, or did some or many remain unread as of yet? Did he pull one from the stack with a bookmark the furthest through its thickness, or was it a random picking? Was it a pick determined by other factors - did he read over the titles before making his selection?

Did he remove any of his clothing before lying on the bed? Did he cover himself with the blanket after lying down? Did he prop himself seated upright against the pillow, did he lay on his back, or did he lay on his stomach with the book across the pillow in front of him? How large was the bed and, if lying flat and straight, did his feet dangle over the edge?

Did he leave the light on, or did he have a small lamp nearby for illuminating his reading? Were the pages he read lit by the lights pouring in from the street outside his window? Would his eyes have found it easy to focus in such light? Would there have been stark shadows streaking across the text?

What sort of text did he read? Was it fantastical fiction, an escape from reality? Was it informative nonfiction, things of the world outside he would never experience firsthand but was curious about? Was it stark realistic fiction, and comforting for its familiarity, though of saddening or cathartic things? Did he think of analogous things in his life as he read? Did he read of any regrets characters may have had in life or love, and did he think of his own regrets? Was a thought given to the dark haired girl on the train earlier?

How long did he read before falling asleep? Did he stop and mark his page as he grew more tired, or did he pass into slumber with the pages still held open in his hands? Would he be able to remember where he was last reading, or had the text begun to blur together by the time he slept?

What did he dream? As he slept, did his imagination come alive with fantastical images, worlds and ideas? How often did people from his life appear in his dreams? Was his dream sleep restless, did he roll around? Was it light and close enough to wakefulness that lights or noises would have startled him awake, or did they infiltrate and take part in his dreams? Did the words of the book he had been reading

influence the plot of his dreams? Did he have nightmares? Or, though the contents of his dreams may well have been frightening, was his dreamed reaction calm and without startle? Was he aware of the dream, did he dream lucidly? Did he dream of trains, streets, and buildings? Did he dream of nighttime in the city, of walking? Were the worlds in his dreams all bright as day? Did he dream himself in heroic acts, flying, in positions of power? Were others people or beings in his dreams dependent on him for their safety, well-being, and happiness? Did seasons exist in his dreams? Was there heat, cold, snow, rain, warmth of sunshine? Was there love in his dreams? Was the past in his dreams? Was regret in his dreams? Was hope in his dreams?

Did he dream fantastically, absurdly, bizarrely, escaping from the world? Or were his dreams nearly real as reality, mirroring his life? Did they present all in his daily living in a simpler, clearer vision, an easier concept, a slower pace?

In his dreams, were there answers?