

THE CUTENESS MANIFESTO

BY

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*“The only important question is whether or not
to laugh at your own jokes.”*

PART ONE:
CUTENESS DEFINED

The world is round, which allows things to happen, because if the world were flat, we'd all fall off, and nothing would happen. If the world were square we'd all have a party and declare a holiday for jumping. If the world were a spider's web instead of dirt we'd all be caught in a spider's web. It's easy to pretend that no one ever reads the obituaries, but we all do it at some point. The earth is not the scooped-out skull of a martyred saint, let us all take comfort in that. It's easy to pretend that no one knows how to drive stick-shift. "It's the beginning of the 21st century and there's nothing left to do" is something a little sponge told me at the bottom of the ocean where light neither escapes nor penetrates. It all moved so fast for the last 150 years or so, now it's all kind of stopped, waiting to see if it will start again, even though it says that it doesn't want to. The sponge went on to say that while everyone is waiting to see if the apocalypse starts up again, they are free to do whatever they choose. There is indefinite free time for everyone. "Don't be too hasty in choosing a course of action," said the sponge, "experiment, explore, laugh, run around in circles, make fun of someone from history, join and dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to the religion of your choice." In short, stand

on top of a very high pillar in the middle of a big field and spit into the wind so that it comes back and hits you in the eye.

There is no one button that is the right one to push. In the end the bomb will detonate no matter what. No amount of cleverness will save anyone, ever. The things that you make should be an expression of your day-to-day state of existence. If you look at things day to day they seem much less important, less substantial. It's the whole that lends itself to philosophy. The hole is very wide, and very deep, and very black, and you can't really see much when you look down it. Within the hole exists everything and everybody. All of existence is in the hole, spread out, or close together, or in big clumps and clusters, but then again, in order for a hole to exist, it must be a hole in *something*.

When I wake up in the morning, my eyes are caked with sleepy sand. I rub them with my fists, I splash water on my face. Maybe I do a little reading, Camus, Herman Hesse, I don't know. Shakespeare, even. If I get sick of that I put the book down and just lay there with my head resting on the bedpost. I check my email. I write a haiku. I have a bowl of Frosted Flakes and read the newspaper. Every day we are at war. I pet my cat, he purrs. (I painted a picture of my cat once. His name is Willy. It's a little embarrassing to say it, but that's his name. My mother named him.) I go out into the city. I walk around. I count the number of bricks in a wall and compare that to the number of dreams I've had that have grasshoppers in them, to see if there's a correlation. Then I try to think in languages I don't know, like French, or Greek, or Hebrew, but it never works. If I see someone I know I say "hi" and maybe have a short conversation. I love to see people who are well-dressed, but that is a rare occurrence. Even if someone isn't well-dressed I

will still talk to them. In other places other things are happening, but I am never aware of where I am not. In outer space a star explodes. At night I go to a party. There are lots of young people dancing and drinking alcohol. I find a comfortable couch to sit on and draw pictures, and look at people if they are well-dressed. Then I realize that the sleepy sand is still there. It never went away and all day long all I've been trying to do is get it out of my eyes. Now it's so late that all I want to do is go home and sleep. I'll worry about it again in the morning.

Trees that grow out of sidewalks, telephone poles, streetlights: this is the holy trinity of downtown. At midnight or after these three icons of cloudy skies are all the same, they become interchangeable. Or at the very least, they get up and walk around, switching places and gossiping about the locals latest relationship woes. There are always birds to sing rock 'n' roll, the music of nature. Earth, sky, and water are the three chords of the world.

Post-Modernism is the same thing as saying that if you turn on the television and a really bad show is on, you have to watch it, and not only that, you have to like it, and be able to explain why you like it. Everything becomes bubbles before a blue sky. Some bubbles are bigger than others, some pop. Some might get in your eyes and sting you. In the winter (of which there is more to be said later), during Christmas time, everything becomes red and green, like blood and mints. If there were more perfect circles in nature, the world would still be just as round. Every circle has a slightly different circumference, and is a slightly different shade of yellow. Each one talks about a

different day of the week, but since there are only seven, there tends to be an overlapping in what the circles talk about.

The longer I allow my fingernails to grow, the more unhappy I am. Trimming them regularly makes life bearable.

Unless something is Cute it is not worth pursuing. Death, disease, war, sex, all of these can be made to be Cute. Cute is not a description, it is an interpretation. It is beyond beautiful and ugly. All art strives for the Cute. All literature strives for the Cute. Politicians wish to be viewed as Cute. Human beings cannot stomach any concept or image unless it has first been made into something Cute. “*Cuteness*” is nothing less than an object or idea’s ability to instill interest, inspire awe, or otherwise engage a viewer, emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually. To cite a possibly counter-intuitive example, the paintings of Francis Bacon, though they portray grotesque imagery brought about by intense personal anguish and hopelessness, are Cute.

The ultimate aim of Cuteness is to make presentable the individuals world to God. Whether this “God” is real or imaginary changes nothing. The tendency towards Cuteness is the tendency towards justifying the world to an outside viewer, a spectator, who is in a moral position to serve as judge to that world. If we believe that something is Cute then we believe it to be judged favorably. Everything must be Cute if it is to have a reason for existence. We cannot bear to live in a world without purpose, so we spend every waking moment, expending all our energy, until the day we die, in a desperate, frenzied rush to instill Cuteness into everything we do.

Sleep is the best thing there is. The stinging in the red, red throat is the sign that too many gummy bears escaped from the zoos last year, according to recent estimates. Stars should be outlined five or six times, maybe nine. By the third outline you should start to get something, the rest are precautionary. Nine billion years seems like a long time, but we're halfway through and still no closer to the secret of eternal non-pretentiousness. The seemingly natural tendency of the asteroid belt to agitation is the result of a meticulously planned solar welfare system. Bodhidharma spat on a cloud, it bounced up into the stratosphere, kept going, and eventually came to rest between Mars and Jupiter, and now there can be evolution towards intelligent life. If there were a microscope big enough, we'd see that everything is just a detail of a painting by Henri Rousseau. Fingernail clippings are crescent moons of Jupiter. IO is a really ugly and farfetched truck stop for the elderly. The elderly ride buses. Buses take us where we need to go. We need to go to our grandparents house. Our grandparents house was bulldozed for pharmaceutical sperm count therapy. We starve.

Does it really matter? Of course it matters, to color God's scatterbrain.

The great big hypergenius Necrokitty ran on and on, over fences, up trees, narrowly averting the cold hands of automobiles in mad rushes across the street. Necrokitty wasn't necessarily brave, but he knew he couldn't stop. Forward, Necrokitty! Forward! He had only the faintest notion of what his destination looked like. He thought it was shiny and soft. It seemed nice. So on he ran, until one day, he could see it on the

horizon. The shiny place! At this he forgot all thoughts of fun and giggling and comfy couches, and became serious and determined to reach his goal, no matter what. He achieved speeds that only secret scientists have conceived of, and even then only in dark whispers of subconscious laboratory gossip-sessions. Faster than sound, faster than light, really fast. Then, without warning, two inches from the end of his journey, Necrokitty exploded into a million bubbles that rose up into the blue midday sky. (He reached a velocity no sentient being was meant to reach.)

Venus is the smartest planet, but rumors of its magnanimous sex-appeal have been greatly exaggerated. In its multitudinous volcano factories, hundreds of 100-watt light bulbs are manufactured daily, but since a Venetian day is 243 times as long as a terrestrial day, this remarkable fact is almost universally overlooked.

Mars is too big to fit in my backpack, Saturn is too smelly.

Uranus is full of good feelings and love. The water there flows really fast, as if it knows something we don't.

Neptune crawls from the cradle to the grave while balancing a complete set of marbles in a pillar on its nose.

Pluto becomes an atomic bomb once every 5,000 years, when it's in alignment with Epsilon Indi.

Mercury is this crazy beat wandering poet guy who walks around downtown reading poems to everyone.

Jupiter is the nexus of un-creation.

Every planet has a fast-food moon. Every planet is tax-deductible. Some of the

planets are bottled by the Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

Hairline fracture of the heart, belly button, smiley face. Counter-culture: *incest*. Everyone gathers in the basement of the coffee shop to read poems. Everyone waits for their turn. It's a Mobius Strip rainbow that goes from red to pain to pleasure to bad timing to coincidence to green. The buzz of a house fly signals the start of the bake-off. The earth trembles at the sight of the baby elephant from somewhere cooler. Black mop-top: *gremlin*. White cube: *day care center*. Revolutionary: *false prophet*. I can see all of this through my 3-D glasses. Once the oven mitts are properly inspected for holes and other weak points, the pie can be removed, and set in the window sill to cool for one hour. Infrared laser-quilted force-fields surround the pie, for protection. Crows like cherry the best, they say it reminds them of their primordial origins in the La Brea Tar Pits with the dinosaurs and Jurassic vegetation. Cherries originated in the Jurassic Era. They were the size of bowling balls back then. Turtledoves are another, less likely threat. To deflect incoming turtledoves, one need only look them straight in the eyes and say, "You're only as mean as you look." The first turtledove was created through artificial means in 1947 in Roswell, New Mexico, via recently acquired alien technology. This primitive turtledove did not have the gift of song so characteristic of modern-day turtledoves. It was tone deaf, and lived for three days.

The process of creating works of art is that of creating an evil fascist Hierarchy of Ideas, with the ideas that are actually made into art objects at the top, forever exploiting and oppressing the other, "lower" classes of ideas. The artist has the entire

world, the universe, even, as a source from which to draw ideas, yet only a select few are ever chosen. In so doing the artist attempts to create a Master Race of Ideas, one that he hopes will go on to conquer the planet! The unchosen ideas serve as the context of the chosen, therefore the very basis of their continued existence is to give the Chosen Ideas something to rule over. Art is the conqueror, everything else is the conquered. It is every artist's goal, whether conscious or unconscious, to conquer the world as a means of imposing his or her own dogmatic philosophy of Cuteness on an unsuspecting populous.

There is no trespassing in the Land of the Smarting Trombones. Everything is out of focus there. No one has girlfriends and they are all unemployed, living with their parents. They are all sad and have throbbing headaches, which causes them to lose sight of their immediate objectives which include mending, haircuts, loading the automatic dishwasher, and dismantling the power structure of the United States Government, the latter being seen by many as containing unprecedented potential for indigenous floral growth, as well as a 21st century re-establishment of Jurassic evolutionary patterns. The illusion of Cuteness is maintained with all the monomaniacism of a baby goddess lost in a department store, screaming for her omniscient mommy. When you turn in film to be developed, it always comes back undeveloped because the camera wasn't loaded properly or something. Fish of all shapes and sizes swim in the river of chardonnay, upstream to invisible mates. One side of a Rubick's Cube looks like a Piet Mondrian painting. Mod is a fashion statement. It is illegal to run yellow lights. In the Land of the Smarting Trombones, every day is Wednesday. There are seven Wednesdays: Wednesday I, Wednesday II, Wednesday III, Wednesday IV, Wednesday V, Wednesday

VI, and Wednesday VII, so everything that happens, happens on a Wednesday. Most everyone remembers with a shudder that horrible Wednesday seven or eight months ago when the two stainless steel candlestick holders were toppled by a couple of acorns hurled by rogue chipmunks in the frosty big city morning. God Bless the Land of the Smarting Trombones! Lint rollers are distributed to needy bachelors free of charge as a public service. Condoms come out of the drinking fountains. People hide in bushes, jumping out to shout, “Hey! How's my hair!?” The public library has the world's single largest collection of paperback books with no covers. The head librarian there is a woman in her late '50s with a bright red wig who chews bubble gum and calls everyone “mademoiselle.” The walls are covered with green wallpaper with yellow polka-dots. They use military time and only show 1940s war propaganda films in their movie theaters, and the sun sets at the usual time, rises ten minutes late.

Sometimes people with long hair suddenly show up with short hair, completely defying all expectations you may have of that person. It can be a shock. They may try to explain, but the truth of the matter is that they are no longer the person you stuck your hand into the ocean with on New Year's Day. You have been betrayed, the best thing to do now is think about pastries. Block out every image you have of pink ribbons flowing in the breeze. They may dress better than ever, or they may not, but the hair is always to be the starting point in any discourse on loyalty.

When people die you have to cry. That is the law, and to break it is punishable by Marxist alienation. Death is the thesis, crying is the antithesis, and the continuation of

life in an uneasy party state is the synthesis. People die every day, and people cry every day. It is the natural order of things, as well as the social and economic order of the pan-capitalist society. Skin care products are available over-the-counter that produce noticeable results in mere weeks, significantly reducing the number of fine lines and wrinkles caused by excessive periods of mourning.

There is a world where even the innocent are guilty, and the guilty are just as innocent. There was a kid who slept with his eyes opened every night, and the night light would act as the backlighting for elaborately staged and intricately plotted megablockbuster dreams and nightmares. He had an old green bedspread and he always slept on the right side, until he fell asleep and would toss and turn every which way. One morning when he woke up, he was on the floor in Yellowstone National Park. His younger brother was once found sleepwalking in a circle, crying. Everyone thought he had to go to the bathroom. In a separate instance of sleepwalking, he took everything out of the refrigerator and put it in the cupboard, and everything out of the cupboard and into the refrigerator. This bizarre event was discovered the following morning by a pair of concerned parents, neither of whom were aware of any history of sleepwalking on either side of the family. “Ten-thousand years of human civilization. I think I'm getting an ulcer.”

The misanthropes are busy building a race of self-perpetuating strawberry-flavored androids in their massive manufacturing plant on the peak of Mount Fuji, overlooking an exotic and mysterious westernized capitalist economic framework

puddle. Utilizing all of the metallic shininess modern technology has to offer, including flashing lights and important-sounding clicks and buzzes, this plant holds the distinguished position of being the only one of its kind that has yet to become boring and uninspiring to the new, more demanding generation of misanthropy enthusiasts. Over one hundred androids are produced every day, with a workforce of nearly two-thousand misanthropes and misanthrope-sympathizers working hard to make sure that number never dips, or changes into a letter. Semiotic mishaps are not uncommon.

Intoxication is the second best thing there is. When you close your eyes everything spins together, negating spinning and confirming the transcendental oneness of the universe. Vanilla Coke is the third best thing there is. Everything becomes clear like a camera lens brought into focus. Black is black and pink is pink. Sex is the fourth best thing there is. Everything disappears and wakes up on the couch still grasping that final, unfinished beer.

“No past, no future, and barely any present.”

“No past, no future, just entertainment.”

“No past, no future, just the possibility of not being bored.”

“No past, no future, just the possibility of falling in love multiple times.”

Then there was the infamous month of waiting until she became cold enough to die. Then there was the peeling back of the plastic cover, after that you are supposed to stir and heat for an additional 1 1/2 - 2 minutes or until cheese in center is melted. After that she became a bikini monster, and all the boys were scared and attracted. After that

you are supposed to let sit for 2 minutes to cool. After that you are supposed to turn on the television. Then she sunned herself lying on her stomach with her bikini top unfastened. Then she read a book. After that you are supposed to enjoy. After that she went for a walk and looked at the turtles. After that she sat on a rock. Then she went to the bathroom. After that you are supposed to sit back and enjoy the television. Then you flip through the channels. They you get tired and go to bed, after that you are supposed to fall asleep. Then she looked at the sunset and flew there.

Blanket statements: all life is boring. Boredom is caused by a lack of anything worthwhile to do. All life strives for the Cute. The absurdity of Cuteness is apparent, but to cease striving for Cuteness is even more absurd, since this would be a positive affirmation of being swept up into the absurdity of the cosmos and swallowed whole before even becoming aware of the fact that this is what is happening. All life exists in relation to other life. Human life exists in relation to, and within, human society. Humans are made of many parts. Humans are the only creatures on earth who are aware that they are bored. Love can be a cure for boredom, but it can also be a very dangerous undertaking. Sex can suppress the immediate symptoms of boredom, but the long-term effects will remain. The '60s was the hippest decade of them all. Everyone was hip in the '60s, just by virtue of living in the '60s. The '60s was a very Cute decade, but everyone was still pretty bored. Boredom is *a priori*. Cuteness is *a posteriori*.

I am at the age in which I want everything to be symbolic but I know nothing is symbolic because in order for something to be a symbol it must point at something outside of itself and that is impossible because nothing is outside of anything.

Everything is just stuck. I am a heterosexual white male, that is what I ended up being. It is the most generic, standard, and boring thing a human can be. I was born a heterosexual white male through the arbitrary and random process of millions of years of evolution towards intelligent life. I could just as easily not have been me at all. I am at the age in which I do too much thinking about rocks and twigs. Almost everywhere I look I see rocks and twigs, but usually not indoors. I wear T-shirts and shoes. At my age one can never be too careful about what brand of shoes to wear.

PART TWO:
HOW TO BE SINCERE
IN YOUR NIHILISM

God sounds political. Approach everything as if it were for the sake of argument. Let's say, for the sake of argument, that expressing yourself serves some purpose. That is the assumption. Devil's advocate. Do that, just because the other part of you is taking the opposite position.

Guns should only be used for suicide. That's what they should be: little suicide machines. That's what they should have been all along. They should make it so that if you point a gun at someone else it won't go off. That would save everybody an awful lot of trouble.

Dancing is ridiculous. How can you not feel stupid when you dance? While dancing, all of a person's human frailty and flimsiness become painfully apparent. Dancing is desperation. One solution to this problem is to dance with a look of indifference on your face. Try not to look like you're having too much fun. This lets

other people know that you realize the ridiculousness of your situation, yet you are choosing to dance anyway. This is what is commonly referred to as Lucid Dancing. You are allowed to have as much fun as you want, but you are not allowed to show it. Always dance like you know everyone is watching.

When you can't sleep, duck into a cave, or the sewers, and look for evidence of a lost civilization.

There is a large, black hole where the mind is supposed to be. I think thoughts but where do they come from? If you don't believe me then look inside yourself and try to locate the place from whence your thoughts arise. It can't be done. It's like trying to grab air. Who are you? Do you really think or are thoughts just something that happen to you? Are you simply a phenomenon? Are you branches flapping in the wind? Are you the descent of an airplane, brought about by lightning and gravity? Are you a waterfall? Are you pillow-head? Are you the large, black hole where your "I" is supposed to be? Things don't look good for individuals. Post-Modernism is actually thousands of years old.

Every minute of every day requires a leap of faith. Living without faith is absurd. Living with faith in the absurd is also absurd, but it must be done. There are three options: ignorance, insanity, or faith in the absurd. Most people choose the first option, but they don't really choose it, they are just ignorant by default. Many think insanity is the most appealing of the three options. I will neither agree nor disagree with this. Faith

in the absurd is the Cutest option, but it is also very hard work. People who believe that aliens visit earth are usually ignorant, not insane. Very few people are actually insane, though many profess to be.

A sculpture, after years of neglect becomes covered with spiderwebs. Now it is complete.

There was a boy who was a trained anarchist and people would stare at him when he went into supermarkets. Then he got tired of that and wandered the streets with poems in his head, never stopping to write them down. Then he got tired of that and fell in love with a girl. He walked up and down Hollywood Blvd. with this girl and kissed her on the cheek. Then he got tired of that and became a party star and drank himself under the table and had dreams of a life without karma. He wasn't always happy, but he wasn't always sad, either, bar-hopping the night away, looking up at the stars, carrying a sketchbook, studying the scene.

[Books about the Holocaust, vertical stripes, tapestry, sweaty pop stars, German television, four noble truths, the Existentialismistic Super Despair Factor, fishnet stockings, fake flowers, not everything has to be justified, everyone's a vegan nowadays, sex appeal in other languages, redundancy, the last shot of the night, firecrackers, hold-ups, the outer space treatment, a gift for melody, evil, evil, evil, evil, seven more dollars, betrayal, long distance phone calls, stainless steel, Featherhell, combination lock, lab coat, pocket dictionary, equality, an occasion for dressing up, the weekend, samurai, prose poem, sandpaper, anniversary, the City of Angels, the Big Apple, it's on the table,

don't mind me, I love clean air, fliers, toothbrushes, I'll see you when I see you.]

Arrange your movie collection alphabetically. Do it on the fourth day of any month, they're all the same for all intents and purposes. Color isn't as important, but an interesting color scheme can go a long way in realizing end-of-the-summer dreams and suppositions. Go to a good music show with ample opportunity for showing off your ability to sing along without error.

Count clouds. Clouds that are connected to other clouds must be dealt with cautiously. Don't look for images in the clouds. That is a waste of time. Once you reach one hundred, start over again at one. The sky is blue, the clouds are white. That should be enough to get you started, now go and make the most of your time under the sky.

Buy a house. Invent yourself within its four walls. Invent the four walls. Generalities are very important. What hangs on the walls can make or break your important career in the field of late-night butterfly catching and releasing.

Spring into action. It was nice knowing you.

PART THREE:
BUBBLEGUM INSECURITES,
THEN REVOLUTION

Winter in the world only happens once a year. The planets begin to shrivel up and the birds all fly underground, into basements and other substructures that are comfortably close to the planet's molten core. Warmth becomes a carefully guarded commodity, the poor put on scarves and mittens but still go cold. The sky seems to get bigger, it oozes out past the horizon and covers the whole planet, swollen with frostbite, and extends to the ends of the universe. Snow and rain fall to the earth, prompting people to wonder how it ever got so high up in the sky, and why, once it did, it would ever want to come back down. Some speculate that maybe it comes back for us, the ones who are too heavy to make the journey on our own. On the contrary, the truth of the matter is that we are just as light as snowflakes, and this becomes apparent when you realize that no two snowflakes are exactly alike. And besides, we don't need water to live, just warmth. Lakes freeze over, fish become trapped, have nervous breakdowns, cabin fever runs rampant. They pound on the thin layer of ice with their fins, but fins weren't made for such strenuous activity, and soon become tired.

People put extra lights on their houses to guard against the darkness. Men are made of snow. The children do this, they have smiles. Snow is edible, everyone has all the food they need. People's minds become slow because of slush in the bloodstream. Activities become more and more premeditated, since spontaneity is the product of a sharp mind. Everyone exercises much greater caution than usual. There are less accidents, but also less accomplishments. Geniuses set aside their notebooks and hibernate in the mountains until the spring.

One winter, a boy climbed to the top of his parents house in the city of his birth. "I am so high up, I am almost out of the reach of time and the rules of probability," he thought as he sat on the snow-blanketed roof. "If only this were a two-storied house." He looked at the sun, which was obscured by the clouds, and consequently was quite dull. Then he looked to the ground. It was a nicely trimmed lawn, but because of the snow, which had fallen only the night before, no one could see it. "Snow is white," he thought. "Not many things in nature are white, but snow is, and when it falls, it covers everything." This, to the boy, was a profound revelation, but it was so big that he hadn't quite figured out what it meant yet. He would need time to contemplate and meditate before he could hope to unlock that box.

"Time to fly away, you with me? Time to fly away, you with me?" It was repeated for emphasis, eight times in fact. Sometimes things come in eights, like hamburger buns or noble truths.

Winter is derivative. It is the result of a lack of warmth. It is a simple negation, it has no real existence of its own, yet it is undeniable that snow and rain fall to earth, causing it to become frozen and susceptible to shattering. If the earth were hit by a meteorite in winter it would shatter into a million pieces and fall to the floor of the universe, where it would be promptly swept up by the unionized janitors of God and dumped into a wastepaper basket. It would be a tidy undertaking, not a shard would be left, no little Californias or Japans for the angels to cut their bare feet on.

A lot of people get sick. During these muted, glassy months there is a lot to be sick of. The common cold is caused by being sick of living in a world without warmth, as well as being sick of working, sick of living in the same place for extended periods of time, sick of relationships, sick of having to buy clothes, sick of eating and drinking, sick of the high maintenance and inconvenience a life of Cuteness requires, sick of looking, sick of seeing, sick of art and culture, sick of breathing, sick of entertaining guests, sick of standing, sick of sitting, sick of pencil sharpeners, and sick of dandruff. The pharmaceutical industry booms during this time of year.

One day in winter, a boy climbed down from the roof of his parents house to go visit the vampire that lived in the old mansion on the top of the hill. He rang the doorbell, knowing that vampires are much more hospitable to guests in the cold months than they are in the warm ones. Soon enough a very tall, very skinny and very pale vampire answered the door. He welcomed the boy inside and asked him what brought him so many city blocks from home. "Well," answered the boy, "I want to know about the whiteness of snow, and since vampires have very white skin, I thought maybe you

could help me.” The vampire made a face, then said, “I have lived for many centuries, yet I have only lived once. I am many feet above average male height, yet I have only one body. The river of my thoughts has taken countless courses, gone down innumerable waterfalls, and passed limitless forests and meadows, yet I have only one mind.

Vampires are but single grains of sand in the great desert of the realm of consciousness, we know nothing more than the coarseness of the grains of sand that surround us, and occasionally, we catch a glimpse of the sky and become frightened, and must turn away. We are white as snow, yes, but we are far from attaining perfect wisdom. However, your question is not a difficult one, and some small council I shall give you. You wish to know why whiteness covers all, and from whence the true perfection arises. You believe that whiteness is boring and uninteresting to behold, and lacks all the properties one normally associates with Cuteness. Well, boy, know this: white is not a color. White is the absence of all color, it is nothing, it is void. What you have sought after so fervently is nothing but nothing. You have learned nothing, you have gained nothing. I am sorry that the answer to your question is so bleak, but before I send you away, I will leave you with one final piece of knowledge: *human beings are made of snow!*” At this the boy looked up at the funny face of the vampire and was filled with joy. Warmth filled his body and began to flow outward, and water began to drip from the tip of his nose and his fingers. The boy was melting. Soon there was nothing left but a puddle of water at the feet of a vampire, standing very much alone, in his mansion on the hill, making a face.

The sun rose on December 1st, but it was made of ice, not fire. Everyone got pretty worried, since it was already cold enough. They thought this would be the end for

sure, the world would never thaw out. People gave up all hope and threw away their springtime wardrobes. Some people, who couldn't stand the thought of living under a sun of ice, committed suicide with guns which were manufactured for that purpose. Everybody else stayed here in the land of the living, and, having made the decision to stay alive, they then had to decide what to do with their lives. They began to realize that every decision that had to be made led to yet another decision, and that life was nothing more than a constant stream of decisions which only ends when you die. The progression of decisions is what constitutes a human life. "But how can we hope to make the proper decisions in absence of the complete facts?" they cried. And it was true. No one knew if, when the sun rose the next morning, it would be fire again or if it would still be ice. A lot of people started to hope, every morning when they got out of bed, that the sun would be fire again. It was always ice, so this hope had to be renewed each day, and although the people were let down daily, the disappointment levels never really rose that high, because they didn't really expect the sun to be fire anyway. Then they would just go on hoping.

"The stream of decisions stops when you die," thought a teenage mod girl while lying in bed one morning. "What if you don't really die when you die? What if you just stop deciding? What if you go on existing, but it is a decision-free existence? Maybe that is why you can't see dead people. Since they are not making decisions nothing is happening to them, so they are invisible. They have no eyes, so they don't have to decide what to look at. They have no hands, so they don't have to decide what to hold on to. They have no feet, so they don't have to decide where to go. And they have no brain, so

they don't have to decide what to do. They are everywhere and everything at once, because when there is no deciding, there is simply what is.” At this the teenage mod girl got out of bed and put on her favorite polka-dotted neckerchief.

Spacial ambiguity causes conflict in the minds of people who do not need glasses, but still fell that the quality of their eyesight leaves something to be desired. The fact that you can see your own breath makes this conflict even more intense in the winter months. It is an extra layer of complication, one that most people could do without. Some people, who have tried all their lives not to go crazy, upon seeing their breath in the winter time, spontaneously change their minds and decide that maybe going crazy wouldn't be that bad after all, and the first step is taken. Later on, when they really do start to go crazy, all they want is to be sane again, but it is too late. They have already set out on a long and dangerous journey into the second Cutest option for how to live your life.

When you can't tell how far away an object is, and consequently how large it is, it is very hard to form a concrete opinion of that object. You have to settle for approximations, and then move on to the next object. Spacial ambiguity leaves nothing to be taken for granted and everything for speculation.

(Precipitation is one of the most common causes of spacial ambiguity. The rain and snow that falls in the winter months directly relate to localized infestations of lotus blossoms of all sizes, the occurrence of which increases dramatically.)

A puddle of melted snow, dripping through wooden floorboards.

Everything is falling down, one thing at a time. First the skyscrapers fall down, then all the smaller buildings. Then the houses fall down, even the doghouses and birdhouses. Then mailboxes and parking meters, traffic lights and stop signs. Then the trees start to fall over, and soon after that the bushes and the flowers. After not too much longer the animals start to fall, starting with giraffes and elephants, progressing through to bears, ostriches, lions, deer, sheep, pigs, dogs, cats, skunks, raccoons, rats and mice. People fall down last of all, after everything else is on the ground and the landscape is flat almost all around the planet, except for mountains.

Then it begins to snow. It snows and snows and snows for what seems like years, but since all the clocks fell down on their faces, you really can't be sure. All the oceans begin to fill up with slush and all the mountains begin to be buried, and eventually the world becomes a perfect sphere, floating in the universe, white and shiny. It reflects off all the light that comes its way, so it can be seen no matter where you are standing in the whole universe, and in two or three of the other universes, as well. It spins on its axis at the rate of once a day. The sun rises and it is made of ice. The stars seem less bright. There aren't many fireflies in Southern California. Sometimes people get fired from their jobs. People are happy to see other people. The wind makes the trees twist and shout. Cupboards are filled with cups, and plates and bowls as well. In the winter time you get to wear scarves. Spiderwebs accumulate in places where people don't dust. Hermit crabs live in their shells instead of houses. Children go to school and get an education. Bananas aren't shaped like most of the other fruits. Books come with pages. Everything is written on a big grid. People step on rugs even if these rugs are very nice and the

people like them. It is nice to be comfortable. Buckles help things stay together. If there are four walls and a roof, then you have a house. Everyone is scared of not having anything to cry about, wait that's not true.

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