

Entropy in Reverse

Let's skip the preamble. You know the one, where I tell you about my life before it happened. I would be telling you about how I had a nice job, a beautiful family, a comfortable existence. But what's the point? None of it matters. I was driving home, and I saw a girl. A very young girl; she could not have been over three years old. She appeared to have lost her ball to the middle of the road, and she was waddling over to pick it up. It was the most beautiful scene that could be imagined. She was dressed in an all pink elaborate dress that only a little princess could get away with. With an earnest look of desire on her small face, and a plastic shovel at hand, she ventured across this troublesome terrain. It was as if that ball was her whole world. It was a scene that would melt any man's heart. The trouble was I saw her too late.

The police were nice. Save for running over a little girl, the thing that disturbed me the most was the pleasantness of the policemen. The children are our future, and that girl looked like a pretty bright goddamn future. It was wiped out by me, someone of no real worth to society; if I had any shine it had been dulled for decades. The police were telling me about how it wasn't my fault, and how there was no way I could have braked in time to prevent my car from squashing her between my tyre and the road. Sometimes these things happen apparently. Said like that, there really was nothing to the whole thing, really. You could even say it was a civil affair, lots of smiles and handshakes as the whole world was bending backwards to let me know how I had nothing to do with it. I did.

Am I just being selfish? I can remember the cold stare my wife gave me the first time I cried myself to sleep. Everyone has their problems, she said, and that I should recognise it wasn't my fault and get on with life. The judge didn't even deem the whole thing to be worth more than five minutes of his time. I had to wait half an hour in the hall as they were imprisoning some dope fiend who had the audacity to consume the wrong kind of substance, and the murder of this little girl (Bianca was her name) wasn't even worth five minutes of his time. Yes, I used the word murder. Whether it was my car who murdered her, or myself, I am not yet sure. Speaking of which, I have become too paranoid to use private transportation. It seems to me its purpose is to make our lives more convenient at the expense of flesh and blood which is given up to the gods every week. What is everyone thinking?

Nightmares have changed from being the exception to the general rule. The crushed body was one thing, but seeing the look on her parent's faces when they stumbled onto the scene

was worse. Just as the ball was Bianca's whole world, she was theirs. Tears came instantly, and did not leave for the entire time I had known them. Their knees were no longer able to support their weight, and I am sure you would find less agonising screams in torture chambers. What little of my soul that had remained at that point left. It was all over. Let's be honest here, I caused this. Everyone is quick to remind me that my body is not physically capable of reacting fast enough to avoid hitting Bianca, but why does that matter? If I took the train that day, she would still be there. If you took me out of the equation, she would still be here. Why am I still in the equation?

The question is how; how can it be done. Too many pills? A bullet to the head? These are the questions that occupy my nights nowadays. Swimming in regret and despair appears to be not enough to push me over the edge and overcome the primal instinct of self-preservation. I have started to think about forcing someone else to do it for me. Perhaps stepping in front of a moving car would be a fitting way to end my life. Poetic justice, as they say. But I am deluding myself, I couldn't do that. There'd always be the chance that my death would cause the same series of reactions in the driver that have led me to write this journal entry. There's also the fact that my salary supports the lives of my family. It's a horrible feeling; obligation is pulling me towards death, and obligation is pulling me towards life. I'm trapped.

Maybe there is another way, a way that I can afford myself a continued existence even though I killed this girl. The televangelists tell me I just have to give them my patronage and all will be forgiven, but what is their forgiveness? I am responsible for my own actions, my own way of being within the world. It so happens this being ended the life of a little girl, and they have the nerve to talk to me about forgiveness from their pulpits? They don't know me, their god doesn't know me, and I am nothing to them beyond an extra point in whatever game they are playing. Screw them and their forgiveness.

I am indebted to everyone around me. Whether purposeful or not, my actions have caused pain to others. Whatever force that underlies this universe knows that I am sorry, and that I seek forgiveness. Yet this is not enough, not nearly enough. What good would it do me or the world if I became secure in my forgiveness and continued as if nothing occurred? That is not acceptable to me. What do I do now? It seems to me reasonable that I now embody the very qualities that I require from the other; forgiveness and care. There is no further meaning that I could extract from the rest of my existence beyond these two concepts. It is strange that I live in a Christian nation and yet there is little forgiveness. Felons are locked away forever, or even killed by the state, but I am somehow pardoned for killing that little

girl. Charity and equality are shameful passions, and self-defence is a sacred right. It seems to me that this world would be a better place if people of my country would realise that they are hurting others. They may not see the pain or personally cause it, but they are responsible none the less. They will ask the people of other countries what our prosperity has done to them, and I will ask Bianca what my prosperity has done to her.

By Timothy Neal

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