

Tunneling

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*M*y younger brother was the most amazing person ever and even the way he died was pretty amazing if you ask me.

When he was only three and my parents and I were gathered around the sculpting table in our living room, Philip came running in yelling, "How does the mike-whoa-wave whook?" And then we all three turned to watch him skid along the hall rugs on top of freshly cleaned wood floors and he went careening right into the corner wall and split his head open like a pumpkin and blood trickled down his forehead like weedy seeds and still he yelled, "How does it whook?" Later that week after 26 stitches and no sobbing Philip told me to be careful because the electrons were running in the walls and secretly that was why he was running in the first place because he read online that current traveled in wires and he was only running to get away and that I needed to be especially careful when I was inside. I laughed because my brother was crazy.

When I was six and Philip was in Kindergarten, he showed up already reading and during lessons was told to stop interrupting and correcting the teacher when she would say gee-ogh-rih-fee and he would say, "No, it's gee-awg-wuh-fee!" And some of the children laughed because Philip had trouble pronouncing his 'r's.

Personally I loved his disregard for popular opinion. At recess he'd sit alone with a beat-up leather briefcase overflowing with white and pink slips and I'd get tagged with a rubber ball during kickball and limp over to him against an ivy wall. "What are you doing Philip? Play today."

"No. It's alright. My Gen Elec's gone down six cents a share."

"Oh. Is that bad?"

"Like two hundwihd dolloohs bad Bwian!" And we'd both laugh. Even though I only laughed because I had no idea what a share was.

Once Philip entered the eighth grade he had already devoured Shakespeare, Plato, Nietzsche, Rand, and all of Keynes. "Philip do you believe in God?"

"No."

"But Philip, how do you sleep at night?"

"Bwian, God is just something yew parents make up to help them explain what they don't know."

"So mom doesn't know anything."

"No. She believes in God."

"But dad doesn't believe in god either, like you, huh?"

"No, he just knows how a lot of things work Bwian."

I wasn't as close to dad until later on.

Philip loved him immensely from the get go and together they made lots of money exploiting the stock market.

Dad lived in Atlanta though while we lived with our mom near the Marina in Los Angeles courtesy of his great investments.

One day we were throwing paper planes out of our tenth floor penthouse overlooking the harbor boats and I laughed because I would always flash the cars below with my dick and Philip said to stop, that it was stupid, but then he went on about how beautiful it was that birds and paper can fly for the same reason, lift, and we stared mesmerized as his plane and a seagull gracefully plotted tandem helixes down the glass face of our high rise. When I asked Philip why we didn't have a lot of friends I thought he'd tell me to shut up, from my perch where I crafted a clay pot shaped like a dragon with ram's horns while he flipped seamlessly through stacks of papers and designs for miniature golf courses, but instead he told me if there were more people in society, it became stupider, like a '1/R' relationship, like if the number on the bottom got bigger, the answer got smaller and he said we were on the bottom and the answer was our intelligence. I just nodded and had no idea that he coined that from *Beyond Good and Evil* and a book on electrodynamics.

Later we played Secret of Mana in our fort based in the lower half of our bunk bed, strategically built to trap all rays of light so our mom never knew we were up all night, us stockpiling toaster strudels and sparkling water since those were the only two victuals Philip liked. We never talked about dad spending so much time in other cities. We just played Super Nintendo. Him always the Sprite, me always the strong, courageous hero. He told me from the start not to trust the character Thanatos. I just chopped away till my sword was full bestowed to level 8. Philip warned me he was behaving like a classic socialist revolutionary psychopath. I didn't read Eastern European history yet and got excited each time I thought the game was nearing

conclusion. For months we played and progressed by Thanatos' instructions through a top-down, 16-bit Nintendo world, till in the end I found out Philip was right. Thanatos had been lying to us the entire time in hopes of creating a new world order through mass genocide.

When we were both seniors in high school because Philip skipped a grade, we stopped spending time together. Not because of some waxing animosity but because Philip's universe consisted of two things, Quantum Mechanics and Joy Division.

In English class Philip never did more than digest physics texts and listen to Ian Curtis' pensive diatribes on his I-pod. Every two weeks we all had to do share and tell with a fancy name, Analytic Extension or something, and Philip tried physics one week but only one Asian girl had any idea who Pauli was while everyone else felt inferior for not understanding electrons aren't even real but ones and zeros that literally fall out of basic linear algebra operators. I tried to play it cool but was more worried about meeting Marla after class to tell her about the sculpture I was working on, the one featuring her left tit, so I made sure to avoid eye contact with him during his whole talk.

The next time Philip spoke he brought a new topic. Having just read a novel called *House of Dolls* he explained the fact that the human race carried the potential to perpetuate quote unquote atrocity exhibits and that our best way to survive in such a fucked up world was to learn to ignore non pressing matters like rape and people burning in gas chambers and property being illegally seized and bombs falling until they directly affected you and that that was what the U.S. did during world War II until the economy faced collapse and saving Jews became a more pressing matter and did you know that Jewish woman were housed in what were termed Joy Divisions where they were used as sex slaves by the cowardly animalistic Gestapo and did you know that no one ever talked about this because it was for our survival to shove the shit of the past under rugs and behind locked doors and he nearly cried when he said that in the ghettos people were given ID cards to feel safe but really it was a scam organized by the military to keep

the Jews quartered because they didn't have enough room to kill them all at once and if they had engineered it right that's what they would have done instead of dispensing hope in disposable bullshit Nazi insignia work cards.

By that time he was yelling at us and after taking a quick breath, he stormed out of class and I pretended not to be his brother and Marla waited for me as usual in the hall.

When I got home after having sex with Marla in the back of my car I found the bedroom in shambles. Everything scattered pell-mell on the floor: Nietzsche, Rand and Shakespeare mashed in a gallant intellectual coup, Buddhist psalms and Jewish hymns delving incantations on the bed, and indecipherable reams of paper etched with garrulous symbols and absurd Greek insignias swirling about like storm clouds.

I knew something bad happened.

I called Philip's cell phone and no one answered. Leaning over the balcony I stared at the lonely marina where day trip fishing boats trudged slowly and the ostentatious yachts fawned the last glimmering rays.

The wind whistled relentlessly.

Philip stood down below in the middle of Admiralty Way, a busy street with high-speed traffic. It was near dusk and I could barely make him out with a squint.

"Philip, what the hell are you doing down there?!?"

"I'm tunneling!"

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"It means that en-ew-gee is quantized and if I did the math wight the next caw should go wight ththrough me!"

“What the hell, get out of the street, are you insane?!?!?”

“No, it’s in the math, Bwian!”

I took my newest sculpture, the one with Marla’s tits on one side and my brother Philip’s ears arranged like a floral bouquet on the other side and ran to the metal railing.

“I’ll seriously throw it!”

“It won’t weach me, yew not high enough!”

So I tossed my half-spun masterpiece with all my might nearly toppling headfirst over and sure enough his physics was accurate, it smashed on the overhanging third floor courtyard it needed to pass to reach him.

“Okay, so you were right! Now get the fuck out of the street!”

Philip just stared at oncoming traffic oblivious to horns and screeching brake pads and diverted traffic and men hurtling insults about his intellect and I decided to run down there myself. I really hoped Philip knew how the fuck this tunneling worked and the next car would go right through him and that there was some hope in the great minds of mathematical men that we artists never comprehend and that he would come back upstairs and we could play Chronotrigger and Turok: Dinosaur Hunter like we did as kids in bed and Marla and him and I could hang out and maybe Philip would even smoke weed instead of abandoning humanity for a series of abstract symbols and I could have said that the singer of Joy Division *was* influential despite hanging himself in eighty-one and yes I secretly admired Interpol who sounded just like them and no I don’t believe in God anymore and yes yes yes you are insightful and appreciated even though we don’t know what you’re talking about half the time...

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And I

ran

ran

ran

three

steps

at a

time

to the

turmoil

below.

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Too late.

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And let me tell you no matter what fucking Shankar says about Quantum Mechanics and infinite well potentials and techniques to solve the Schrodinger Equation in three dimensions or how electron orbits in Hydrogen atoms can travel through inexplicable electric potentials or what that asinine movie, what the bleep o blah, blah, blah tells you about human psychology through a misinterpretation of quantum mechanics and the wave function, fuck it. Let *me* just tell you one thing.

Tunneling really is *the* biggest crock of bullshit in the entire universe.

And I don't care how many New-Age self-help diagnoses you throw my way or how many times you send me box sets of the undergraduate Feynman lectures where the seats were all filled by gawking physicists and a few lucky undergrads.

Seriously. I don't.

None of them bring back amazing people.

None of them bring back a guy like Philip.