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*Flipping three coins on a desk. Two or three heads—yes. Two or three tails—no.*

Is this book a good idea?

*yes*

Is the time to start it now?

*yes*

Here, in Toronto?

*yes*

So then there's nothing to be worried about?

*yes*

Yes, there's nothing to be worried about?

*no*

Should I be worried?

*yes*

What should I be worried about? My soul?

*yes*

Will reading help my soul?

*yes*

Will being quiet help my soul?

*yes*

Will this book help my soul?

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*yes*

So then I'm doing everything right?

*no*

Am I handling my relationship wrong?

*no*

Am I wrong in ignoring the suffering of others?

*no*

Am I wrong in ignoring the political world?

*no*

Am I wrong in not being grateful for the life I have?

*yes*

And the things I can do with it, having this time and prosperity?

*no*

Having my particular being?

*yes*

Is the time for worrying about my particular being over?

*yes*

Is this the time to begin thinking about *the soul of time*?

*yes*

Do I have everything I need to begin?

*yes*

Should I start at the beginning and move straight through to the end?

*no*

Should I do whatever I feel like, then stitch it all together later?

*no*

Should I start at the beginning, not knowing what will come next?

*yes*

Is this conversation the beginning?

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yes

How about those rolls of colored tape Erica bought me, sitting over there. Should I use them somehow?

no

Should I just let them sit there and look at them?

no

Should I give them back to her?

no

Should I hide them from sight?

yes

In the cupboard?

yes.



It's going to be so hard not thinking about myself, but rather thinking about *the soul of time*. I have so little practice thinking about *the soul of time*, and so much practice thinking about myself.

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But nothing is easy at the start. The phrase *the soul of time* has been with me since Erica and I took that trip to New York over New Year's Eve several months ago. It was in my head shortly before that trip, too. I remember explaining it to her in detail on the subway platform. We were staying at Teresa and Walter's apartment. They were out of town, visiting family over Christmas. I threw up that night, drunk, in their toilet. But this was much earlier in the day. Was it December 31?

*no*

Funny, I don't remember it being cold, and I don't remember wearing a coat. Was it January 1?

*no*

December 30?

*no*

Was it some other trip entirely?

*yes*

I don't think it was. I was explaining to Erica about *the soul of time*, about how either we as individuals have no souls, but experience a sort of collective soul that either belongs to time or *is* time, or that our lives—*we*—are time's soul. I wasn't entirely clear on which one it was. The idea was in its infancy, and still is today. She got very excited, while I found the idea that my soul was not my possession very comforting—that either my life was an expression of time's soul, or that my soul was time. I don't know if I'm getting it right. Am I?

*no*

No, no. I hope to better understand what I meant on the subway platform, and what so excited my dear friend Erica. This will be my stated purpose, my design or agenda, in writing this—to

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understand what it means, *the soul of time*, or to explain it to myself.

Is that a good premise for this book?

*no*

Is it too narrow?

*yes*

Can *the soul of time* be involved?

*no*

Am I allowed to betray you?

*yes*

Then that's definitely partly what this book will be about.

Maybe I shouldn't have said that I wanted *to explain it to myself*

but rather *explain it to other people*. Is that better?

*no*

To *embody it* rather than *explain it*?

*yes*

I have a headache. I'm so tired. I shouldn't have taken that nap.

But if I hadn't taken that nap, I would be in an even worse mood

than I am right now, right?

*no.*

~

Today I cried as Miles was leaving the house. When he asked why, I said it was because I had *nothing to do*. He said, *You're a writer. You have the Bonjour Philippine book, you have the I Ching book—you have the Simone Weil book. Why don't you work on one of those?* He hesitated before bringing up the Simone Weil book, because it was his idea that I write about the ideas of Simone Weil, and right after he said it, several weeks ago, both

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he and I became uncomfortable—that he should suggest a book idea to me. I rejected it outright, to his face, but around noon I started work on a book about Simone Weil. Miles texted me that afternoon to see if I was feeling better, and called me several hours later to ask the same thing. It's really him I should be worried about, not him who should be worried about me, because he is the one who just started working and has no time to study, right?

*no*

It's fair for both of us to be concerned about each other?

*yes*

I beat myself up over everything.

~

Around noon today, I took a drive in the country with my father. I was trying to decide whether to take a three-week trip to New York in June. Teresa had told me that she and Walter would be heading out of town, and that their apartment would be free if I wanted it. After much debating over what to do, I decided to make the choice that would make me feel better and warmer inside right now, and that was to stay here. After the drive, I came home and took a nap and woke up with a good feeling. I sat on the purple couch in the bedroom and just thought. I have for so long been putting off starting a new book, but now that Miles has begun working long hours, the choice has presented itself: to make a change and run off to New York and have fun, or to *be a writer* as he put it—as he reminded me that I am. I wanted to tell him that I'm not the sort of writer

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who sits in her room and writes, but I did not. I remember how the other day he said that once a writer starts to have *an interesting life* their writing always suffers. My reply to him was, *You just don't want me to have an interesting life!* Does that continue to ring in his ears?

yes

Did it hurt his feelings?

yes

Will he one day just forget about it?

no

Must I apologize for it tonight?

yes.

~

Although Miles and I had been having a nice night, I apologized to him for that comment and told him I was not going to go to New York to stay in Teresa and Walter's apartment for three weeks. He said, *I don't relate to these values you always come back from New York with.* I love him. He just refilled the water in the vase with the lilacs, which he bought for me last week. They were dying, the lilacs on my desk, and I hadn't even noticed. Now the ice cream truck outside is playing its sad song, and I'm a little drunk from the wine I had earlier this evening. I'm feeling all right. Does it really matter how I'm feeling?

no

No, no. I didn't think so. So many feelings in a day. It's clearly not the rudder—not the oracle—not the thing you should steer

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your life by, not the map. Though there is always that temptation.  
What's a better thing to steer your life by? Your values?

*yes*

Your plans for the future?

*no*

Your artistic goals?

*no*

The things the people around you need—I mean, the things the people you love need?

*yes*

Security?

*no*

Adventure?

*no*

Whatever seems to confer soul, depth and development?

*no*

Whatever seems to bring happiness?

*yes*

So your values, happiness and the things the people around you need. Those are the things by which you should steer your life.

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