

from IKMQ

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I had writer's block. K said there was no such thing as writer's block and that the problem I had was a big ego. M agreed. Century after century of Private Citizen speaking to Public World had become tiresome, Q said. The liberal, Habermasian conception of a public world was a con, K said, nevermind the epistemological and ideological dilemmas associated with the valorization of the private individual. Or the citizen, M added. I was studying creative writing at the University of Victoria and didn't understand. Try appropriation, Q said. I looked at K. Take a newspaper and a pair of scissors, K said. Choose an article as long as the intended poem and cut out the article. Then cut out each of the words that make up the article and put them in a bag. Shake it gently. Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag. Copy conscientiously. By following this procedure carefully, K said, I would be a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that was charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar. That's already been done, M said. Then take an existing text like Paradise Lost, and cross parts of it out, Q said. Done, K said. Use the Fibonacci sequence as a compositional device. Done. Alphabetize responses to the Rorschach inkblot test. Done. Write a story without using the letter E. Done, done, done, M said. What about a story without the letter I, I said. Q looked at M. M looked at K. Great idea, K said. Alright then, I said.

Kfingered the chips and sighed, hoping to feign weakness, then pushed the pile into the middle of the table. M called the raise and bumped it \$7,400. Then it was Q's turn. I lit a cigarette, counted the stack, and speculated on Q's next move. M didn't bother because of a nice pair of Aces, but if Q called, the flop would change everything. And to Q's advantage, M was all-in so there was no more betting. Q decided five-four was worth the small dent it would make in the twenty-some-thousand on the table, and played the Ace and Queen of diamonds. When M replied with the two black Aces, there was a buzz around the table. I gave K a look. Slow-playing Aces was either the height of cheek, or of idiocy. Either way, M was out. The flop brought a black queen, giving Q a useless pair, and the last thing K wanted to see: two small diamonds, making four to a flush. After an irrelevant seven of spades, I played the fifth and final card, which would determine the future: the ten of diamonds. That made the flush. K went pale. Once again I had defied the odds, and now I held the title.

M set the timer and flipped the patties onto the grill. Q hit the sear beeper, I put the buns in the oven, and K set the oven timer. M flipped the patties. Q took the reconstituted onions out of a bowl and dropped them on the meat: t-con, t-con, t-con, t-con. I heard the bun oven beep so I opened the door and took out the crowns. K lined the crowns up in a row and gave each one a squirt of mustard and a squirt of ketchup. The dispenser was pre-measured for ten-in-ones and for quarter-pounders—K correctly chose quarter-pounders. Now it was time to place the pickles. M put two pickles on each crown. Q noticed that the pickles on the third crown were smaller than the others. K agreed and said three pickles would be ok in this case. I took another regular sized pickle and placed it on the third crown. Q nodded. When I was done M placed the lettuce. K asked for a cheese count. Cheese for four, Q said. Suddenly the sear beeper went off: beep-beep-beep, beep-beep-beep, beep-beep-beep. M took the patties off the grill and slid them onto the crowns. K scooped the heels off the top shelf of the bun warmer, pushing the tray out from underneath so they landed on each burger, right on top of the t-cons. M stopped the timer: 93 seconds. Good time, Q said. M and K agreed. I nodded, but I couldn't help but wonder if adding that extra pickle wasn't responsible for those three extra seconds.

Q used the 30 loupes pocket magnifier to check the trichomes. The heads were approximately 25% amber. K said that was perfect and would give a nice cerebral effect. Q preferred a body high and told K to wait. Another week would allow the CBD and CBN levels to increase, Q said. M said if Q wanted couch weed then a pure indica would have been a better choice. I suggested indica for next season and passed around the Felcos. K and I cut the plants at the base of the stalks. M and Q removed the larger fan leaves to prevent mold. Then Q and I trimmed off the damaged leaves and buds. K and M hung the plants upside down in the drying shed. I suggested cutting a few buds for the dehydrator so there was something to smoke while the rest was drying. K said the bud would taste like shit but M and Q said do it anyway. After 10 days Q bent the central stem on the one of the larger floral clusters. The stem snapped briskly. That was a good sign, I said. K, M and I collected the plants for trimming, careful not to shake or damage the calyxes. Q spread a tarp out over the floor and set chairs in each corner. Working up from the bottom of each plant, all the leaves, stems and popcorn buds were trimmed and tossed into the middle of the tarp, while the larger buds were placed in empty beer flats with holes poked through the bottom. Then the buds were trimmed, working up from the bottom while rotating counter-clockwise. When all the buds were trimmed, K brought out a box of Mason jars for curing. K and I filled each jar with bud. M counted twenty five jars. Q said a celebration was in order and brought out the bong, but I was already busy collecting the schwag, which I knew would make some wicked bubble hash.

I brought the paint mixer, K brought the bucket, M brought ice and water, and Q brought the 20 gallon four-bag bubble hash kit. Q placed the bags into the bucket, beginning with the 25 μ screen bag, followed by the 73 μ , the 160 μ , and the 220 μ . M filled the bucket with the ice and the water, being sure to raise the water above the level of the screen to prevent contaminants from entering the first few bags. K took the trim out of the freezer and poured it into the bag. I thought there was room for more ice and emptied four more trays into the bag. It's all in the ice, Q said. K stirred the mixture on high for 15 minutes to make sure all the frozen trichomes separated from the plant material. Then the mixture was left to sit for half an hour to allow the gland heads to settle. Q put on Cypress Hill and lit a joint. When the 220 μ bag had settled, I removed it, being careful to not let any pieces of leaf into the bags underneath. M said to squeeze it, but K said that might let contaminants into the extract. Q removed the next bag, letting the water drain into the bucket, and observed the screen. There was a decent amount of dark, lower-grade resin. I scraped the screen gently with silicon spatula and set the collected material on the pressing screen. The 73 μ bag took a while to drain, so K stretched it over a bowl, which made collecting the resin easier. I looked at the extract and noticed it was light colored and highly fragrant. M was careful to rinse the bags back into the bucket so as not to waste any gland heads. Finally I took the 25 μ bag out and squeezed it hard to remove all the liquid. The resin on this screen was white. The infamous white lady, Q said. M suggested sampling the product immediately, but I knew this higher quality resin still needed to be pressed in order to ensure proper drying.

K was driving, M and Q were in the backseat, I was riding shotgun. K pulled the vehicle up to the end of the driveway. Turn right, I said. K accelerated onto the road and turned right. Stop at the intersection, M said. K brought the vehicle to a full stop. Which way, asked K. Turn right, Q said. K complied. When the vehicle had reached the posted speed limit, K checked the rearview mirror. M looked out the window. Q was looking at K. I told K to watch the road. M asked how much longer. K and I looked at the clock on the dashboard. The clock said 10:15. I told M there were three more hours to go. Q asked if there was any music. K said check the glove box. I opened the glove box and took out The Four Tops' *19 Greatest Hits*. Play track 11, K said. I inserted the disc and entered 11. The music started to play. Increase the volume M said. Just as I reached for the volume control, K stopped the vehicle at an intersection. There were three other vehicles sitting at each corner. Four way stop procedure, I said. Which way K asked. Turn right M said. K activated the appropriate turn signal indicator. None of the other vehicles moved. I told K to signal to the vehicle coming in the opposite direction to proceed. K rolled down the window and signaled. The vehicle pulled forward and turned right. Then the other two vehicles advanced through the intersection. When the intersection was clear, K pulled forward and turned left. The song was still playing on the stereo. K, M and Q sang along. The vehicle gained speed. This is going to be an adventure M said. K and Q nodded, but I knew that without a map, a destination, and only one CD, this trip would inevitably become tedious.

M arrived at the Curia to sit at the head of the forum. As usual, K, Q and I took seats around the tyrant. I was the first to petition M with a request for a pardon for an exiled brother. I knew that M would refuse the request, and that this would give K, Q and I occasion to surround M to make appeals. As M rose, I grabbed and pulled the purple tunic from M's shoulders, which was the signal to begin the attack. K was positioned behind M, and was the first to stab the dictator, piercing M's upper shoulder with a dagger, just above the collar-bone. M turned and asked K what is this violence? As Q approached, dagger in hand, M stabbed K in the arm with a stylus. Q and I then joined the attack. I struck a second blow deep into M's chest. K stabbed fervently accidentally cutting Q's hand just as Q plunged a weapon into M's groin. Covered in blood, M tried to cover up for posterity, pulling at the edges of the tattered toga. In the end, M was stabbed 23 times before collapsing at the foot of a statue. Later it was reported that in the final moments of the attack M had used the expression *καὶ σὺ, τέκνον*, but I heard no such utterance, merely a groan.

Q began in a largely defensive role, stepping forward for the first free kick, but K took it instead and banged it into the wall. The first significant contribution Q made was in the 13th minute: a long pass that curled around M, although K quickly lost possession. In the 20th minute, Q stole the ball from M and sent K forward to a goal. But just minutes later I intercepted a pass from K and scored from within the area as Q and K looked on. Q took a free kick in the 41st minute from the right side, near the sideline—a perfect position for that famous right foot—but the kick was headed away by M. A minute later M came across to take a corner from the left, but I easily handled that low attempt. In the second half K tapped in a nice cross from Q while M and I waited for an offside call that never came. Q took another corner from the left in the 51st minute and put the ball on K's foot by the far post, but K volleyed high. Four minutes later I dribbled past Q on a counter-attack and chipped the ball into the net. K got a corner kick in the 66th, passing a short ball to Q. Q lobbed the ball quickly on the net, but I had no trouble handling that attempt in front of the post. When Q came on strong in the 70th minute by capitalizing on a bouncing ball with a quick header to tie the game, the crowd broke into song. Q ran to the wall, K punched the air, and M looked down, but I knew this was just the beginning of a long and bitter contest for position.

I brought out a deck of cards. K selected the top two cards from the deck and placed them about two inches apart from each other. M lifted the ends of the two cards and brought them together to make an apex. Q obtained two more cards and made another apex beside the one M had made. I placed another card horizontally on top of the two points and looked at K. K constructed a second apex on top of the horizontal card I had placed. Now there were two stories. M added another apex and repeated the process. Now there were three stories. Q noted that with each new base the potential for additional stories was increasing proportionately. M nodded, selected three more cards, and added a fourth story. At this point Q announced that the structure was complete, but I knew this was impossible. The plan required a total of 64 stories, and there were only 29 cards left in the deck.