

Intro to Delights

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I think I'm in a unique situation where describing the reasoning for my 'delights' and my verbiage and/or diction makes sense (normally, I have to imagine what constitutes a delight is rather obvious or at the very least – doesn't require a defense). Who is even reading this, anyway? Just me, but... anyway. I like writing, so, on it goes.

Most of my delights, I anticipate will be rather normal, save for an oft-depressing backdrop or references to past events that sound (and probably are) rather bleak or reflective of some kind of sorrow, trauma, grief. "What is joy if you have not experienced sadness" or something like that, I'm sure there resides a famous saying somewhere about the duality of "it all" – with death, there is life, with light, there is dark. We've heard it all a million times before, but I'd ask that you – in reading any of these delights – keep in mind that some of us experience an unfair amount of one, or the other. Sorrow, or happiness. And while "it all" is a pendulum, for some of us – that pendulum stays magnetized in place, or held, or its cord cut to a side. I use the term unfair because it simply is. We know life isn't fair, but I am assuming most of us don't really gauge just how true that is because we are largely on the well-receiving end of "fair" here in America.

My life has been good, as good as I think it could've been when I embody some sort of outside onlooker, hovering above whatever this body is. It could've been a lot worse, at least so far – though as of late, I'm living through the worst of it.

Anyway, to the heart of it all ; I am significantly medicated – I think that there is an important distinction between "medicated" and "on medication". Medicated, most certainly fits my situation – because no, I am not just taking my medication – it isn't in spite of something, it isn't an addition to me or something else. I am medicated, because I wouldn't be here without it. It isn't a series of pills swallowed for the sake of "feeling better" (or, for many, staving off some difficult but surmountable ailments, symptoms, etc) – I cease to exist without the medication I have. Sure, a few days is fine, I'd manage... at least for the first two or three days. Lexapro withdrawal can be awful, but it's the Wellbutrin I worry about. Hydroxyzine, too. All of it together? Well, I'm sure I can imagine where that'd go. I won't even get into the therapy, or doctor visits, or hospital stays – you can imagine how all that looks for yourself.

In being medicated, there is a blunting effect to some of what we'd all consider the standard range of emotion. I'll save my rambling about the difference between emotions and feelings, for now, and simply say – I experience the range of emotions you'd probably expect, but certainly not to the extent most people are used to. Sorrow, self-hatred, loneliness – those ones I still get, full-force if I want to (complicated, wanting those things). Joy, contentment, optimism for a future – they exist, but it's a dwindling, back-of-the-mind, tiny spark of things. Joy is a blank stare and crooked smile at Union while I dance to some band I've never heard, playing music I don't really like, but Duncan is there – life is liveable, I'm a millisecond away from forgetting how shitty it all is.

That is to say, my delights may not seem very delightful to you. They are often barely delightful to me, but I suppose that is the most important thing – they are delights, despite it all.

In reference:

Devin - My late fiance. Suicide, I found him in our apartment bathroom at 6:00pm on September 23rd, 2025. It is important to me how he died, but I do not want to traumatize people, so I will simply say he hurt himself if I need to reference that. I love him with all of my heart, and oftentimes find myself saying “we”, even in typing – that will virtually always mean Devin and I. I could write about him endlessly, but it would never amount to even a shred of justice for him and his life. No words will ever be enough, try as I may – and I do, and will continue to do so.

Duncan - A guy I am currently casually seeing, who I am starting to like a bit more than I thought was possible. Confusing. He is 21, I am 29 - I do not foresee it working out. More confusing.

Mom - Devin's biological mother, my mother-in-law. My only real mother figure, the only person I could imagine calling mom. The strongest person in this life, in this world.

Medication/Meds - A lot, doesn't really matter. Anti-depressants, anti-anxiety, all the works.

Delight 1

Delight 1

"Manic Rockstar Dreamboy"

I'm not a fan of canned wine – I'm not sure anyone is. I'm also not the biggest fan of folk music. Sometimes I can't really tell what a lot of music around here is, genre-wise. So, I have taken to calling it folk music. Today, I learned that it is not folk music ("it" being all local music, which I have compassionately lumped into one incorrect genre). I also learned that I am, perhaps unsurprisingly, just fine with the music scene here. My stance on canned wine is perhaps more complicated now.

There is something to be said about the quality of every canned wine you'll ever have. It doesn't really matter how much you pay for it, or where you're getting it – though a chilled can will at least, marginally, be better than room temperature wine. Whether that's an improvement in quality or a temperature-influenced placebo is hard to say, but I'd argue for the latter. Anyway, it's all on the worse end of mediocre. We'll all* pretend not to judge you if you disagree.

It was canned wine or beer, and beer makes me feel bloated so... wine it is. I poured it into a plastic cup just moments before Duncan arrived. We took turns taking sips, he'd run off to this little backroom where all the performing bands were storing their shit, answer questions from his slightly more studious bandmates, take a hit from what I can only imagine is a dab pen in his shredded canvas bag. Come back, another sip of wine – a man after my own heart. His band is called "the Sardines". I bought a shirt he screenprinted that morning, it smelled just a little like him.

Eventually we made our way to the dancefloor, dancing about and bumping into each other, settling into a politely seated little row in the middle of the floor. I could've sworn I'd poured every drop from that wine can into my cup, but anytime the cup was low, the can had a little more to give. All things considered, it tasted pretty good. I wonder if his lips changed the taste at all, made it a little sweeter perhaps. We did eventually run out, but that strange sickly sweet taste slept on my tongue all night.

*myself, friends, family, your neighbors, loved ones, and acquaintances – also the bartender who gave it to you, and the people at the bar when you ordered

Delight 2

Delight 2

“Global Warming”

It's March, Sunday, the first of the month. This time last year, I was probably waking up with Devin to a brisk ten degree morning – window frozen over, heating vents rumbling the apartment walls. We're probably nestled in a mountain of blankets, three comforters at minimum. I'd have gotten us McDonalds – McGriddles and coffee specifically. It was our Sunday morning thing, I wish everyone could've seen his face when he got a good McGriddle in his hands. Just one bite and he'd be smiling ear to ear for the next twelve hours.

I don't have anything like that this morning. But it's a warm day out, fifty-one degrees to be exact. If this isn't alarming to you, I'll extrapolate. It's March, in Montana. That is M-O-N-T-A-N-A. (You know where Chicago is, move left.) The average high is usually in the low forties, maybe one day at fifty if you're lucky. This is the second week of weather just like this. Our world is burning, but I can't be concerned today. Too warm, too sunny, can't be cooped up inside thinking of things and not doing them.

I'm not sad today, not particularly anyway. (I'm very rarely happy, but I expect more numbness than not.) I'm reminded how nice life can be, which I'm chalking up to both weather, and my medication (thank god). Maybe Lexapro works well in tandem with sunlight.

I found myself in Bitterroot Flowers, this largely unimpressive flower shop that happens to also sell plants... again, probably the 100th time in the last three years of living here. I'm never particularly happy with the plant selection, and I have no reason to buy flowers without Devin to give them to. But today, I'm quite fond of the selection. I like all the little ferns, overpriced orchids, the boring money trees tied into uniform (and insidiously unhealthy) little knots – why do we tie tree trunks together for show? Probably because these poor things are doomed to become scraggly, long-legged, brown-leaved corpses in the windows of someone's north-facing apartment.

They sure are pretty right now though, and while I'm aware of some type of fate that awaits them, they are not. They still grow, throwing out bright new leaves under the skylights of this terracotta-tiled room. Wouldn't it be delightful to be a plant in a warm, bright sunroom? You'd never know it's below 70 degrees, never know that there's a world of plant-killing maniacs who view you as decor out there. Up until one of them buys you – but until then, how wonderful. I'd like to be at peace like that, and so today, I am.

Delight 3

Delight 3

"Mulholland Drive"

I worked yesterday (Friday), probably my first seven hour-plus shift in two weeks or more. School eats up all my time, so I stopped feeling bad about not working as much... though my bills are going to eat me alive, eventually. I can't find it in me to worry about that. The stress of school sort of overrides every other source of anxiety or stress I have in life right now (or most of it).

Up until yesterday morning, I totally forgot I was hosting a movie at my place. Or, at least I forgot it was Friday. I had it on my calendar – I am oh-so organized – that it would be today (Saturday). I'd have an extra day to clean my living room, maybe even my bedroom to show off a bit of the Victorian architecture I'm paying \$900 a month for. Instead, I had about 45 minutes to run to Orange Street Food Farm for an extra bottle of wine, fresh fruits for drinks and charcuterie, and maybe some cured meats in case anyone got sick of the forty-odd different types of canned fish and fresh salmon I had ready.

At about 7:00pm, most everyone had arrived – Alec, Loran, Taylor, Jade, Daniel, Sean, Duncan. First time for Duncan meeting my friends – I imagine he wasn't thinking much of the lofty expectations I can only imagine my friends have. I know where I stand with him, but it has to be strange for them to see someone who isn't Devin showing me affection. It's weird for me too, but for different reasons. But it's only in hindsight that I think of this, I was more than happy enough last night to let those thoughts slip by.

We watched Mulholland Drive, finished my expensive bottle of sparkling red wine – which is hard as sin to get in the USA, let alone in Montana. Apparently we don't have much of a market for other varieties of sparkling wine here, it's an Italian thing. Anyway, we didn't make it through the second bottle of wine, but we surely made it through more than half a bottle of my good whiskey and cognac. Luckily, the cheese was mostly untouched. As much as I love my friends, I am so excited to put all that expensive cheese into the most diabolical mac and cheese you can imagine. I'd eat Cheetos flavored mac and cheese every day if I could, so you can imagine how gourmet the rest of my pasta habits are.

I can't decide which is more of a delight – the company of my loved ones, or their unknown generosity in leaving me with my nice cheeses. I suppose I'll give them the credit of making me happier than the cheese ever could.

Delight 4

Delight 4

"Boy's Web and Flower Petal"

There are three large comforters on my bed at any given time. I push them off the foot of the bed from time to time, and at the behest of whoever is sharing my bed if I'm feeling generous. Were it up to me, I'd always have all three stacked over me – sweating to near-death while I sleep is perhaps the most insane of my little joys in life.

There is something beyond the warmth of the blankets that I like, something more than the coverage or the texture of them. Woven, cotton, wool, cable-knit, whatever. It's the tangling of them between your legs and arms. The getting stuck in place when you go to turn your body, fetching something from the nightstand, trying to get out of bed for that glass of water you knew you should've just brought to your room. Try as you may, the blanket becomes your web.

Even better, it's not just your legs that become entwined with the covers – but "his" legs too. He can be whoever you'd like to imagine. For me, it's Devin. It isn't anymore (in the literal, physical sense), but it always was. Perhaps it isn't fair to Duncan, but when our legs twist together into my blankets, I am reminded so much of Devin. All the times we tied our limbs together in knots with our duvets and sheets, so often unable to even move a little. We'd be content to sleep for hours and hours longer, thinking perhaps the knots would untie themselves with time, praying they never would.

I'm reminded of this all today, as I grab flowers to put on my coffee table. I'll make some kind of shitty, avant-garde impressionist display of them, I am sure. But as always, I pick a sunflower, Devin's favorite. It'll be front and center, and the rest of the flowers can tangle around it as they please, tie themselves into whatever knots they will. Maybe time will untangle them, maybe it will draw them tighter. I will simply enjoy the show, and think of his legs under the blankets with mine.

Delight 5

Delight 5

"Milk"

Lactose intolerance is a joke. I used to drink a litre of milk a day growing up, I didn't think anything of it until I was something like 17, maybe 18. I realized, one fateful morning, that my stomach didn't feel too great after my gargantuan bowl of cereal. And not to worry – I'm not inept enough to ignore that the cereal was mostly sugar and processed flour (thank you, Frosted Flakes) – so I knew I'd have to investigate further. I tested myself the next day, just a glass of milk.

Unfortunately, the same gross feeling, same bloating, and the same awful realization that my own horrible body was turning against me. How could we be fighting that which we love most? I'd die without my daily cereal, my weekly litre of chocolate milk on-top of what I was already drinking in plain whole milk. What of cheese, what of chocolate, what of ice cream and all other kinds of treats and breads? Cheesecake?! "My body is a traitor to itself", I think. I've been on this earth for nearly two decades and ignored this feeling the whole time? How? Or is it a new development? It doesn't really matter, my life is now in shambles.

These days, I am less dramatic, but lactose intolerance remains a joke. I can take Lactaid whenever I want, dampening the would-be negative effects of my now long-gone dairy addiction. I still enjoy it, quite obviously, but I'm not just drinking milk anymore. I rarely even have it in the fridge (and when I do, it wasn't me who bought it), but... there is still the matter of ice cream.

Big Dipper, an ice cream shop across the street from where I live (and where I have been going religiously with Devin since moving here), is my favorite treat. Quite famously, they do not re-release their rotating/unique flavors with any regularity, if at all. Fortunately for me, my favorite of theirs continues to crop back up – perhaps a testament to the grandeur of taro and oreo, united together. Anyway - I got a scoop for myself to eat then and there (with more oreos on top, you'd never believe I am 130-something pounds with the way I eat), and then a pint to take home.

I didn't take any Lactaid, and don't intend to. I think there is some kind of delight in eating my favorite ice cream and suffering whatever consequence awaits me. If I view it more as a trade-off with my body, it feels less traitorous. I get to enjoy dairy, and my body gets to throw a little fit to see me suffer. It's all transactional, so it's okay – I'm happy with it. Do you think your body loses more calories fighting off the lactose it can't process? I'm going to think so.

Delight 6

Delight 6

“Waking, Sleeping, Waking”

The title of this delight may mislead you into believing that it'll be about my bed, sleeping, or otherwise being horizontal with my eyes closed.

It's a nice Sunday. I woke up at some point before noon, but I've largely forgotten how that went. If not for my proclivity to spend money with reckless abandon, I'd still be sleeping. The hungering call of capitalism and filling my apartment with shit I don't need, however, cannot be ignored. Insatiable and all that.

I decided it was a mall kind of day, because Missoula still has a functioning mall – I adore this, most stores are filled, it's usually busy, and I almost remember when malls were actually cool places to be. I was born a little late to really experience the heyday of these often hideous megastructures, but there is some nostalgia. I adore the smell of pretzels and new sneakers, ebi fry and linoleum. It's all so comforting in the strangest way, I almost feel like falling asleep while walking around. As if in bed, I can close my eyes and let my brain wander, up to a point... I don't really want to be some weirdo standing comatose in the middle of H&M right now.

It sounds nice, though, to turn my brain off and drift away here. They aren't playing music at this H&M right now, which is strange, but welcome. It's an awful lot more relaxing than the usual upbeat house music. Just the sound of people walking out in the main mall thoroughfare, no hangers clinking around since the men's side is always dead. Foodsteps, the indiscernible chatter of distant people, cotton slacks brushing against each other under a heating vent. Oddly poetic a situation to be in, considering I'm essentially standing inside what you could consider a metaphorical nuclear bomb of microplastics and excess waste.

Whatever! I'm getting a pretzel in a second, the slowly drifting scent of salty dough and cinnamon has finally worked its way into my consciousness. Oh, what a world, new t-shirts, fresh cinnamon pretzel twists, probably some boba tea and more clothes in the next hour... life is so difficult today.

Delight 7

Delight 7

"Dullscythe"

I have to move again – it's been less than five months since the last one. I own (literally) hundreds of books, plants, my own furniture, and two walk-in closets full of clothes. Devin and I were the same height and weight, so we shared everything. As you can imagine, nobody in his family had much use for a wardrobe when he passed, save for some sentimental pieces of clothing for his mom and Tyler, his brother. Don't worry, this is still a delight.

Last time I had to move, I was freshly out of a hospital and had about one week to figure out where I was living. Stress. Lots of it. I'm not going to get into it, because it isn't delightful. And, while I am tempted to say this move isn't delightful either... There is something about it. A gilded edge, silver lining, mother-of-pearl bordering, any other trimmings you can think of.

I realized while moving a vast amount of dead plants out of my room (little time to care for them with everything else going on), that, while difficult; I am capable of throwing things away now. In a way, a sort of delight, to be able to rid yourself of a thing, a something or other, that is no longer serving you. The books, of course, will stay. But I find some joy in this, that I have grown just a little tiny bit between the blurry days and weeks and months. Grown enough to do something with these poor, long-wilted plants I once sobbed over losing just some months before.

I'd give credit to Marie Kondo if I thought she was due for it – decluttering as a lifestyle, objects that spark joy stay, as she puts it. But then I think of the time, some weeks before I got the notice of my impending move, where I was at a vintage shop downtown. I joked with the woman running the store that clutter is what makes our residences human, organic, alive, and that I can't get rid of a god damned thing I own. I forget exactly where I brought up Marie Kondo, but I do remember that she said "Marie Kondo can get (expletive)", and to be honest, I mostly agree.

Ah fine, just this one time – Marie Kondo is right. Throw away the dead plant. You'll feel better afterwards.

Delight 8

Delight 8

“LSD and the Search for God”

If you had told me a year ago that I'd be spending my days listening to shoegaze every night and dancing my heart out three feet from speakers bigger than my body, I... would probably believe you. Partially. All but the dancing.

I've never been much of a mover, doer of things involving my body, utilizing limbs for non-essential tasks or hobbies. I always felt weird in my skin, judged by myself, judged by others, scared of the way shirts clung to my body and what that might reflect about me. Am I eating too little, too much? Do my arms look weird when I put them in the air? Are my legs crooked when I jump and prance around?

I couldn't tell you where it came from. Perhaps Duncan is to blame, perhaps he is a simple catalyst, maybe even less. But as of late, there has been some kind of shock in my bones that inspires one to move, however they can. In my case, that would be dancing.

Truth be told, I do get a bit sloshed at these shows, and this one wasn't much different. 'LSD and the Search for God', one of Duncan's favorite bands, came to town. I wasn't going to go initially, having planned to hang out with friends and move more of my shit to my new place. Yet, I found the time somewhere, and found the willpower somewhere else. Shoegaze is the genre – if you're not familiar, you can call it psychedelic rock, or dream rock, or whatever. Other bands under the shoegaze genre umbrella include My Bloody Valentine, Japanese Breakfast (pre-Jubilee), and the GOAT (greatest-of-all-time for those not in on modern slang), Beach House. Anyway, I went. With Duncan.

And boy. Did. We. Dance. There isn't really much more to this delight than that, to be honest with you. It's a simple revelation, but quite wonderful to me. My body is capable of movement, and I don't suck at it, and nobody really cares anyway. The people who aren't dancing are either too embarrassed (much like I was, I have to imagine), or truly do not care to – and they are not looking at the people who are dancing with any opinion that matters. Unless they wish to compliment someone, I suppose.

We did bump into people constantly, which does strike some kind of primal fear into me, but still a delight.