



A Fortnight's Lament by Elizabeth Saas

FLYMF August 2004, The "Terrorists Hate Our Freedom" Issue, Volume 1 Issue 6

July sixth. Spent day quietly despising self. Simultaneously wished for and did not want a call from X while simultaneously fighting urge to call that guy who spent our entire relationship trying to kill himself. Burrito for dinner.

Saw a man fly out of wheelchair right outside my apartment building. Was compelled to flee scene until I realized it wasn't my fault. Was no help. Stood there anyway.

No one is right for me.

I am wrong for everyone.

July seventh. I can trace everything back to my mother, my father, and the boy I lost my virginity to. To whom I lost my virginity. But I wasn't thinking about grammar then, so why start now? Everything, everything. Every thing. What am I supposed to think about that? It's bad, I guess. It's not the worst thing, though.

Isolation, A Poem
Why?
Why bother?

What will I do tomorrow? Who cares?

July eighth. Two months ago I was writing my novel. Now I sit around giving myself shitty manicures. Isn't it funny the way life goes in cycles?

Once I read "we pack the stuff that makes up our lives into cardboard cartons, neatly labeled and then stacked in the basement, only to find the next time we must go back to that inner place all order has been replaced with chaos because the labels are off the boxes." Or was it the lids? It could have been the lids. At any rate, I was happy I didn't write it and now I keep it around to remind myself there's always someone worse than I am. Well, usually there is. I think.

July ninth. My roommate is on the phone now and her end of the conversation is a cadenced chorus of uh-huh, uh-huh, right, right. Either she's administering an oral test or she's had this conversation before. Maybe both.

July tenth. I'm glad the world is my oyster, because the other night I ate a scallop and my lip swelled to three times its natural size. If the world were my scallop, I'd need a wheelbarrow for my upper lip. If I ate the world, I guess. But then there'd only be me. But I'm a part of the world. It's too complicated to comprehend.

Lately, I've been thinking that I'm an intellectual snob. And I've been thinking that maybe I should start telling people who I think might not know. But they probably wouldn't get it anyway.

July eleventh. Left the house today because I was in a lousy mood. Still in a lousy mood when I got outside – so it wasn't my house's fault. Still, I had already locked up, so I continued on. And when I got outside, I divined quickly that there was an unofficial, unannounced celebration of Every-Stranger-Talk-To-Me-Day going on. I would say that I tried not to talk to them, but what does that really mean? I mean, I must not have been trying very hard.

Went to the post office to buy some stamps to mail bad checks to creditors. Some kids were crying. This is the most effective form of birth control invented. Fear of a mewling child puts me right off the idea of sex. Having a kid is like signing a contract to tolerate whining for at least 18 years. Or 40, if you're my parents.

July twelfth. Mother told me that when I was a child I spoke to her only in commercials. Commercialese, she called it. She stopped taking me to the grocery store, because people were looking. Also, I was driving her crazy. But I refuse to take full responsibility for that. First, I wasn't allowed to touch the TV. Secondly, Dad.

July thirteenth. My roommate keeps asking me what I'm doing. I keep telling her: Nothing. Is it memory lapses? Or is she trying to tell me something? Should I do something?

Activity, A Poem
Why?
Why Bother?

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July fourteenth. Before I had a handle on colloquial English, when people used to say "the other day," I used to wait for them to remember which one. Or I would try to remember for them, and then I would miss the story. Who cares? Those kind of people are always boring. If you keep a journal, you remember what happens when. Then again, keep too much of a journal, what happens is journal keeping.

July fifteenth. Sometimes, when I go out for a walk, I call it The March For Sanity. Usually I'm just out of cigarettes, though.

July sixteenth. Last summer, I worked in a restaurant with no customers. This summer I'm working for a temp agency with no work. I'm beginning to take this economy thing personally.

July seventeenth

WHAT'S GROSS

Do

you know what

's gross?

I do.

When you are friends

with a person you really like and all – it's not that.

What is it, then?

You ask.

You! Ask!

What's gross:

When that Person Refers

To SEX

or

THE BATHROOM and

And then,

You must picture them

With genitalia.

I'm trying to get that one down to a haiku. Or something. Initially I thought maybe a sonnet, for the shock value, but the imagery here does not lend itself to a classic pentameter. Perhaps I'll workshop it next week.

July eighteenth. One time, my friend Dawn from group and I went shopping. It was really great. Even though I had to go to the bathroom for most of it because we were drinking so much iced coffee. I always have to go to the bathroom. Dawn says it's the iced coffee. That's it. That's what she says. I've been trying to remember that for days, now.

Oh! The worst thing about the temp agency is this chick named Judy. She wears this shiny, pleated, polyester white and navy blue hound's-tooth check skirt. She thinks she's so great. Maybe she used to be a lot worse. Maybe this is great as far as she's concerned. If I were a different kind of person, I'd feel bad now. Instead, I'll just go get a Diet Coke. But I'll finish laughing at Judy first.

July nineteenth. Today, I went into this convenience store I usually don't go into because usually it is inconvenient. But I was in a different part of town. As it turned out, this one was still pretty inconvenient, because they didn't have any Camel Lights. Well, actually, they might have. I don't know. I didn't see any out and I thought, hey, I'll buy this other kind so he won't have to go searching with those beautiful sea green eyes for my stupid old cigarettes. He can just go on ahead and keep them pointed right at me. Me. The girl with the yellow stained fingers and the rat's nest of hair that hasn't been washed in a fortnight. Hey, no temp work, no shower, no big deal, right? Except for right now.

My improvised plan was to make this guy's job easier so that he would fall in love with me. Maybe not right then, but, you know, sometime. Mental note to shower, return, and be even more accommodating. Mother would slay me for dating within the service industry. This man is perfect for me! He gave me two books of matches. I think it's mutual.

July twentieth. In general, I'm feeling a lot better, though. I was feeling a little bit burdened, a little bit overwhelmed. Felt a little like I'd like to reach out to someone, right after I found out about the worst thing. But the burden is so great. Too great to share? Besides, I keep getting everyone's answering machine.

I was wondering about my poems today. I fear that I'm becoming derivative. If it's possible to become derivative of one's self, then maybe I am. But it's better to have a legitimate fear if you're going to have a fear in the first place. That's something a grandmother would tell you. I'm sure mine will if she ever sobers up.

Fear, A Poem
Why?
Why bother?
