

Swallow

by Luke Swenson

- ❖ Drink Coke
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- ❖ Retrieve notepad from backpack
- ❖ Lift pen
- ❖ Begin composing the list Jack commissioned for his opera
 - "Use automatic writing" - Jack
- ❖ Drink Coke
 - Swallow
- ❖ Turn on Os Mutantes
- ❖ Do you know what automatic writing means?
 - Have you ever read a French surrealist?
- ❖ Drink Coke
- ❖ Is automatic writing lazy writing?
 - Fantastic!
 - Surreal
 - Boring.
- ❖ Swallow
- ❖ So far you are only writing about making a list
 - Will this be a list about making a list?
 - Will you hate it?
- ❖ Embrace
- ❖ Change title from **Jack's List** to **How to be Luke Swenson on the 2:50 Frontrunner between Provo and Salt Lake City on July 14, 2014**
 - A list of how to be me in this moment
 - Clear?
 - Me
 - ◆ Not
 - You

NOTE: Put all perspective titles of the piece in bold instead of italics.

- ❖ Will it be conceptual?
 - A list is boring
 - A list of lists is boring?
- ❖ Drink Coke
- ❖ Check song name: "Virginia"
- ❖ Listen to joyful Brazilian psychedelic rock
 - Sun rays breaking through the clouds
 - above Utah Lake

Note: There was a note here that was deleted at some point. It said something about changing which Os Mutantes song I say I am listening too. I don't remember why.

- ❖ Reminisce on last night's intimacy
- ❖ Swallow
- ❖ Would Lindsey mind you publishing something so blunt?
 - Reword the intimacy sentence.
- ❖ Would your list be of physical actions or thoughts?
- ❖ Hate the meta-textual
- ❖ [Bullet Point]
- ❖ Drink Coke
 - Swallow
- ❖ Do you think stringency is necessary for conceptual projects or should artful deviation be allowed?

NOTE: Both thoughts and events seem to be represented in this list.

- ❖ Reach for a Coke can
 - and catch the place where your two headphones meet with your finger
 - and yank them from your ears.
- ❖ Look below the table
 - see the thin white cord hanging from a thick black cord
 - grab the thin cord between your thumb and finger
 - lift
 - ◆ headphones drag along the floor
 - ◆ the phone charger is lying on the floor

- and nods so synthetically
 - ◆ that the tall man scoffs
 - ◆ and grows quiet
 - because what else is he supposed to do?
- ❖ How would you set this list to music?
 - Could the bullet points be represented musically?
 - Could the sounds correspond to what you hear riding the train?
- ❖ How does it sound becoming a poet today?

Note: Remove the line about musing about becoming a police officer because in the light of recent events you'd rather not praise a police officer.

- ❖ Drink Coke
 - Swallow
- ❖ Both your thoughts and outside events are represented in the list.
 - Have you read this line already?
- ❖ Are you forgetting your most engaging ideas?
- ❖ Will Jack hate this list because it can't engage an audience?
 - Will this line affect his opinion?
- ❖ If this list ends up boring at least listeners will have a moment to think about why this list is boring
 - or about their own problems
 - their relationship with this person or that
 - happy or sad because of this or that
 - both as fine as anything else
- ❖ Lift pen
- ❖ Would describing the officer story with a more belligerent customer help engage the audience?
 - Change the story

Note: Write more notes

- ❖ Are writers' thoughts and fears relatable to people in other circumstances and with other interests?
 - For instance: will this list have an audience?
 - Did that question engage you?

"ARRIVING AT MURRY STATION"

- ❖ The train door opens

- ❖ Unplug phone
 - Pick up phone and charger
 - and secure them in your backpack
 - Pick up backpack
- ❖ Did you take too long to pack up?
 - Will you make it off the train?
- ❖ Bump into a woman in a yellow shirt and jeans
 - Enjoy her presence
- ❖ Did you leave your phone on the train?
- ❖ Kneel down
 - interrupt the flow of people exiting the train
 - check for your phone in your backpack
 - see the phone
 - ◆ sigh
- ❖ Did you annoy someone by stopping?
- ❖ Stand up
 - walk towards the street car station
 - in the hot summer sun
 - arrive surround by passengers
 - of the former train
 - ◆ some you remember
 - a pair of teenagers who must have been sitting across from you on the train
 - look above them
 - RED LINE MEDICAL 2 MINUTES
 - ◆toss your can of Coke away
 - ◆and sit down on a bench
- ❖ To your left a large man in a green shirt
- ❖ To your right a skinny man in a red shirt

Note: Replace all instances of consider, realize and notice with action-oriented verbs to help engage your audience

- ❖ Retrieve notepad from backpack
 - Record the actions that occurred while walking from the Frontrunner to the light rail
- ❖ Heads turn
 - as a street car
 - slows towards the station

- doors open
 - people exit
 - you enter
- ❖ Sit across from a student
 - with a black shirt of a frog skeleton
 - white headphones in her ear
- ❖ Three intoxicated individuals enter the train
- ❖ and walk to the quad of neighboring seats
- ❖ and sit down
 - cornering the woman

Note: Cut this section to meet a page count required by an online journal

- ❖ Listen closely to the neighboring booth
- ❖ and record their actions
- ❖ because it's something happening
- ❖ and readers enjoy reading about something happening

Note: Based on some passing remarks made by your workshop group, expand the project by asking for criticism. Choose your father because you haven't talked in awhile, and of all the people readily available you are sure he would dislike it the most.

From: lukeswenson105@gmail.com
 To: daddy@math.edu

Dad,

Could you give me feedback on this poem by Tuesday? It doesn't need to take you long at all. I'm looking for your honest opinion on the writing, and I'd be quite confused if it came back all flattery. Comments in the Google doc are easiest for me, but you can write your reactions/suggestions/criticisms however you'd like. Consider the task very gentle payback for your analytics final.

See you soon,
 Luke

From: pops@math.edu
 To: lukeswenson105@gmail.com

Ok, I took a look at your poem. Some thoughts: Does the list of all boring lists list itself? Needs more coke, as do I. I am not sure how to critique stream of consciousness, do I say NO, you shouldn't have thought that? Also "your obsessing over yourself" should be "you're obsessing over yourself" unless the bad grammar was intentional. Similarly carriage is missing an a (unless that was intentional). Is the only reason you asked me to critique this poem because you mentioned me critiquing this poem in the poem? Russel called, he wants his paradox back. Is my critique of this poem going to become part of the poem? Is that really how poems are supposed to work? Poems clearly need a union. Also, too, I would not want to be mentioned in a poem that has my writing in it, because I have standards.

From: lukeswenson105@gmail.com
To: father@math.edu

Dad,

Thanks for looking over the poem. This is exactly what I was looking for.

The 'unity' of the poem comes from the procedure that created it. The theory is because I am upfront about what my procedure was, you always know why the language is where it is even if the sentences don't build a clear structure with themselves: hence unity. Keeping with this honesty, every step I make must have either come from the original stream-of-consciousness, or I have to note the changes I make to the poem in the poem. I really enjoy that by trying to be entirely honest with the reader about the experience, I create a recursive maze that makes the actual experience much harder to access than a personal essay would be (which, because it doesn't explain its procedure, would be lying in this framework). I know its heady, but I hope the humor pulls it through.

You have it backwards, not that it really matters. I thought to include your critique in the poem, and that is why I had to note that thought into the poem.

As far as Russel's paradox, I learned about the idea as *Mise en abyme* but I think its basically the same?

Yes I was hoping to include your critique as part of the poem. The whole point of the poem is that it comments on itself, and it will enrich the poem to have critiques that come from someone else. You have legitimate concerns, and I think the reader will sympathize with you. Are you so opposed to it? I wouldn't change your language at all. You would just have the space in the work to say exactly what you think. In a lot of ways it gives you much more control over your representation than you would have had if I had written a personal essay.

Thanks,
Luke

From: [Mr. Swenson@math.edu](mailto:Mr.Swenson@math.edu)
To: lukeswenson105@gmail.com

Luke
you do what you want with it. The last line was an attempt at humor.

Love
Dad

- ❖ The man turns to his own company
 - and they discuss a friend who
 - was high for two weeks
 - and how that would have been too much for them
 - but he was just that kind of guy

"LIBRARY 200 E. 400 South"

- ❖ Jump
 - You are almost done
 - Will you be able to read your notes later?
 - Will Jack even like this list?
 - ◆ Has your writing become experimental or irrelevant?

“WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING?”

- ❖ The older woman has turned
- ❖ and is looking you directly in the eye

“GERMAN”

- ❖ which is better than saying writing
- ❖ because she would have asked what kind of writing
- ❖ and you would have answered fiction anyway
- ❖ because you feel stupid saying poetry
- ❖ that look people give you like your some
- ❖ kid who needs to learn some lessons

- ❖ Jolt forward

- ❖ Stand up
 - Walk into the middle of the carriage
 - and wait for the doors to open
 - Follow the slow movement of bodies
 - onto the hot concrete of the platform

- ❖ Appreciate the Salt Lake City Public Library for its organic roundness

Note: Change title from **How to be Luke Swenson on the 2:50 Frontrunner between Provo and Salt Lake City on July 14, 2014** to **The 2:50 Frontrunner** because you don't want people thinking your obsessing over yourself

- ❖ Retrieve notepad from backpack

- ❖ This sort of writing experiment was conducted in the 70's when this sort of thing was cool
 - Steal the idea

- ❖ Take pen from mouth

Note: Change the names of Jesse and Lydia to Jack and Lindsey to protect anonymity

Note: Change title from **The 2:50 Frontrunner** to **Swallow** because you are ingesting this experience

- ❖ Are you still writing?
- ❖ Check your backpack for your phone

4:40PM