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# Old Joy

By Jonathan Raymond

Leave a message, we'll call you back.  
Hey, it's Kurt. I am calling you.  
I'm in town. Just hoping you're around.  
I don't know if you're there or what...  
Pick it up, man. You will not regret it.  
Hey, Kurt...  
So you're here?  
Where're you stayin'?  
Yeah, thanks. The rumors are true.  
Naa, we didnt wanna know.  
Oh yeah? What've you got? Lay it on.  
Sure... I could be into that.  
I could use some time in  
the woods, absolutely.  
Yeah... I think that would be  
cool. Let me just run it by Tanya.  
I'll call you in ten... Right on.  
What?  
Don't ask my permission...  
I said I'll run it by you.  
He wants to check out some hot  
springs near Daketa, camp out tonight.  
Get an early start tomorrow,  
be home by... noon I'd say.  
Look, if it's gonna be  
a problem I'll just...  
call him back and tell him 'I can't go.'  
Hey... you should come too.  
You're totally welcome.  
You know... that'd be fun.  
I'm not exactly up for camping.  
It's probably gonna rain anyway.  
Could rain all day...  
Look you just waiting for  
me to tell you to go...  
We know you're going so I don't know  
why we have to go through this thing...  
of me letting you off the hook.  
I'm not gonna enjoy myself if  
you are... miserable about it.  
Go in, Lucy, Go in.  
that'd be Eleven Nine. Hugh How are you?  
Very good. How are you today?  
Good, Thanks.

I'm callin' in...  
I never could understand  
why Lyndon Johnson...  
became the champion of  
the Civil Rights Movement.  
...are you talking about? I  
mean the Voting Rights Act...  
was a great thing.  
Oh Yes...  
- It was the...  
It was the beginning,  
literally the beginning of  
American democracy.  
I grew up in a state...  
It also became the foundation of the...  
Southern Strategy.  
He said we've delivered the South to the  
Republican Party for a long  
time when he signed...  
the Act.  
I mean is that what  
you're talking about?  
Yeah.  
You said it with regret...  
These were all wedge issues.  
When Reagan talked about...  
He's for State's rights.  
All it was, it was just  
a veiled way of saying...  
'He's a Racist.'  
When Nixon talked about 'Law and Order',  
that's what he was talking about.  
He was talking about the...  
Think about this. You had... Lee Atwater...  
kickin' around when  
all these guys were...  
devising the Southern Strategy.  
Including...  
Including Karl Rove, he's taken the  
Southern Strategy to the next step,  
and that's to divide  
us by way of religion.  
So, I don't think you're insane.  
But, I mean... is here sayin'...

- Not Really.

I'll tell you... I'll tell you this.

I agree with the fact that...

May I interject here?

- Yeah.

I didn't call up and assert that

Lyndon Johnson did this,

I asked a question.

But Bobby reacted as

if I was asserting it.

And then he starts calling names.

Let me go back...

- It was a bad question.

Listen Bobby...

there's no such thing

as a bad question...

Kurt.

Hello?

Hello.

Hey man.

Hey, Kurt.

I brought a cooler.

Take it. And a wagon. And a TV.

You're looking good.

- Really? I wish.

He hasn't sold the house yet?

No, not yet. But my days are  
numbered here.

I'm really glad you could come.

I didn't know if you could make it  
on such short notice,

everyone's so busy now.

You know I had a dream about you  
the other night? Where you're...

in like a hospital or something.

It was really weird.

But you were the best  
thing about it by far.

That's cool...

How's Ashlyn?

Ashlyn? Amazing.

Transformative.

I'm at a whole new place now really.

Aw you've really got it all goin' on.

Hell yeah.  
Where's your shit?  
- It's in the car. I've got the dog too.  
Really? Why don't we take your ride.  
What do you think?  
Cause this thing is just a  
slug in the mountains.  
Uhm... Sure. I can drive.  
Alright. Let's load it up.  
The Democrats are sitting  
on their damn hands.  
What do you make of that?  
First of all, the Democrats in Congress...  
have made a tragic  
mistake, and that is...  
they seem to think that they're  
part of the Government...  
Yeah. Yeah that's a good point.  
- Rather than going to the people.  
Opportunity is not just  
knocking at the door,  
it's pounding at the door.  
There's the Democratic donkey, you know  
sittin' there sip in peace sayin':  
'I don't know. I don't know if I should  
get up and answer the door or not.'  
It is there. You know we  
saw the same thing...  
in last year's presidential  
election when...  
Our party's nominee did not...  
It'll just take two seconds.  
- ... the corporate crooks.  
Hope that's all?  
- ... the fight is not...  
about them. It's not a fight for them.  
It's a fight to hold on  
to the very solid...  
Yo, you got ten bucks?  
...by the Exxon, by the Coors,  
by the Murdoch, by  
Richard Mellon Scaife.  
It's a fight, we can't win by removing  
ourselves, standing on the sidewalk...

Some people say we need a third party.  
I wish we had a second one.  
And I'm gonna fight for that to be  
the Democratic Party.  
But I certainly understand people...  
Hey, what's up?  
- What's goin on?  
30 dollars?  
- 30 dollars...  
...and other folks, because...  
- Take it easy.  
And if we do not stand up for  
working folks...  
The one good thing about  
the... is trying...  
to flip the party back...  
to the grassroots  
level. In last month...  
This thing go back any further?  
How's your dad?  
He's alright, you know.  
All things considered.  
Last I heard he was  
living in... a new place.  
Yeah, right.  
For some reason he decided at age 70,  
that he didn't want to  
be married anymore.  
So he moved out.  
Yeah that's what I heard.  
Then he ended up with these...  
...fuckin' blood clots on his brain.  
Oh fuck.  
And they just showed up, out of nowhere.  
He was really weak for a while,  
nobody knew what to do.  
Then they... dissolved.  
Just went away.  
That's heavy.  
Put my mom through the wringer.  
Yeah, I bet.  
I bet.  
It's kind of like when an old Eskimo  
goes off to die alone.

Who knows?  
You still have this.  
Didn't this use to be Noah's?  
- Yeah.  
Found it behind Krugers, there's...  
There's crumbs in there  
where you can add it.  
And then, it was mine for a while.  
Man, Mark you really hold on to shit.  
Not that I should talk.  
I've still got crates of  
records in the garage...  
stuff that I haven't  
even listened to in...  
ten years.  
I'm gonna have to take the whole  
load down to Syd's I think.  
See what I can get for it.  
Syd's gone man.  
- No way.  
The rent got to be too heavy, now it's a  
...smoothie place.  
Rejuicenation.  
- No.  
Syd sells on eBay, now.  
Oh that makes sense.  
I should be doing that.  
Tony went by in the last days,  
...the only records left in the bin...  
to our friends.  
No more Syd's.  
End of an era.  
Come on.  
That was amazing.  
Were you catching that?  
That young soldier got a raw deal...  
- And everybody that was there...  
Do you know where we're goin'?  
- Oh yeah.  
Cruisy... Downtown.  
Now you take this.  
No, you take this one.  
You take this one.  
These aren't even funny.

Back to you, Lucy.  
Shoot up.  
It's a great spot, man.  
Gonna love it.  
I was here...  
two summers ago.  
Totally private.  
No one around.  
And most of all...  
It has this otherworldly  
peacefulness about it.  
You can really... think.  
Sounds awesome.  
Cause you can't... you can't get  
real quiet anymore.  
I visited this hot spring in Arizona  
last summer.  
Where no one is allowed to talk at all.  
Total silence.  
It's fuckin' amazing.  
They want me to come back and  
work as a chef sometime.  
I've got a whole menu  
worked out for 'em.  
Right I think I read about that place  
in a magazine.  
You remember Yogi?  
Sure, he stiffed us on the rent  
when he left town.  
Really? I forgot about that.  
Well I ran into him in  
Big Sur last month.  
We had the most incredible  
night together.  
We were out under the stars,  
dancing to these drums.  
Everybody was jumping over these  
huge bonfires.  
I've never seen anything like it.  
Everyone there...  
was just so joyful that night.  
Beautiful women...  
singing and dancing.  
I don't know, just a really



really amazing group of people.  
No shit.  
- Yeah. You should've been there.  
I think Yogi got laid.  
Slow down...  
Slow down,  
you wanna go left.  
Really?  
- Yeah.  
Trust me Mark.  
Okay.  
I'm in your hands.  
I remember that.  
I think we're somewhere...  
in this area.  
I need some space.  
It's the mother of your child.  
- Thank you.  
I have no idea...  
No it's fine...  
Can you hear me?  
Can you hear me?  
What was that?  
No... I mean, we are looking for it.  
I can't hear you.  
We're gonna have to go.  
I'll call you when I have reception.  
I love you.  
I love you.  
Sign up there is literally blank.  
We've entered a whole other zone.  
Up.  
Getting dark...  
What do you think Kurt?  
I spotted a turn-off  
where we can camp for the night.  
Just a few miles back  
down that road we passed.  
We can camp there...  
And find the river in the morning.  
You know how to get there?  
Yeah, I know how to get there,  
but you gotta turn around.  
Well. That's close to

here I guess right?  
Still get a good start in the morning.  
Looks fine to me.  
Lucy, stay here.  
It's good to get out of the city.  
Forget all this is out here sometimes.  
No shit.  
It's not like there's any big difference  
between the forest and the city though.  
Know what I mean?  
It's all one huge thing, now.  
There's trees in the city,  
and garbage in the forest.  
What's the big difference, you know?  
I see what you mean.  
So you lookin' forward to fatherhood?  
Yeah.  
Sure, I mean...  
We're stretched so thin with work,  
it's almost impossible  
to imagine, but...  
It'll have to work itself out.  
We'll just... find another rhythm.  
Do it is whatever people do.  
So... fuckin' brave man.  
I have never gotten myself into anything  
that I couldn't get myself out of.  
It's just...  
Having a kid is so fuckin' for real.  
Watch out Ham's cans.  
Did you... are you pumpin' these for me?  
- I pumped it.  
It's easier to aim with one hand  
than with two hands.  
Really?  
Why do you think on TV  
they do it with two hands?  
Everything is about looking cool.  
But I look pretty cool  
with one hand, right?  
Yeah...  
Two Hands is the responsible shooting.  
One Hand is renegade shooting.  
Yeah, renegade...

I'll try leftie.  
Switch, switch.  
Switch Hitch shooting.  
I think one more shot...  
Let me take one more shot.  
You know I was gonna sleep out, but...  
Is it... cool to sleep in?  
Sleep in the tent with you?  
- Fine.  
So you're gonna sleep in the tent?  
- It's a two men tent.  
Two men and a doggie.  
That's cool.  
- Two men and a doggie tent.  
That's pretty cool.  
Sleeping with the dogs.  
Pretty cool. She's a girl.  
Keeps you warm.  
I took some night classes.  
- Anything good?  
It was alright.  
Some physics classes...  
But here's the thing about that,  
It's that I knew more than they did.  
All this quark and superstring shit,  
I know all about that.  
It makes sense.  
And don't get me wrong.  
I understand it.  
But that's not the final answer.  
Wow, you think you understand it?  
- Basically...  
It's like this see...  
Sometimes things look like  
they don't have any order,  
and then, from a different level,  
you realize that it does have order.  
It's like climbing a mountain.  
Look around, you see trees  
and rocks and bushes,  
pressing around you.  
And then you get above the tree line,  
you see everything you  
just went through...

and it all like comes  
together. You know,  
you see that it has a shape, after all.  
Sometimes it takes a long  
time to get high enough...  
to see it, but it's there, it's...  
It's all about space  
and time and how it...  
How they change the rules  
sometimes. No no no...  
Makes perfect sense to me.  
It's like... two mirrors.  
Moving through space.  
There's a single atom moving  
between them.  
Fuck.  
I forget...  
Whatever...  
But I... I... The thing is: I get it.  
I get it on a fundamental level.  
The thing is...  
Is that I have my own theory.  
Ah yeah?  
It's that the universe is falling, man.  
That's what explains it all.  
The entire universe is in  
the shape of a falling tear.  
Dropping down through space.  
I'm telling you man. I don't know...  
how it happened, but that's  
just the way that it works.  
This tear, it's been  
dropping down for ever,  
just doesn't stop...  
So did you tell them that? Your theory  
about the tear-shaped universe?  
Did I tell them?  
Who the hell am I?  
They don't care about my theory,  
doesn't mean shit to them...  
I don't have any numbers for it.  
God...  
I miss you, Mark.  
I miss you really, really bad.

I want us to be real friends again.  
There's something... between  
us, and I don't like it.  
I want it to go away.  
Man, what are you talking about?  
We're fine.  
Are you serious?  
Do you really think that?  
Of course.  
Course I do, we're fine.  
We're totally fine.  
I don't know...  
My God.  
God, I'm sorry.  
Just being crazy.  
I'm sorry.  
I'm just being crazy.  
I know...  
Don't pay any attention to me, okay?  
We're fine...  
Everything's totally fine.  
Feel lot better now.  
Your dog's in distress.  
- Yeah...  
Tanya calls it 'Separation Anxiety'.  
It hates to be left out.  
Hi.  
Thanks.  
How far are we from Bagby hot springs?  
- Oh you're real close.  
I think. I've never been  
there, but it's around here...  
somewhere. Maybe 10 miles... away.  
We might have a little map printout  
in the back. I'll check for ya.  
Great.  
And I'll bring you some coffee while  
you're looking at the menus?  
This is better anyway.  
Now we won't be rushed.  
Take our sweet time.  
Need more time?  
- No.  
Alright.

Hey, hang on a sec.  
Could I get... two scrambled eggs,  
dry toast and sausage.  
Before my call comes.  
Could I get the same...  
as my friend please?  
Except, bacon instead of sausage, and  
no dry toast.  
Wet toast please.  
Very good.  
Not too wet, just make it damp.  
I know... I know, I'm sorry.  
Well he thought he knew  
where it was, but...  
Remember who we're dealing with.  
I don't know. Apparently we're...  
closing in on it.  
Did you do anything last night?  
She's fine.  
We're super close.  
I never doubted you man.  
This is where we're goin'.  
This is where we are?  
- Awesome  
Yo, yo, yo yo yo...  
There. On the tree.  
How we could've missed that.  
I'm tellin' you man.  
This is a very special place.  
If you can't see the  
little arrows at night,  
you can't get in.  
Grew pickles?  
- Yes.  
So they grew pickles?  
It's only like a half-sour.  
It was... I guess it's called half-sour...  
where they're sort of salty  
and don't have a lot of flavor.  
How are you feeling?  
- Good.  
I feel good.  
How about you?  
Feel good too.

I see sticks.  
Yeah. Here.  
My God. Lucy, come.  
Go catch it.  
It's only one day a week but,  
really pulls me out of myself.  
The kids are cool.  
They're really into it.  
And it's fun thinking  
about carpentry and...  
woodworking...  
in a way I haven't for a long time.  
Makes you realize how long ago  
sixteen was.  
So now this... it was  
basically a dumping ground,  
...is this really  
happening community garden.  
I'm so proud of you, Mark.  
I'm serious.  
You've really done something.  
You've really given something  
back to the community.  
I don't know...  
No, really.  
I'm serious.  
It's really something.  
It's not that big a deal...  
It's not that... much  
time out of my life.  
It's nothing you couldn't do if you  
felt like it too.  
Not that you don't  
give to the community.  
I mean...  
Just a... different community.  
This is it, Mark.  
Cool, this looks fantastic.  
- I hope you like it.  
Awesome.  
Alright. Let's start these flowing.  
Plug it up, and then...  
Let's grab it.  
Come on.

Fill up here.  
And then... just make the tubs  
cool enough to get our bodies in.  
Dump it in.  
Whole thing?  
- Yeah.  
Probably wanna refill.  
Look at that water.  
Man...  
Yesterday...  
Wanted to get a notebook, for...  
my journal.  
So I borrowed Pete's bike,  
and first when I took off riding,  
and where I was on the sidewalk,  
there was this old man  
on the sidewalk too.  
And,... you know he was  
walkin', walkin' walkin',

**so I thought:**

And I took off to the left, around him,  
and just then he stepped to the left.  
And I didn't ring the bell or anything.  
When I got past him, he yelled at me.

**He was like:**

Thanks for the warning.'  
And I just felt so... bad.  
All of a sudden I felt so guilty.  
But it was fine, you know.  
Never gonna see this guy again.  
But I realize I forgot  
something at the house.  
So I rode back. Had to ride back by him.  
Just looked at his  
face, like, I felt like:  
'Oh he's so angry at  
me. Totally hates me.'  
Whatever. Can forget him again.  
So, then I wanna go, you know...  
Get something to drink.  
And I go into a little  
store, stop the bike.



When I come back out, I get on the bike,  
I'm riding.  
I'm riding down the same  
street, cause it's a hill.  
And I pass the guy again.  
And again, I'm just like,  
feeling more and more tense, like...  
Then I've got a stretch, you know,  
before I get to the notebook store.

**So I'm like:**

finally move on with my life,  
not have this guy.'  
Go down to the notebook  
store, look for my notebook.  
It's like 20 blocks.  
Look for my notebook.  
Come up to the cash register.  
I'm buyin' the notebook,  
and the automatic doors open,  
and I look up and the guy is like,  
walking right into the store,  
right, in front of me.  
And I'm just... can't believe  
it. And then the cashier woman.  
I hear her talk to me all of a sudden.

**She's like:**

What?  
And I look at her. And she's  
this Indian woman, maybe...  
like 50 year old Indian  
woman, with glasses and...  
dot on her forehead.

**And I was like:**

**She said:**

'You said Jesus Christ.'

**I was like:**

say Jesus Christ.'  
You know? I looked at the bagging guy.

**Asked like:**

He's like, just, shrugs.

**And she's like:**

...felt like, I feel like I  
would've known if I'd said...  
'Jesus Christ', you know?  
I would've heard my voice in my memory,

**like:**

'Jesus Christ', Kurt  
said 'Jesus Christ'.  
So, I was still shaking  
my head, I was like.  
I feel like I'm going crazy.  
And I'm still sorta  
tense and everything.  
'I feel like I'm going crazy.'

**She's like:**

It's ok.'  
She was really nice.  
And right when she said that, I...  
This dream that I'd had just,  
just yesterday morning,  
just flashed on me,  
because, the same lady, the cashier lady...  
was in the dream, doing  
the same thing, basically  
I mean it wasn't in a store  
But I was really upset about something.  
Totally depressed about something.  
And she just... put her  
arms around me and said:  
'It's okay. You're okay.'  
'Sorrow is nothing but, worn out joy.'  
I see all kinds of shit out there, man.  
Most people don't see  
it, they don't want to.  
Hey, what's goin' on?  
Just relax, man.  
Just, settle in.  
- Alright.  
Lucy, come.

All righty.

- Yup.

That was... that was awesome, Kurt.

I'll call you soon, man.

Hold on a sec.

See ya.

See ya, Kurt.

...take care of the new  
people who come along...  
every year...

to join the labor force  
or to re-join them.

And it doesn't take care of the sharply  
higher cost of necessities.

It's one thing to say inflation appears  
under control of the aggregate.

But when you notice that  
housing cost, healthcare cost...  
and energy cost are exploding...

you're talking about  
things that make up the...

overwhelming share of the  
budget of an ordinary family.

And so the combination of  
uncertainty about the future...  
and the pressures on the present...

create this mood. Now the White House is  
well aware of this.

You hear the word  
'recovery' all the time,  
because they don't dare  
use the word 'prosperity'.

You also see things like these...  
photo opportunities this week...  
from the... uh... so-called...  
working vacation in Texas.

...think about help me  
out with a little change?

Ahhh... I'm sorry, man.

Hey man.

- Right on.

Have a good night.

- You too.