

Room 232A in Doris Hall of The University of The Critically Acclaimed is quiet. It is 3:42 AM so this relative noiselessness is not at all uncommon. Yet if one were to zoom in, in a sort of oh-look-at-this-mysterious-thing-happening sort of way, one would be able to discern a dorm AC unit's ambient hum and the muted clacking of two computer keyboards. The adjacent room, 232B, is deathly silent because no one's lived there as far as anyone remembers (a bed bug infestation, it's rumored) and the administration cut the power.

In the realm of the living, sophomores John Blossom and Ray Cage sit at opposite ends of two standard issue dorm desks that have been pushed together in the middle of 232A. It's almost entirely dark but for the blueish white off their computers. 232B is completely dark: a sad, windowless room. Only doubles 232A and 232D on either end of the hallway gets windows, much to the annoyance of Critically Acclaimed Freshmen getting stuck with the habitable "C" variant of the two middle singles. Sometimes John Blossom feels that he metaphysically exists in 232B in some unashamedly gross sincere way. His mom says he doesn't take his Lexapro. Currently, he's very tuned in to the Wikipedia page for the list of active United States military aircraft, pumping into his subconscious via a modest USB10 port running a cord from his forearm to the side of his desktop.

"Aerial refueling," he says. There's this whole side effect of USB10 usage where your body just says whatever it's looking at. While obviously relevant and in hot use by skeptics and critics of that sort of digital contact, the CDC put out a press release years back detailing its harmlessness. That's only if you *have* that side effect in the first place;

most people don't, or they do and they learn to feel when it's coming and suppress it, and John Blossom does and he knows how to hold it down when it's coming, but he tends to let it loose cuz his body gets a weird mechanical satisfaction from it.

"Huh?" Ray barely hears him with headphones in. While John Blossom investigates various statistics on jets and stealth fighters Ray has been going through videos of people falling to their deaths, mostly off of buildings. The kind of webms that keep normal people up at night, but Ray is immune because he's "scene [sic] all of them." He does this thing in conversation where he'll spell a word that sounds the same as but isn't the word he's going for. John Blossom has a habit of pranking Ray over this hyper-ironic-yet-bafflingly-sincere tendency by interpreting homophonic words in his roommate's speech as always being the unintentional. Ray tends to retaliate by pointing out that his roomie requires his first and last name successfully enunciated in order to be addressed. He doesn't make a habit of it though because he's sure that, in terms of net social capital loss, John Blossom's quirk is far more economically devastating than his own and it's safe to say that if it's brought up enough it'll be a sore spot for him, eventually.

"Aerial refueling," repeats John Blossom, a little more loudly. "Transferring aviation fuel from one military aircraft to another during flight."

"Dang, didn't know you were into planes." Ray slides his left headphone off.

"No no, as in *airplanes*," continues John Blossom. "I loved them when I was a kid. My mom used to take me to the airport just to look at them." With a cord inside of him John Blossom can absorb any and all information about aerial refueling if he wants. He's more or less fixated on a picture of a C-17 Globemaster refueling with a Boeing KC-

135 Stratotanker, though, and doesn't need to clutter his mind any much more than that. Feeling the heaviness in his eyelids that many fellow students at the University of the Critically Acclaimed would report experiencing after a long night shitting out essays on a Shakespearean Oedipal complex, John Blossom turns towards the line of crushed-up Adderall on his desk.

A quick note on that. Neither John nor Ray are prescribed Adderall. Ray has been getting it for them through a seventeen year-old he's been casually seeing when he's on break from school by trading her cigarettes. Her name is Lisa and she trades two 20mg tablets for three or four or five Marlboro Reds (depending on how she's feeling), which, Ray constantly reminds John Blossom, is a Really Good Deal, even if she does ask for five. Adderall, along with any other dextroamphetamine really, is ideal for late night web trawling because it not only facilitates better flow of information from a digital space to physical bodies via stimulation of the CNS, but it also makes it damn hard to fall asleep.

Anyways it's there on the desk crushed up with the end of a lighter and sifted into lines with Ray's student ID, and John Blossom is increasingly tempted with the dose he snorted a few hours ago wearing off. *Sleep is only fast-forwarding to the mourning (m-o-u-r-n-i-n-g)*, Ray always says, and this next sunrise closely precedes a 10 AM CHEM 112 exam for John Blossom. The early gray/blue light is increasingly apparent, slivers coming through closed blinds in 232A and it strikes John Blossom as a reminder of impending death. Not quite poignant enough to call *memeto mori* or anything, though. Elsewhere, he wakes up alone in 232B. He gets up from bed and goes to his desk in boxers, with red stripes that look almost dark brown in the low glow of early morning light. On his computer he sees on Facebook that his ex dyed her hair.