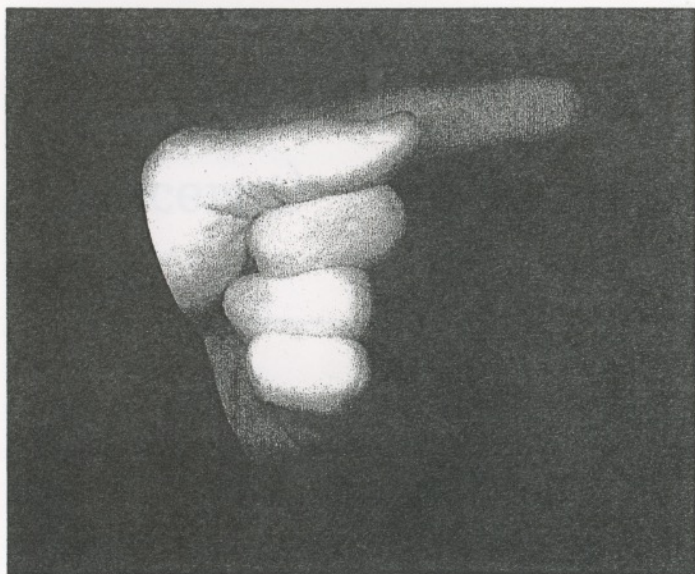


for a
friend



Seth Price

[Faint handwritten notes]



For a Friend (excerpt)

And your point is

What they talk about the date is, like, the first sentence?
Call me crazy, but I'm officially obsessed with this. It's

Seth Price like, "You must now start your shot like
just me?"

No, yeah, totally. And then you go all boring on their ass,
like, "The early twentieth century saw the rise of ..."

Yeah, though "saw the rise of," that's later, I'm talking.
Like, opening fucking sentence: "In 1943, Ernst Muehl
synthesized a new and delightful germ that would go on to
become—" blah-blah-blah. Like, date, time, boom.

You know how when you read some article, the first sentence is always basically like, “On a Sunday morning in 2002, researcher Robert Jarvik arrived at work, swinging his green Subaru Outback into a parking spot at Los Alamos Labs”?

And your point is . . .

When they talk about the date in, like, the first sentence? Call me crazy, but I’m officially *obsessed* with this. It’s some whole *thing*, like, “You must now start your shit like this, or else.” Or is it just me?

No, yeah, totally. And then you go all boring on their ass, like, “The early twentieth century saw the rise of . . .”

Yeah, though “saw the rise of,” that’s later; I’m talking, like, opening freaking sentence: “In 1943, Ernst Mandel synthesized a new and dangerous germ that would go on to become—” blah-blah-blah. Like: date, time, *boom*.

Oh, yeah: "In September 2001, a long-time reader of the *New Yorker* could have been forgiven for thinking there was something funny afoot in the august paragraphs of 'The Talk of the Town' . . ." Straight-up yuppie style.

I know, hello? Can we talk?

Yeah, but see, that's basically just dudes trying to be all, "Yo, this is *real*."

Yeah: "This is how I roll. Deal with it." But also it's coming out of how people use computers now. . . . To just check up on shit?

No doubt. Everyone's all up in that, these days.

Yeah, some DIY shit.

Like, "Oh, let me just hack this a wee bit." I'm the king of that.

Yeah. I mean, not that you don't just hack your life and whatnot, too, but . . . You know, that whole thing of "hacking," and whatever. I'm all about that.

Yeah, but it's also more that now people think they can just *mess* with stuff. Like, "Oh, OK, thanks for my super-duper

new, like, pimped-out *whatever* . . . So, how do I *change* it?"

Toootally. But also they want just *more shit*.

Oh my god, I'm insane. I'm crazy with that. I have, like, twenty phone chargers. I have one at work, one in my bedroom, one in the kitchen, one in the country . . . Don't even get me started.

Yeah, but see, I'm talking more about, like: "Oh, so, hey, I want a phone. . . . *Made out of wood*."

"Wood." That's ridonkulous. That's gotta be the funniest thing I ever heard.

Totally badass. "Wood."

Yeah, but thing is, are you gonna be blingin' that shit out *yourself*, or . . .

No, totally, yourself. Right? Like, "Hey, y'all, check me out, I'm going to make my phone a, like, *wood case*." How cool is that?

Yeah, but people are just more active, now, anyway. It's all: "Search, click . . . *Ahhhh!* That's so bugged! Ummm, actually I kinda dig it. . . . Okay, *go*."

Yeah, it's that DIY shit. Like, get a stereo; damn speakers come with, like, two-foot wires on 'em, and you can't take 'em out, so you're all, "OK, get out the ol' scissors, and hit the interwebs," and, "Hello!" Next stop: speakers with normal wires.

Or, like, *long* wires.

Fuhgeddaboutit. Though probably if you got speakers back in the day, you would have just unplugged the freaking wires and just plugged in other ones.

Yeah, basically, 'cause before you would have been able to take them out and swap them for other ones.

Yeah, or they would have just been long enough in the *first* place.

Whoa . . . That's some old-school shit. That's like a pathway where you make it to do a short cut, but later on you abandon it. . . . Like, "It's not good," or whatever.

I know. You're all, "That path sucks."

Yeah. And it gets mad overgrown.

Or it just—yeah, it gets all overgrown, but also it might *not*. You know? It might just do *nothing*.

Oh, yeah. . . . Right on. Though, by doing nothing . . . That's pretty much the same as "It gets all overgrown."

D'oh!

But sometimes it's all just some perspective thing, too, like: "How in fuck am I supposed to understand this shit? Oh, snap, you're all *this* way?"

Yeah, when you really *do* think outside the box.

Literally!

But no, yeah, it's kind of like how, if you dance sometimes . . . The whole thing is, sometimes you think you *can't* dance, but you actually *could* . . . If you did it differently?

Ya think? I mean, that's kind of a no-brainer.

No, but when you're little, you think it's all some shit like: "Oh, dancing is supposed to be how *cool* you are," but in actuality it's more like: "Um, OK, can you just show your enthusiasm? Please?" That's all people care about. Not, like, skills. It's all about if you bring your A Game, just fuckin' *go* for it . . .

Just do it.

Yeah, but point being, if you're having a good time, you can just spazz, and it'll probably look good, 'cause you're into it. 'Cause *attitude* is what's cool, not some, like, "technique," you know, like what it actually *is*, or whatever.

Um, ooooookay . . . "Note to self: complete spazz equals the shiznit . . . Yay!" Or not.

Well, all I can say is, sometimes you just gotta go for it. . . . But, hey! That's me.

Gotta say, I'm *so* trying to make sure we're on the same page, but . . . Kidding! It's all good.

Or not. No, actually, that's so weird: Schumann said you can tell if a person is musical if they can just go on playing some shit, even if you *forgot* to turn the page.

Good stuff. Though what would really be interesting is if they just completely fucked it up, but it was still kind of right on?

Yeah, but wait, why is that cooler?

Well, not *cooler*. Just, it's not like they did it right, and it's not like they did it wrong.

Um, actually, methinks they did it wrong.

Point taken, but if it's *cooler* . . .

Um, no, actually, (A) it's officially wrong and (2) it's retarded. Period. No "ifs," "ands," or "buts."

But see, that's the whole point he's making, is that it's a hypothetical. It's more like: "You decide." He's pretty much like: "Just puttin' it out there." And you just come along and pick it up, like: "Nice one."

Or: "Annnh! Wrong!" As the case may be.

Irregardless, it's still: "Oh, man: tool-using ape." Choose your own effing adventure. 'Cause it's a total hypothetical. End of story.

Well, it is what it is.

True that. But actually it's more about, like, do you notice things? Or *not*. It's like, know when you're a kid, your head's not filled up with crap as much, so you're walking around, just basically *looking* at shit? Like: "Oh, sidewalk." "Oh, buildings."

Yeah, totally. That's out of control.

And you're totally scoping it out, you're not all thinking about some, like, *shite*. You're more: "Hmmm. Interesting."

Yeah, not that it's *easy*, but, no, yeah, that's bugged. Kids are the epitome of that. That said, you *do* have things you think are, like, good and bad.

This is true. Duh. But not like it's so different in real life. . . . I mean, know how many grown dudes are still all, "Where's my sweatpants? I wanna play some video games?" *Tons*.

Oh, yeah, cause everyone now's all: "Oh, oh! I'm so *sporty*! Oh!"

Yeah, but, see, my whole thing is, you *do* do a lot of just straight-up *looking*, as a kid . . . As opposed to looking, but not really seeing stuff?

Well, be that as it may . . .

You know what's really crazy is how, when you close your eyes, you basically shut off your whole eyes. Like, your mind just takes over. You know? Like, things that make you go "Hmmm." For all intensive purposes your eyes keep working, still, but you don't actually *see* stuff.

Oh, yeah, I'm doing it now . . . Cool beans.

It's like, close your eyes and you're still *seeing* something, but it's just *dark*. Or red, you know, whatever. But you don't just all sit there, just trying to figure out, "Oh, I am now looking at a lot of, like, *skin* —"

Yeah, you're not all, "OK, I am officially now seeing *skin* . . ."

You think you're not looking at anything, but you *are*. Psych! I'm loving this.

Totally: one gazes upon a thin membrane hovering scant millimeters before the optic circuit, and yet somehow one refuses to "see" it. Indeed, it is precisely this apparent failure to "see" that marks this as an instance of looking.

Or *not*. . . . 'Cause check it out, it's actually kind of more about focusing. 'Cause if your eyes are open but you're, like, an inch away from the wall? Same deal, yo! It's all about if you can't *focus* on some shit, then you pretty much stop, like, seeing it.

Yeah, but I'm just saying . . . Kids just walk around, and it's not like when you're grown up, when you start freaking about, you know, a job, or the fact you're going

to die, yada yada. There's a difference there. Not that kids don't worry about, you know, "Am I going to grow leg hair." But it's like, you take it to a whole nother *level*.

Yeah, basically what happens is, *ding!* "Welcome to *über-stress*."

Yeah, fricking, get your angst on, kid! Problems problems, whatever whatever . . . The whole kitten caboodle.

Total. Can you say, "Paging doctor Freud?" Like, "Someone just hit puberty, send over some stressage, on the fucking double? Thank you."

"Exsqueeze me? Um, please turn my mind into a Möbius strip? Thanks."

Yeah. Kickin' it M. C. Escher style.

That dude's my favorite MC.

But what it *is*, is, you kind of lose that Zen mind.

Oh, yeah, that thing of just being able to like, zone? Just hard-core chilling, like: "Ahhhhh . . ." I'm so *with* that.

No, you know: "That's very Zen."

No, I know, like: "In the zone."

Um, actually, no. It's pretty much, "One day at a time."

Ummmm . . . K. Let's agree to disagree.

Looks like *somebody* didn't get the memo about, like, realness.

Not to be retarded, but . . . That whole thing is kind of gay. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

Well, whatever. Anyhoo, my thing is more just, we just want to have a good time and fuck shit up.

Word. "Boo-ya!"

Know what I'm saying?

Now *that*, I'm on board. It's like: "Best. Philosophy. Ever."

You bet your bippers. It's basically, long story short: "Woo-hoo!"

Yeah, like, "U-S-A! U-S-A!"

Um, *no*. Tell me you didn't just say that.

My bad.

Too much information . . .

But no, for real, like, “Fuck shit up:” you mean, like, “Change the world”?

Or *not*, as the case may be . . .

Yeah, ’cause I was gunna say . . .

Activism, anyone?

I know, right? Complain much?

Yeah, no, I was thinking more: “We just want to have a good time and, like, move some shit from *here* to *here*.”

But actually maybe it’s more back to that thing of, we need to tell ourselves stories to live . . .

Oh, no, don’t go there.

No, I mean, we tell ourselves stories, or, not “We tell ourselves stories”; we *need* stories. Or—

Or not.

Yeah, but, um, can you say, “Stories are important?” Fiction is important. The novel is important, quote-unquote in society. Eksetra.

Okay, can we just stop for a minute? Can we just note for the record that you go from “stories,” which could basically just mean *whatever*, to suddenly we’re talking about “fiction,” like, some literary shit, and suddenly you’re all, “the novel”?

Can you say, “Whatevs.com?”

Well, no, just—there’s a way in which one could argue that there’s an odd sort of slippage being performed. Or something. Like, are you saying we need stories, big S, or are you saying that we need to buy books? ’Cause when you just go to, “Oh, books . . .”

Easy, tiger; whoa, whoa—

No, I’m just saying—

No one’s all, “Hey, buy books.”

I’m just saying, it’s a slippery slope.

Let's just say there's a very real human impulse we all share, which has to do—or, not “We all share”—but this impulse, whatever, whether you're talking about cavemen sitting around the fire back in the day, or me, going to Borders, like, tomorrow—

Riiiiight. I'm adopting a wait-and-see attitude on *that* little bad boy.

Ouch. Touché, Brutus.

Slippery slope, indeed!

But no, it's weird, if you think about my man up in some cave a million years ago, and then how it's like, “Oh, sidewalk, buildings.” Like, how came it thus, that we live all up in this welter of grids, planes, cubes, geometry? What's up with *that*?

There ya go! Like, why is every frigging thing, like, square.

No, more how, at some point, it was more just, *blaaaaahhh*, just, shit everywhere, just, like, *nature* . . . And dudes are all running around like, “Oh, I think I can just impose some order on this; let me just, like . . .”

“Let me get all Barney Rubble on your ass.”

Yeah, *literally*. Running around all crazy, like: “Must . . . Name . . . Everything . . .”

Meanwhile, dude is buck naked.

Yeah, but, point being, then you get *that* times a *million*.

Actually, dude's prolly more: “Must . . . Identify . . . Every . . . Cultural . . . Reference.”

Yeah, but either case, thing is, you get that times a *billion*. And suddenly you get where *we* are. It's like, “What?” “Huh?” “*Surprise!*”

Meanwhile, cut to a life eked out amongst bleak rectangles, planes, corners, ineptly executed Euclidean solids . . .

Oh, right: “The horror! The horror!”

Nice to be sympathetic. I'm off on some, like, sob story, and you're all: “La-de-da, it's all good, woop-de-doo . . .”

One word: “Keepin' it real.”

No, I know, it's cool, it's all good. But know how sometimes you meet someone who, some stupid shit pops up, they just kind of laugh it off like that?

Oh yeah, I love that. Like, "A-yup, that's just the way it is." All chuckling, like: "Har-de-har-har. Life's all fucked up."

Yeah, but not some kind of, like, resignation, like, "Oh, the weirdness." More like, "Shit's fucked up. . . . But know what? No probs."

Yeah, I don't know. I'm not really feeling that "as I got older, I got wiser" shit.

Oh, check it out, know this? "Older . . . Budweiser."

But why does it have to always be some *old* dude? It's like—

Excuse me, can someone please tell me why people are such haters? Like, "Must . . . Automatically . . . Critique . . . Everything." Don't be hating on the oldsters.

I'm just saying.

It doesn't have to be *old*, I didn't say that. I mean, I *did*, it *could* be some old dude, but just, statistically, you're more likely to find somebody old who, when you step on their toes, is going to kind of just shake their head and be like, "Going forward . . ." when dude is sixty, than when they're twenty. I mean, *you* do the math.

Yeah, 'cause when he's twenty, my man's statistically all up in your face like, "What? What?"

OK, but my whole thing originally was, OK, what does that *mean* if you can do that; if you can, like, step back and laugh at the foibles of your fellow man and be all, "Going forward." Is that something you *want*?

What, now? Laughing at dudes?

Well, not to laugh at *people* . . . At *yourself*, more. At, like, misfortune. Or, not "misfortune," but, like, if it's noisy, or whatever. It smells like ass. Whatever. Is that cool, more.

Well, yeah. Total no-brainer.

Yeah, I don't know. Know what I'd like to die and come back to earth as? A freaking self-annihilating question.

