

We Are All Schizoid

By

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Xini is alive. He lives in the City. He lives with, what his neighbors think, an unusually high number of animals. A pig, a goat, a pony. Of course he is divorced.

His father was the owner of Asia's oldest handcrafted shoe workshop. Before he discovered the joy of walking barefoot and he closed shop.

There are voices running in his head. The voice of Desire, the echo of old Wounds, the fire of Rage and the repetitive chanting of a Lama.

DESIRE

Open your heart. There are things out there that can satisfy your itch. Settle your restlessness.

OLD WOUND

And if you follow Desire, I promise to disappear again. You won't feel a thing.

Xini looks around. And then something else is happening.

RAGE

I will swallow everything.

Xini listens.

LAMA

Breathe. They are making empty threats. Come lets play the flute.

To you and me, it seems strange to see someone sitting on a street corner, playing a flute in the air. And that you can still hear the music. Strange, yes. But then, Xini lives in charmed times. Sometime between the past and the future.

Xini sits and plays the flute.

Small squirrels gather all around him. They are gently swaying to the tunes he is playing.

XINI

Who are you guys?

SQUIRRELS

We are the little people. We are very small and we live in the air. We appear wherever we hear the curtain lifting.

(CONTINUED)

XINI

Hear?

SQUIRRELS

Yes, the sign is always heard.
And read.

XINI

So, we might as well close our
eyes, eh?

SQUIRRELS

Yes. That's what they have been
saying.

The Lama stops playing the flute. Xini stops playing the
flute. Music stops. The Squirrels disappear.

Xini starts hearing the Damaged Music. The Damaged Music
of the times.

The warped architecture of the streets, the skewed
arrangement of the map. When the wind blows through the
city, like a giant, boundless flute it plays the ruins and
you hear thee damage.

Listening to the damage can be painful but you may start
dancing. Dancing involuntarily, your arms like balloons
and legs like sycophants, dancing through the streets.

The little people look at you, floating in the middle of
nowhere.

Xini sees pages strewn on the road.

He gathers them and starts reading.

THE RITUALS

This is the manifesto of true
experience. You are reading this
aloud. And that is the right
thing to do. The text follows.

**- Everything that we know, feel, experience is an image. A
symbol. A representation. We have become incapable of
dealing with actual text, raw context, raw meaning, raw
unparsed sensory experience.**

**Everything becomes like it "should be" in our heads. Or
doesn't (which actually pisses us off). We are dependent
on culture as a laxative to dilute our everyday
experience. RECOGNIZE this.**

- These are a set of rituals which you can follow to
instantly (yes, just the way you like it) be able to dig
deeper. To be a part of a LIVE happening and not just a
self-observing-itself, manufacture an ongoing history.

(CONTINUED)

- The first few steps: FORGET; STOP; DISCONNECT; ISOLATE; READ; DISORIENT; FRAGMENT; CHANNEL; SLACK;

a. FORGET time. FORGET histories, memories, plans. You are now slowly becoming precisely what you need to be right now: lost, afraid, trying to make sense of the moment.

b. STOP searching for meaning. Everything is strange, and meaningless and weird and ridiculous? It is. But don't search for a way out.

c. DISCONNECT the Internet. You don't need it where you are going. And then the phone and then the mobile. You don't want people to reach you and ask, "Wassup." You are going to be way beyond that. They say WYSIWYG, I promise you WYFIWYG. The corollary: if you don't feel anything, you don't get anything.

d. ISOLATE yourself. You might even need to isolate yourself from the people you live with. No, not just because they are bad people, so that you can remember who you are. For a moment.

e. READ text. Scanning makes text into an image. Having a book is not the same as knowing what is written inside. Text doesn't need images to support it. If it looks good, its not meant to be read. Read only raw text.

Any process or action that renders text as an image is sacrilege. We have an infinite capacity to be create distractions. Don't do it. TEXT will punish you.

e. DISORIENT yourself: in vision and coherence. Nothing is real, in the way you understand reality, so nothing needs to have any accuracy. Fidelity of representation is a misplaced concept. Render your world the way you want. Map your city the way you want. Science is just an instrument of control, a body that validates the illusion by what they think are facts.

f. FRAGMENT your experience. Abhor continuity. You can't find the subtle, the hidden and the secretive if you pretend to believe that everything is flat and continuous. There are holes between the holes and that is where what you seek might be hidden.

g. CHANNEL somebody. Speak in the voice of other people. Nobody will question. The self is a floating entity, it is like a torrent file distributed across thousands of computers. Torrenting in humans, outside computers, is called channeling. Think of yourself as being stuck in thousands of other people. You have to find them, channel yourself through them.

h. SLACK. Figure out the trick of doing things without doing them. Understanding that there is no indignity in self-identifying as a puppet. Understanding complexity

means understanding that our individualistic free wills are so small and insignificant (if they exist at all), that its strange to call it a "will." Don't enter into discussions about "free will," rather talk about beautiful, talented puppets.

XINI

What do you think? Feels incomplete but, this is pretty amaazing, eh?. This is it.

SQUIRRELS

Is it?

XINI

No?

SQUIRRELS

There is no IT, right?

XINI

Oh. No. Of course not. But if there was, this would be it.

Xini folds the pages and puts them in his pocket. He walks on.

NARRATOR

And with this start the Chronicles of Xini. He discovers different ways to tinker with the artifices of power. In the future he will draw from the Chronicles and add to the Rituals.

Xini walks on the gray road.

The City is a bunch of electromagnets. Tuggs, pulls, sways, movement do not happen on their own. It is like dogs following a trail of smell. People follow the pull of the magnets.

The magnets are invisible. But that is not a significant fact, that is almost expected. The significant fact is that they are electromagnets. They get electricity from the wing-flapping of slave honeybees. They store the electricity in abandoned tiffin boxes salvaged by their foot-soldiers.

These electromagnets get turned on whenever they sense boredom. They shape boredom into an urge, a desire. And people move. They do what the magnets want them to do. So they shop, murder, drive around the city, do hit and run accidents and sit in the evening over a drink and laugh.

XINI

I discovered how the magnets work as I was drinking coffee one morning and It all started to make sense. Why do people wake up in the middle of the night, panting? Because in their dreams they are running away. Skipping, jumping. Being themselves.

People know their desire as a sharp moving drive. A pull which tells them what to do. Something they never know otherwise.

Xini wakes up. Its a Thursday. He slept the previous night exhausted from a feverishly conducted search for a book. A book, he knew he hadn't seen in at least a dozen years. Another magnetic passion; sometimes you chased apparitions, but you chased something.

XINI

Chasing. Opening a door and closing it a hundred times, for that click in the head. That's chasing. You never chase anything useful here. No romance, trial of passion and all that in this City.

So Xini is strolling in the park across his house. It is a fine balance. If you get bored, the magnets sense you. And then you have, what they call an episode. And boredom was inevitable. The more you thought about it, in fact, the faster it consumed you.

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XINI

I am going to the Fish Tank.

The Fish Tank is ten storeys high. When people want to be distracted really badly (to save themselves from an episode) they go and stare at the fish tank. It is something to do. It is said to be owned by the Magnets.

XINI

I will break the Fish Tank.

Some people hear him and they panic. They tell a police officer.

Xini throws a stone at the Fish Tank. It breaks. Water floods out. Xini stands his ground.

Police is going around in boats saving those who can't swim. Small girls scramble into the life boats, dragging their scraggy-haired dolls behind them.

SCREAMS

The magnets will get drenched!

XINI

(thinks)

Of course.

The water short-circuits the electromagnets. The fish evaporate and the water drains off into the gutters.

There were people who were clapping for Xini as he walked back home that night and there were people booing him.

XINI

(standing on a park bench)

This is called anger. It comes from fear. It can destroy anything. It is also a good cure for boredom.

CROWD

Clapping. Cheering. Booing.

The Squirrels reappear. They are standing on a twig of a walnut tree.

SQUIRRELS

Welcome to the Age of Angst.

Then there was the world where people slept with their eyes open. The cities totally blacked out after seven in the evening; it became pitch dark, nothing to see anymore. And people slept.

A popular fashion accessory was this wire-frame to keep your eyes open. Even if they were tired. Very tired.

The cost of keeping their eyes open all the time was that nobody really know what it was like to close them. The pornography of the times, showed people in ecstasy, with closed eyes.

The environmentalists were very happy and it was said they had sponsored the move to pass the "Eyes Open" bill in the parliament. There had been a sharp decrease in energy consumption, the world shut down after sun-set. People were tired and wanted to go home and rest.

Eye-lid removal was becoming a fashion also.

ADVERTISEMENT

(eyelid removal service)

If they aren't there, they don't
need to be shut.

Dead people were cremated with their eyes open.

Over the years, people stopped expressing with their eyes, a lover saying,

LOVER

Look into my eyes, baby.

was meaningless. As there was nothing to look for. For emotional connection, people looked away from each other and thought of something intense. If there was a connection between them, they felt something in the lower base of their spine. This, they called love.

The cost of keeping one's eyes open was high sometimes. Witnesses were everywhere. Murderers were sentenced to death. Rash drivers were punished. The insincere were fired from their jobs. Everything was in plain sight.

Xini wakes up. He feels something at the base of his spine.

XINI

(thinking)

What does this mean?

Pause.

XINI
(thinking)
This can't be self-love.

NARRATOR
But it was. It was self-love.

Xine takes his eye-lid frame off.

XINI
I will close my eyes now.

And the whole world started experiencing a strange cyclone. A bureaucrat went LIVE on radio and announced,

OFFICIAL
Ladies and Gentlemen, the world
as we know it, is coming to an
end. Someone has closed their
eyes. We all have another ten
minutes to say our goodbyes.

Xini closes his eyes. The world around him starts disappearing. First, everything goes silent.

Then like an eraser is going over the world, it starts disappearing. Xini's mind settles down, quietens down. As his mind quietens, the world comes to an end.

Xini becomes a Black hole. The world spirals into him. There is total darkness. And silence.

4

XINI IS FREE. TAKES OOS FOR A RIDE

4

Xini has decided to be unfettered. Behave in a way which reflects an apathy for the other.

He stands outside a train station. The sound of trains in the background, the buzz of hawkers bargaining for the first sales of the morning; and Xini stands, waiting for Oos to come.

He has never met Oos before. This is the first time.

XINI

(thinking aloud)

I always hate the first time. Why can't we meet people for the second time before we meet them for the first time?

NARRATOR

Oos arrives.

Oos has no luggage, he is dressed in a blue hospital gown. Xini walks up to him.

XINI

Oos?

OOS

Xini?

XINI

Why are you dressed like that?

OOS

(smiling)

I escaped from a hospital. A misunderstanding with a doctor.

XINI

(smiles back)

Always good. To misunderstand.

They walk to where Xini has parked his scooter. Oos sits behind. And they drive off.

XINI

I am going to take you for a ride.

OOS

Good. Where are we going?

Xini is driving furiously. Recklessly. Twisting the scooter through the traffic that he encounters on the way.

(CONTINUED)

OOS
(leaning forward)
Can you drive slower?

XINI
No. With risk comes clarity. I
will tell you a whole different
lie about myself.

He stops near an ATM. Takes out what-looks-like-a-grenade
from his pocket, pulls the pin and throws it at the ATM.
Post-explosion, there is cash all over the road.

XINI
(while he is sweeping cash
from the ground)
Ever done this before?

OOS
No. Do you need money? I could
have helped.

XINI
(pockets stuffed with notes)
Its never about the money.

They are again on the scooter and driving towards the
hills.

XINI
I am Xini. I have no yesterday
and no tomorrow. I will die and
be undead in an instant. I am an
apparition.

OOS
I can touch you.

XINI
Its a misunderstanding. You are
good with those.

With that he speeds the scooter off on the road going
uphill.

XINI
I pressed the reset button. I
managed to learn how to forget.

OOS
How?

Xini crashed the scooter into a metal fence. As Xini and
Oos flew off into the air, Xini was smiling. They fell on
a patch of grass

OOS

Why?

XINI

Misunderstand.

Xini goes and stands on the ruins of his scooter.

OOS

This is not what I had bargained
for.

XINI

It never is.

He takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and reads.

XINI

I live to confuse you. You will
never be able to decipher the
meanings. Everything about me:
the way I look, how I smell, what
I do, is deliberate. I live to
confuse you.

OOS

How does anyone sell anything to
you?

Xini is jumping in the sun, where his scooter lies in
ruins.

5

XINI SURRENDERS

5

Xini flips through a telephone directory. His arrives at a random page, picks a number and dials it.

XINI
(on the phone)
I am coming.

He goes downstairs, gets onto his bicycle and pedals to the address that he has noted.

He reaches the address and rings the door bell.

A woman opens the door and waits for Xini to respond. Xini is looking at her earrings, which are catching the sun and dazzling his eyes. Distracted as he is, Xini loses track of time. Fuly, the woman whose house it is, was the last member of the tribe of Patience. As the name suggested, they had an infinite capacity for patience. The Patient did it by not waiting, they suspended their non-vital bodily functions, slowed their breath and hung on.

XINI
(after about ten minutes)
Those are beautiful earrings.

FULY
(coming out of her stupor)
Eh?

XINI
I said, those are beautiful earrings.

FULY
(smiling)
Yes.

XINI
Can you tell me what to do?

Fully studies Xini intently for a moment.

FULY
Ring my neighbour's doorbell.

Xini walks away from Fuly's house and towards the neighbour's house. Fuly follows him.

Xini rings the doorbell of Fuly's neighbour. An old man opens the door.

OLD MAN
Yes?

(CONTINUED)

XINI

Sir, can you tell me what to do?

OLD MAN

Ring the neighbour's doorbell.

Xini walks away from the Old Man's house and towards the neighbour's house. Fuly and the Old Man follow him.

Xini rings the doorbell of the Old Man's neighbour. A boy opens the door.

BOY

Who are you?

XINI

Wrong question (because that is none of your business). You can ask me what I want, or what I am doing here; I can answer.

BOY

What do you want?

XINI

Right question. I want you to tell me what to do.

BOY

Ring the neighbour's doorbell.

Xini walks away from Boy's house and towards the neighbour's house. Fuly and the Old Man and the Boy follow him.

Xini rings the doorbell of the Boy's neighbour. A woman opens the door (only partly).

WOMAN

(looking through the gap)
I do not want to buy anything.

XINI

Neither do I. What should I do?

WOMAN

(pause)

That pause lasted long enough for the Woman to realize that the question was earnest. Seeming to hang on Xini's question were people standing at a few arms length from Xini.

WOMAN

(thinking)
What should I do?

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

Let's ask the neighbours.

XINI

Ok.

So, Fuly, the Old Man, the Boy and the Woman started following Xini around as he asked his question from door to door.

They all want the answer.

The Squirrels come in the way of Xini.

SQUIRRELS

So, how many doorbells will you ring?

XINI

As many as there are. I have surrendered to the question.

And Xini walked on. The Squirrels also started following him.

6

XINI ACTS LIKE A REGULAR GUY

6

SQUIRRELS

Xini what will you do now?

XINI

I will live the life as a common man. I will blend in. Maybe there is an answer in belonging.

FADE OUT AND FADE IN

Xini wakes up. Goes down into the kitchen and puts some water on boil in an electric kettle. He sees a pair of jeans hung behind the door. He feels his way around in its pockets. Finds a wallet, takes it out and searches through it. He finds an I-Card and takes it out.

It says, "XX Software."

XINI

(mumbling)

So, that is where this avatar of mine works. This seems to be a life pretty much just like what they advertise. I am on the inside.

The water boils over. He pours it into a cup, takes a tea-bag from a drawer, a few spoonfuls of sugar and his tea is ready.

He walks with his tea over to the glass center-table in the adjoining room.

From reading the paper, to catching a cab to office - the morning was totally uneventful, ordinary and commonplace.

In the evening he was dropped home by the company bus and he stepped into the house. Not tired, only slightly bored. He opened a beer.

The door bell rings.

THE FAMOUS POLITICIAN

Hello

XINI

I don't remember you.

THE FAMOUS POLITICIAN

Will you vote for me?

XINI

Yes.

And he bangs the door shut.

(CONTINUED)

Next morning is the same. And the next. Something new happens only on Sunday.

A spaceship full of alien gangsters lands in Somalia.

TELEVISION

A yellow space ship has landed in Somalia. Here speak to their leader LIVE only on #\$\$ TV.

FRTI

We are going to kidnap all the people on earth who display any kind of desire. Our desire sensor must be flying around your city now. Scientists on our planet are doing research on Earthly Desire. They think maybe it is the source, the origin of life. We want to extract it and put into our robots.

XINI

(thinking)

Desire?

Next morning there was no newspaper. Xini switched the TV on and FRTI was on it again.

FRTI

Xini

XINI

Me?

FRTI

Yes. Everyone on Earth is now captive with us. Do you want us to release a few of your friends?

XINI

But why not kidnap me too?

FRTI

You, Mr. Xini are dead. You have no desire. So, do you want us to release your friends and family?

XINI

No. Why? What will I do with them? Why are you asking that?

FRTI

(smiling)

You were being tested for traces of desire that my sensors can not detect.

(CONTINUED)

XINI

Oh.

FRTI

Our spaceship will leave earth's
atmosphere by the time you switch
the TV off. Goodbye.

Xini switches the TV off. Then he opens the frontdoor
peers out of his house. The streets are empty. He runs
out.

The Squirrels appear.

SQUIRRELS

This is neat.

XINI

Yea. I am all alone on Earth now!
I can play my music really loud.

SQUIRRELS

What will you do now?

XINI

I don't need to think now. I can
pretty much do what I want.
Except that I don't want to do
anything.

SQUIRRELS

No?

XINI

No.

7

XINI TAKES POWER

7

Xini is sitting on the terrace of a building. He looks down, traffic moving about on the streets, people going about their business.

XINI

Things work because nobody is
trying to break them hard enough.

He walks down to the street and over to the train station. He gets into a local train and walks from compartment to compartment.

XINI

Every night there are ruptures.
But continuing like nothing has
happened, repairs the webs.

The squirrels appear.

SQUIRRELS

But, you live in the same world
that you are trying to destroy.

XINI

No. It's not the same. We are in
a house of mirrors. Smashing one
mirror - will just be that.
Smashing that mirror.

Xini shakes hands with a young, formals-clad gentleman.

XINI

(gives him an id)
Sir, now you are the Mayor of
Intercity.

GUY

What is that?

XINI

I will deal with queries later.

He swiftly goes on distributing ids to people he saw in the compartments. From the Queen of Spades to the Secretary of the Invisible, to the Chief Maverick Officer to Delinquent by Choice, the ids had various titles printed on them.

After he had passed around ids to a lot of people, Xini stood at an compartment-entrance and looked out. The wind played with his hair.

The train stops. There is no station in sight, but the train stood there for at least fifteen minutes, before some of the restless started shouting and creating a fuss.

(CONTINUED)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen, this train will not move now. Passengers are requested to get off the train as soon as possible.

Xini smiles.

SQUIRRELS

What happened?

XINI

(standing up on a seat)
There is too much Power where there should be only obedience. Power is power even when it is simulated. Systems are not designed in this world to deal with so people with names. The end is near.

SQUIRRELS

Oh. That was clever. So once all these dudes in the world assume power, the world will stop functioning?

XINI

(shifting to a comfortable sitting position by a window)
That is the plan.

Xini yawns and lies down on the seat of the empty train.