



# People-focussed Algorithms

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### **I'm Not Worth Bothering With**

She takes my topic of conversation and worries it wears it converts it to a long rambling tale with no punch line and then starts a new theme of her own choosing she's knocking us down one by one and she'll be the last one standing and speaking and she talks and talks and talks and talks and I can't bear to look it makes me retch she loves her own voice loves the inflection the craft of her own enunciation loves to be the centre we all listen and she's beaming eyes rolling like she's just had a round of applause and she says close your eyes and think of a lemon

### **Like Trying to Stop People Feeding Bread to Ducks**

He's a liar and a thief and shakes my hand and kisses my wife on the cheek and sits and talks with such apparent clarity of conscience that I really want to ask him what mental shenanigans he uses to blank out any shame I can't believe that all his moral fibre has vanished and I assume he knows what he's doing so how does he excuse himself what's going on nobody cares about him and he thinks his feelings are secret hidden he gets no nurturing and quite logically steals from his OAP mother you know when you've experienced a bit of life and put yourself through the ups and downs and done your best to keep your honesty intact well it's tiresome and undermining to see such a slobbish attitude and now he's hungry and wants me to make him a sandwich and he accompanies me to the kitchen and in a flash I could thrust this breadknife through his throat and pin him to the Welsh dresser I imagine he'd be quite surprised

### **You've Only Got Yourself To Blame**

She'd just come back from a two-week sunbathing vacation in Spain and I suppose I was being cheeky and maybe I shouldn't have but I greeted her with a hearty how now and she hasn't spoken to me since though actually this is a blessing because when she speaks she doesn't make any effort to move her lips the most expressive she gets is when she spews out words like a grooshing puke which makes me feel ill but on the other hand there aren't that great a number of people that I can count on to talk to and I often rely on opportune chats to strangers to give me some contact and to stop my throat from seizing up so losing one out of only a few is a high percentage and I guess that makes it significant also I'm a bit concerned about the growing trend of isolation and my uncooperative individualism and maybe I've been cursed because it seems that everytime I set myself a little goal then the exact opposite occurs and I'm sure I used to be in control of stuff like this and could look forward to things getting better rather than trying my utmost just to slow down the decline and worsening and oh Christ I need a drink

### **Over The Park Again**

He's a sad man saddled with a good reliable child-bearing wife and daughter and pink bicycle and job and mortgage and life insurance and what the fuck is it all about and he's doused in self-defeat and emasculation and hopes for a small victory a little game to start and win and what else is there and in the movies and the adverts he comes alive and his dreams are fulfilled and neutralised and compart-mentalised and how else would he get through the day who cares

### **Talking Bout My Medication**

The theory of evolution has a flavour of common-sense the notion that we are sophisticated-animal lifeforms is self-evident especially when the whole façade breaks down take a visit to a shopping centre A-to-B-ing is not an unfamiliar activity and you'd think practice would make perfect however watch us herding through a small aperture for example a retail establishment's doorway just what is going on beats me

### **Why Do Dogs Look At Me and Grin**

You know the astral plane is divided into 7 levels but it doesn't really matter because I'm talking about level 3 or 4 and that's where I'd expected to receive some message or other because it's half-eleven and the post will have arrived and you'll have read my letter and I'd presumed that I'd pick up some emotional discharge sense it some outpouring over the ethers

### **A Poem from A Few Years Ago**

Wakey wakey no shaky and I don't blame you really I sort of know what it's like and I know that I (we) had it easy well easier time to study time to think and write and write poems and lots of sex a different (very much the same) world now of course you struggle and hate just to get food on the plate (!) and a roof and Denplan and all the other stuff you stuff yourself with and why not eh look what happened to me (us) indolent detached superior unhappy better to believe you want something get it be happy repeat as necessary and what the fuck do I (we) know well I (we) know shit when we step in it I (we) know unbridled assholes when they barge into me (us) in the street I know shit

## **Bad Cloning**

Oh God she's off again I've never heard her say a good word about anything suck suck suck like a whining black hole maybe this time maybe she'll say some encouraging words maybe just plain like I like this or I see what you've done and it works well but no oh Christ here she goes why don't you change this section and it would be better if you got rid of blah blah and how about putting blah blah blah she might be right probably not I just think oh fuck here she goes it's not like she knows what she's talking about maybe if she did then it'd make a difference you know give her some credibility so why doesn't someone tell her to shut up I mean I know you've got to encourage people give them space but this is just irresponsible and ultimately she's just a case of partial reproduction misses the whole picture needs to be instructed in the ways of balance perhaps she'll stumble and fall down into a sewer and disappear

## **Synchronicity**

We've been sluffing across this massive beach for hours and now we're getting tired we've been playing I-Spy but everything begins with an S sand sea sky sand seaweed shells sand sun shadows sand surf seagulls so we try a different game now it's I hear with my little ear and it's something beginning with S sea meanwhile it's day 6 of the big Naming-Things Convention 20K BC a hot sunny day OK guys it's beach stuff today and I propose everything should begin with an S Samuel was chair he hoped they'd get it all done quickly because he'd booked a swimming-with-dolphins holiday he didn't want to miss I propose S he repeated Xerxes went bananas leapt to his feet and drew his dagger you only suggest S because it's your initial I'm not having it what's wrong with X nothing's wrong with X I'm just suggesting S well it's unfair and selfish we already have too many Ss and my wife Xena agrees oh really and where is she now shopping where at the supermarket she goes every Saturday sure yes I hold her hand for a bit swinging gently walking slowly feeling the hot sand slipping in and out of my sandals glancing at her watching her eyes waiting for the right moment she's dressed in a loose salmon-pink shirt with blue baggy shorts she stops to move a dead washed-up starfish gently pushing it with her foot I stand looking at her grubby suede shoes thinking miles away how am I going to get all this sand out of my nose and throat and ears and eyes we stroll and after five minutes I think it's time I whisper I've got to have a life-changing conversation with you meanwhile at the Bigsea Beach Promotion Department Emergency Meeting Subject Not Everything Begins With S they're brainstorming the local attractions wind rocks pebbles shingle (oops) driftwood twigs flotsam jetsam condoms don't mention the wind don't mention the condoms pandemonium I've trod in a puddle of sewage leaking from a big rusty pipe that cuts across the sand down to the beach where the swimmers swim and the senior-citizens paddle she reaches into her shoulder-bag gets a tissue and wipes my foot I fall to my knees and weep like a schoolchild

## **Tooth Boy**

It seems I have an unusual number of grandparents the term of uncertain descent is used a lot in our family it's just as well we've got a big house granpa Purvis with his stubbly face brown teeth and bad breath has never married and makes me shudder when puts his hand on my bum and there's ganpy and ganma Vom who've invited cousin Wilhelmina to come and play we all call her Billy she has a problem with her tummy valve and keeps regurgitating cupfuls of fluid we all tell her jokes just so she'll get excited and puke the carpet already stained with chip coloured splodges though not as thick as broth more soup-like gran and gramps Welton used to be sheep farmers but now retired they're OK a bit ugly but they're probably my favourites gandy and grandma Tregelles Williams which is my name and they're OK as well pretty strict though same as my dad and at tea time it's very crowded with us all trying to sit at the table and trying not to knock elbows and no one sits close to Purvis so he gets a lot of room but then before 8 o'clock all the eating finishes and my special chore begins other folk memorise the alphabet or times-tables or long poems or the lord's prayer me I memorise the order of false teeth lined up on the bathroom windowsill in the evening the old folk sit around supping ale and sherry and wine sloshing it over their old gums while I brush and clean then plonk into individual tumblers in set order all their dentures and I haven't told them but I use water from the toilet and today I had a big runny poo beforehand and specially worked it into the crevices of Purvis's set I hope he dies

## **Bonus - Outtakes**

My eyes lick around the contours and slopes of the river-bank both banks one eye on left one on right follow the shape as it bends widens narrows a loop a twist steep bank flat bank muddy dry weed-filled bare

She doesn't have a womb instead she's got a safety deposit box

Filton Abbey Wood is where the Beatles recorded all their songs

And Jane in her £200 white blouse eating spaghetti Bolognese

Women don't have balls but they do have pins and scissors

Yellow-belly jelly-babies spineless wormies on your knees backbone-less B-graders

Yeh I'd like you to be my friend she said but first you've got to agree to hate this list of shits

He's grunting she's squealing it's one of those perfect yin-yang moments