

LIA

The following program contains explicit language, and resigns itself to isolation and despair, almost pridefully, with masochistic glee. Please, be nice to your children. Be nice to yourself. May we all be innocent again someday.

LIA

I've often found myself in a place where, I'm not sure whether I'm supposed to feel like I know what I'm doing or if anyone can even see me, but you know, I've found the strength, I've persevered, and what's funny is people who've never hit rock bottom, they think that's inspirational, that continuing along the path you've set for yourself despite the odds is something to be commended or lauded. I know I haven't yet experienced my most spectacular failure; I just hope I haven't felt my greatest success.

MICHAEL

It's How to be a Nothing. I'm Michael Liam Abbott. Our guest today has been something of a recluse most of her life, either because she was too shy or too encumbered by the baggage of gender and sexuality. In 2015, she made a decision to reenter society, and now, a few years later, she's still trying to do that. Don't tell society. Her podcast, Tales of Insecurity, proves week in and week out that she can't sing, please welcome our guest, LiA Lindsaychen.

LIA

Thank you for having me. Thanks for that intro.

MICHAEL

No, it's my pleasure. I've always wanted to do a podcast.

LIA

Great. You're really doing it.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm pretty excited. It seems like there's a really low bar to entry. All you have to do is talk, right? That seems easy. And as far as I can tell, you don't have to say anything interesting, either.

LIA

You can, though. Don't think that's a disqualification.

MICHAEL

We can disagree about that. How to be a Nothing is a podcast focused on the never ending process of fitting in. You don't want to be too interesting. If you go down that road, people might get jealous. I think it's entirely possible that we might alienate our potential audience by planning too much. People want to hear spontaneity. They want their podcasts to be casual. When was the last time you were spontaneous?

LIA

I don't know. Writing is kind of an improvisatory process. It's just improvised in advance, slowly, with the benefit of editing.

MICHAEL

Maybe.

LIA

I don't know. So what's going on today? Is that the kind of thing you say?

MICHAEL

Well, I was thinking, no one knows who you are, and that's kind of alienating. I thought it might be a good idea for you to introduce yourself to the world at large, so that you can assure everyone that you don't think you're particularly special.

LIA

Okay, sure.

MICHAEL

So who are you? Why should anyone listen to your show? Why should anyone care about anything you say or your thoughts about anything or anything at all?

LIA

Okay. Well.

MICHAEL

Hurry up. This is radio.

LIA

Sure, okay sorry.

MICHAEL

The clock is ticking. Tick tock tick tock.

LIA

It's complicated. I'm not saying that my voice means more than other people's voices and I know that there's so much out there competing for everyone's attention, I'm just making myself available and trying to make something honest.

MICHAEL

Yeah, okay. That's fine. Doesn't really sell me on your show, but I guess you don't need to. What does my opinion matter?

LIA

At this point, I'm just trying to have fun with it.

MICHAEL

And that's completely reasonable. That's completely fine.

LIA

Thank you.

MICHAEL

But also, you think that maybe it could be a way out of the mess you've made of your life, right? You think that your words mean more than other people's just because you don't speak as much, like somehow you've resisted inflation

because you're poor.

LIA

I choose my words carefully, I guess. I don't think they have inherent value, not more than other people's.

MICHAEL

Of course you do. So let's get to know you, LiA Lindsaychen. First of all, how are you?

LIA

I'm okay.

MICHAEL

Really?

LIA

Not really. I've had a migraine all week. Our air filter went out a few days last week and that always throws me off.

MICHAEL

You've mentioned this before, this breathing problem. Is this new for you?

LIA

Kind of. I had some asthma as a kid, but I thought I grew out of it.

MICHAEL

Really compelling stuff.

LIA

I didn't say it was interesting, I'm just answering your questions. I'm just going along with you. Leave me alone.

MICHAEL

This is important. This is your chance to prove yourself as someone worth listening to. You have to prove that you can have a regular conversation, possessed with wit and wisdom.

LIA

I can talk to people. I thought

this was about fitting in.

MICHAEL

Yes, but you have to grease those wheels. You have to make the right conversation. There's an order to it. If you just stand to the side, you're an oddball. You have to speak to get to the middle of things, to really blend. And I'm prepared to throw you softballs. And you get the final edit, so really, whatever you want to say, you can. Don't hold anything back.

LIA

Yeah but. You can't just tell me to say whatever I want. That's not how you have a conversation.

MICHAEL

So you tell me. How do you have a conversation?

LIA

People do like talking about themselves, but you have to give them a path. Find out what they're interested in, give them a nudge so they can remember their anecdotes, thoughts they've had before. You're making it about each individual.

MICHAEL

So again, you keep going back to this idea of preparation. Conversations for you seem to be memories of more interesting conversations. When do you have the conversations you talk about?

LIA

Well, Michael. What interests you? What do you spend your time on?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I read and write a lot.

LIA

What do you read?

MICHAEL

Various things.

LIA

Like what? Novels? Poetry? Do you retain anything you read?

MICHAEL

Sometimes.

LIA

The problem here is, you don't have any confidence in the things you actually enjoy, so you can't even talk about what matters to you, so you end up talking about the things you want to care about more than what you actually do.

MICHAEL

Well forgive me for aspiring to something.

LIA

You don't, though. You just want to hide, and that's weird too. Anyway, I'm not trying to hide anymore.

MICHAEL

And I would say that makes you more effective at hiding.

LIA

Not my intention, but sure. Once you present yourself, you might feel more like you're being ignored, but like, nothing's changed, really.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but it's more than that. You've got to participate a certain way. You've got to engage in the rituals. People have to see you.

LIA

No. I mean, you can't make the decision to be seen all on your own. People have to cooperate. Everything is twoway. You have to give people a reason to notice you. You have to engage in a conversation that's already going.

MICHAEL

You should write some fan fiction.

LIA

I mean, I kind of do that already, sometimes. I mean, I write in pastiches to illustrate conventions people take for granted.

MICHAEL

Do you do that because you don't have original ideas of your own?

LIA

No. Originality is easy. The problem is when you're completely original, nothing you say makes sense.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but it needs to be a little original, right? It needs to seem original.

LIA

Yeah, all I'm saying is if it's too original, it doesn't conform to the expected forms, and then no one can wrap their head around it.

MICHAEL

Is this more of that genius talk?

LIA

No. No. I'm just saying.

MICHAEL

For new listeners at home, Lia thinks that she's a genius.

LIA

No. I mean. I don't think genius is necessarily good.

MICHAEL

Here we go.

LIA

It just means that you defy the conventions of the thing you're doing.

MICHAEL

"It just means that you defy the conventions of the thing you're doing." That's what you just said. That's what you sound like. I

thought you wanted to be honest.

LIA

It means you have a different way of interpreting the world, and if people recognize it as true, you're a genius, and if they can't make any sense of it, you're just schizophrenic or something.

MICHAEL

So which do you think is more likely?

LIA

These sorts of questions aren't really worth thinking about to me. I'm just going to keep making the things I want to make, and if they make sense to someone else, fine, but if it doesn't that's okay too.

MICHAEL

You're always paranoid about legal problems. How did that affect you when you were writing *The Talented Officer Ripley*, a mash-up to two copyrighted works, *Alien* and Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley* series?

LIA

Well, I don't know. It was a joke, if an esoteric one. I thought it made sense. It was just a personal project, I didn't mean for it to be shared with anyone.

MICHAEL

Let's listen to an excerpt from that, why not? Here on *How to be a Nothing*.

Ellen had been awake a few minutes before her pod crept open. She had had a moment to consider what interruption could have necessitated the whole crew's attention. Her first worry was that they were back on the earth, but when her capsule opened and she wasn't under arrest, she stood with confidence. No one had reason to suspect she had done anything wrong, and she hadn't. Not really. Not in the grand scheme of things. She had done what she had to do to

leave the earth and nothing more.

"These early wake-up calls. Can't stand them," said one of the men, still in his pod. All of them looked the same to her, but one was the captain, and she had to placate him from time to time. She laughed politely, just in case.

"Yeah, I was just learning to lucid dream," she said. "I was about to start flying."

"You're not supposed to dream in there. It's not sleep. Don't you know anything?"

Ellen frowned. She decided it wasn't worth explaining that she had been joking, because the joke hadn't been funny, but it wasn't supposed to be. It was just one of those things people say to each other in professional settings to seem friendly.

"No dreams, eh? Try telling that to the luscious blonde I just banged, am I right, Ripley?" The captain slapped her on the back, a sign of camaraderie. She nodded, though she wasn't sure what part of the statement she was supposed to agree to. Just the general misogyny, probably.

"Is there something wrong, Captain? We're not back on the earth, obviously. Is there some kind of emergency?"

The crew was starting to come to attention, though they weren't fully dressed or alert. The other woman had herself together, in uniform, her hair neatly combed, but the rest of them were slovenly and unkempt, especially the captain.

"I don't know. There's some signal from a nearby planet. Company policy says we check it out. We can probably just take a quick look around and get back."

"So we're still en route to Earth. We're just taking a little stop." Ellen confirmed. The captain looked at her strangely, and she cursed herself for vocalizing her thoughts. Of course they were headed to the earth. The rest of them had families or descendants of families to visit. They were excited. What reason could anyone have to stay in this cramped out of the way place forever?

She could visit Ellen Ripley's family, and maybe enough time had passed that no one would mind they didn't recognize her. She had some resemblance, and a

few more generations removed could make a difference. All it took was enough time. Everything is forgiven after enough time.

"So the way I see it," the captain said, "a few of us will go down there, see what the hubbub is, scan the area for life, and then we'll just forget about it. Whatever. Quick, get in, get out. No problem."

"So what exactly does the transmission say?"

"I don't know, it's in some kind of weird language. Ripley, you have training in these things don't you? Why don't you come with me and see if you make sense of it?"

"Sure." Ripley had so many credentials. She was some kind of weapons expert, a crack shot. She had a Ph.D. in something or other, some branch of physics, theoretical or particle or something. Ellen always said, "Oh, it's been so long," whenever those kinds of questions came up. "Really, when you're at the serious academic level, you get interns to do that kind of busywork." The cryptolinguistic angle hadn't come up as often as mathematical calculations, but with any luck, she'd be able to fake something. Something that could keep them in hibernation.

"So here it is, can you make any sense of it?"

"It's definitely meant to be interpreted by computers. It seems like it's some kind of primitive sound-based data transfer."

"Okay, well. Why don't you run whatever diagnostic agents you need while I go investigate, and keep me informed if you figure out something."

"Yes, sir."

Ellen listened to the sounds a while. They were almost pleasant to listen to. They had a certain rhythm to them, and she could imagine they were someone else's poetry. At the same time, deriving any meaning from these auditory squiggles seemed futile.

The captain's computer had certain perks to it. He regularly received messages from earth, it seemed, even while they knew he was in stasis. He had left his mail protocol open, and she could see his report about this interruption, and a reply he'd sent to the news that Ellen Ripley's body had washed up on an

Italian shore. "That's impossible," he'd written back. "All my crew is present and accounted for. If you really want to investigate when we get back to Earth, be my guest, but I'm sure you'll find you've made a mistake."

Somehow she didn't share his confidence. She couldn't imagine she would get very far once they started verifying her dental records and however else they checked these things. Fingerprints might not be so much of a problem, as she had already gone to the trouble of fixing those, and surely what remained of Ellen Ripley wasn't so intact as to have fingers, much less their prints. But she would still have DNA somewhere. No changing that.

As the ship touched down on the planet, some meaningless string of letters and numbers, Ellen jolted with the impact. "Captain, are you alright? What's going on?"

"We misjudged it, that's all. I've already sent a team to assess and repair the damage, you just focus on deciphering that signal."

"Yes, of course." It could be a distress beacon, that was the most obvious. Or it could be a warning sign. A greeting, maybe, or some mechanical NPR. There were enough androids out there now that they could develop their own culture, surely. She'd probably fit in better with them, she realized. No, on second thought, they'd probably talk about her in mechanical whirrs she couldn't understand, "What's wrong with her? Why is she so tall? Why does she look so angry all the time?"

"Hey, any luck? The captain sent me over to see if you needed anything." The other woman. She was employed as the ship's navigator. The ship had crash-landed on the planet.

"Oh, thank you," Ellen said, though she didn't know how to interpret this series of events. Was this woman being punished somehow? Was she herself? How paranoid did she want to be about all this? Was this message a test somehow? Maybe the captain had left those messages for her as a trap. Maybe all of this was a trap, and he already knew what she had done and who she wasn't.

"So how do you go about this? Is there anything I can do to help?" The

woman's questions seemed innocent enough. Ellen liked her earnestness. She was the one member of the crew she felt comfortable around. She was the one person who seemed to take her seriously.

Ellen tried to explain everything she could to make her imaginary process seem like a science. She had already decided: the message said, "This is a test, this is only a test." Somehow, she was going to get the navigator to confirm this for her, so she'd have a witness, just in case the message turned out to be something else.

"Oh so yes, I hear that. It's definitely a repeated pattern. I don't know, are you sure? It sounds kind of urgent to me. It sounds desperate. It sounds lonely."

"No, you can't attribute those kinds of emotions to machines. Try divorcing the patterns from human intonations. It isn't like conventional language."

"I see. Okay. Is it just a Hello World kind of thing, you think?"

"I think it might be. I think it's just an empty relay station."

The woman seemed thoughtful. Ellen considered radioing a report to the captain, but decided it was probably better to wait. Best not to seem too eager or nervous. Everyone knew Ellen Ripley was calm under pressure, but then, Ellen Ripley wouldn't be under pressure.

"Ripley, we couldn't find any disturbance. Have you made any progress on the message?"

"It's still inconclusive, but we're pretty sure it's just a test beacon."

"Are you sure? It sounded urgent to me."

Ellen considered a moment. "It's still inconclusive. We're going to keep checking."

The navigator was looking her over. Ellen could feel the woman's eyes scrutinizing her every intention.

"You have no idea what you're doing, do you?"

For a moment, Ellen couldn't believe the woman had actually said the words. But she had been looking at the computer too. She had found the message about the body.

"We're a few levels removed from this language," Ellen started, but the

woman had no interest in her explanations. She grabbed the radio control and began to speak, "Captain, I have a bad feeling about this."

Ellen began to scan the area around her. Everything was locked down, except the woman's helmet that she had carelessly laid on the floor next to them. Ellen picked it up and held it in both hands.

Was she really going to do this? Was she prepared for everything she'd have to do? There'd be no turning back. She made her preparations as she bashed the helmet against the woman's skull. First, she'd have to imitate the woman's breathy voice on the radio. She could say whatever she wanted. The woman was still conscious, but the radio was out of her hand. "Are you still there? Hello? Do you have any other thoughts on the signal?" The helmet was starting to crack, but still held together after a few more collisions. The woman was on the ground. Dead. "Yes, it seems the message is a warning. There's a deadly toxic mold on the surface of the planet, deathly contagious to whoever breathes it in. We're not going to be able to let you back on the ship. Quarantine rules."

"Ripley? Are you there? Can you verify this?"

"Yes, as the ranking officer in charge, I'm afraid I have to make this executive decision."

"So you're just going to leave us stranded on this desolate planet to die?"

"It's not an easy decision." She looked at the woman's body. It might come in handy later. Maybe Ripley would meet her tragic end at the hand of some alien menace. Maybe she'd make some daring escape but bang her head and burn to ashes on the way back to earth. So tragic. Who ever could have seen it coming?

MICHAEL

Welcome back to How to be a
Nothing. I'm Michael Liam Abbott.
Our guest today is LiA Lindsaychen,
a trans woman who quit her job to
make a podcast, despite no social
following, no previous experience,
no demand. Congratulations, LiA.
You're going to die in obscurity,
without even the humble
satisfaction of doing a simple job
well, of contributing in the most

basic ways to any sort of economy. Was that a hard decision to make? Knowing you'd have to default on all your debts, knowing that it was unlikely anyone at all would ever hear anything you've made, because your friends all know how little you have to say because they've known you for years and you've never said anything?

LIA

Yeah, I guess it was hard. There were reasons I didn't do it before. There are reasons it's a bad idea, but it was kind of freeing too. You know, you reach a point in your life where you have to make that decision, where you can't go another day living the way you've been living and you take a risk. I might end up in prison if something doesn't happen soon, but whatever happens, if I die tomorrow, at least I don't have the regret that I never tried.

MICHAEL

But lots of other regrets, right?

LIA

A few. I don't think too many. Not really.

MICHAEL

You probably would have transitioned sooner, right?

LIA

I guess so.

MICHAEL

But when, when would have been a good time?

LIA

Probably in college. Probably my freshman year of college. It probably would have happened if I had had a social life, if I had been connected to anyone who knew anything. Oberlin has a yearly drag ball, and I feel if that hadn't seemed so repugnant to me, I might

have understood myself a little earlier. And maybe I would have found someone who knew about it, and maybe I'd be fine.

MICHAEL

It would have been convenient then, right? It would have given you an immediate social group. For a lot of people, college is when they start to come into themselves. They get involved in things that stay with them the rest of their lives. What about you, what roots took hold in those formative years?

LIA

I don't know. I don't remember anything.

MICHAEL

You're going to have to come up with something for these questions if you ever get a following.

LIA

I know.

MICHAEL

If you ever get on any real interview show, you're going to have to prepare something. An anecdote.

LIA

Yeah, you're right. I know.

MICHAEL

This is your chance to practice. What shade of yourself do you want to present? Are you thoughtful and introspective? Do you want people to think you're clever, with a warped way of seeing the world?

LIA

No, I hate all of that. My biggest worry is that I'll seem like I'm trying to be cute. All I've ever wanted to be is honest. And like, I don't even have an honest accent.

MICHAEL

That's right, what is the deal with

your accent? You sound foreign, but not from anywhere in particular.

LIA

As a small child, I had a pronounced southern twang.

MICHAEL

Tell me more about that.

LIA

Well you know, I grew up in the south, and for a while, I talked like the people around me.

MICHAEL

Uh-huh.

LIA

But eventually, I understood that that accent had particular cultural associations that I didn't want attached to my whole persona.

MICHAEL

Huh.

LIA

I don't think it was a conscious decision really. How does any aspect of personality form? In desperation, right? You just have to be something, and you take in whatever the best part of whatever's around you, and for me, that was my mother, who I became, but on a certain level, I already was her, so of course I chose to be like her, and I'm more like her than she ever was. My brother became a caricature of my dad and we became opposites of each other. That's how these things work.

MICHAEL

You've not said anything about your brother on your podcast. I would have assumed you were an only child.

LIA

We're far enough apart that that's basically true for both of us. I don't have anything to say about my

brother. He's my opposite. I got the light-skinned genes, he got the dark ones. He's good at detail, I'm good at abstraction. I don't want to say anything bad about my brother.

MICHAEL

No one's asking you to say anything bad about your brother.

LIA

He works really hard and he loves his dog.

MICHAEL

Yeah, that sounds fine.

LIA

Sorry. He's all right.

MICHAEL

Yeah, you said he was your opposite.

LIA

We should move on to something else.

MICHAEL

Absolutely. So. We shared a bit of your Alien reimagining earlier.

LIA

Yeah.

MICHAEL

I wanted to talk about it.

LIA

Okay. Let's talk about it. Ellen Ripley murdered the people on the ship so she could avoid having to deal with any consequences. It's really not very complicated.

MICHAEL

It seems like it might have psychological implications.

LIA

Okay.

MICHAEL

What do you think?

LIA

Maybe.

MICHAEL

Huh.

LIA

Are you saying that I would also be willing to sacrifice everyone around me just for the sake of my own comfort?

MICHAEL

Have you called your mother yet?

LIA

Michael.

MICHAEL

LiA.

LIA

Don't try to make me feel guilty. They haven't tried to call me either.

MICHAEL

I'm just saying.

LIA

What, that I'm a sociopath?

MICHAEL

No. That's not what you are.

LIA

And I don't think there's anything wrong with sociopathy. I think it's an entirely reasonable response, given society.

MICHAEL

Do you think your depiction of a character so often cited as the archetypal strong woman undermines the feminism of the original?

LIA

No. I mean. I don't know.

MICHAEL

It seems problematic to me.

LIA

I wanted to make some edits to it. It wasn't meant to be anything. But I don't think it's offensive.

MICHAEL

So, in retrospect, the way everyone kind of undermined her authority in the original, they're kind of justified because you made this alternate version where she really is the bad guy.

LIA

It's not a perfect depiction. What do you want me to say?

MICHAEL

Nothing. I just think it's interesting.

LIA

The problem here is that marginalized people are held to a higher standard than other people. White cis men. So whatever issues there are with that character, and it's just, I tried to make her like Tom Ripley from those books, you notice them more because my name is on them than if yours was.

MICHAEL

I wouldn't have written that.

LIA

You wouldn't show your writing to anyone.

MICHAEL

When I'm proud of something, I'll share it.

LIA

When you're proud. That's never going to happen.

MICHAEL

I know. So I guess I'll just get a job in a restaurant and do it until I can't stand it anymore.

LIA

I've often found myself in a place where, I'm not sure whether I'm supposed to feel like I know what I'm doing or if anyone can even see me, but you know, I've found the strength, I've persevered, and what's funny is people who've never hit rock bottom, they think that's inspirational, that continuing along the path you've set for yourself despite the odds is something to be commended or lauded. I know I haven't yet experienced my most spectacular failure; I just hope I haven't felt my greatest success.

MICHAEL

See, when you talk, all I hear is confusion. I'm more isolated than you. People want to support you. They have reason to support you, but I'm just a cis mostly white man. There is no reason to support me. I should transition just to have a role in society.

LIA

No. What. I mean, you should. You're the least interesting person and I'm glad you're dead.

MICHAEL

Is that what you'll say to Mom and Dad?

LIA

No. No.

MICHAEL

Looks like I struck a nerve there.

LIA

No. You just said something mean and dumb. It's not the same.

MICHAEL

Alright. Seems like you're making a bigger deal out of it than a regular person would.

LIA

I think most people if you said

"You will celebrate the deaths of your family members, some of whom have late-stage cancer" would be similarly provoked.

MICHAEL

Well, agree to disagree.

LIA

No. I don't agree to that.

MICHAEL

Alright. Fine. Sorry.

LIA

Do you have something to cut to? I think we need to regroup.

MICHAEL

You are such a control freak. This is my show.

LIA

Okay. I don't think I'm a control freak. I just like to avoid disaster if I can.

MICHAEL

You said something about originality earlier that I wanted to go back to. I have here one of your originals, and maybe it could be a good contrast to that derivative piece we played earlier.

LIA

It's your show.

MICHAEL

Alright. Here's something original, by LiA Lindsaychen. What's the name of it?

LIA

It's um. Bricks of Sand.

MICHAEL

Bricks of Sand. Whatever that means. Here on How to be a Nothing.

CAT WARRIOR

Never face the south on a full

stomach.

APPLE CAPTAIN

You manage sometimes.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

When the wind comes, we will face execution.

CAT WARRIOR

But the wind isn't the same. It's cute now.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

True. We made belts out of each others' hair.

APPLE CAPTAIN

What simpletons.

CAT WARRIOR

The oxcart and the mangroves, they betray our fathers and sons.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Our mothers and daughters are fine.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

Would you excuse me? I have to shape my body according to the humidity.

CAT WARRIOR

Of course you may.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

No fruit mentioned in the bible has any nutrition.

CAT WARRIOR

Except the grapes that Jesus shared to illustrate the joys of polyamory.

APPLE CAPTAIN

My favorite parable.

CAT WARRIOR

And they all gathered together, and Jesus knew all of them, for he was omniscient.

JESUS

My one commandment, love one

another.

FORTUNE COOKIE

In bed.

PEDESTRIAN

Would you excuse me? I'm in the way.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Oh of course. By all means.

PEDESTRIAN

Thank you, it means a lot to me.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

It doesn't matter what I say, as long as you look up to me.

PEDESTRIAN

Excuse me. Your face is facing the wrong direction. That's better. Better composition.

CAT WARRIOR

As a samurai, this seems like appropriation.

APPLE CAPTAIN

The goddess won't like this at all.

PEDESTRIAN

It's not my fault. Stop looking at me. Every time you look at me, you murder a stranger.

CAT WARRIOR

When you violate the terms of our agreement, I get to snap the neck off of your body.

APPLE CAPTAIN

That seems fine.

FORTUNE COOKIE

You will face a series of trials.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

Informed consent is still consent.

WELL-INTENTIONED NEWT

No one ever thinks about the consequences of the mind.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Does one moment connect to any other? What did you get for 35-across?

PEDESTRIAN

I didn't agree to anything. Don't pretend you have my interests at heart.

CAT WARRIOR

Before we commit to any of the flavors of the month, I think it's important we establish exactly what it means to exist and have thoughts and fully understand the nature of our existence as fully realized beings and then and only then can we enjoy the cool and subtle tastes of refreshing Mediterranean gelato.

WELL-INTENTIONED NEWT

What part of the Mediterranean?

PEDESTRIAN

No one ever asks my opinion.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

What do you think?

PEDESTRIAN

I don't know.

CAT WARRIOR

How's the wind, captain?

APPLE CAPTAIN

Empty. Gone. Steady.

FORTUNE COOKIE

Do you think anyone will notice when we're gone?

APPLE CAPTAIN

It wasn't meant to be.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

Don't try to tell me how to run a hotdog stand. I've been running hotdog stands since you were bopping around with the mumpsies and the measlies.

PEDESTRIAN

I'll take a double.

WELL-INTENTIONED NEWT

It gets you really high.

CAT WARRIOR

You can have anything you want if you can see it. Your position allows you dominion over all you see.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Nice.

CAT WARRIOR

Do you want that flag? You can have it. Do you want that bubble blowing out of that guy's nose? It's yours.

PEDESTRIAN

Can you hand me that tissue?

BARTLEBY

I'd prefer not to.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Everything you say makes sense to me some way or another.

CAT WARRIOR

What about this?

APPLE CAPTAIN

I'm sorry?

CAT WARRIOR

You don't have friends because you're too boring on a fundamental level because you don't have the confidence to have opinions so all you do is reflect what people already know so only people who like themselves could like you and we all know how likely that is.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

On the horizon, a seagull.

APPLE CAPTAIN

Good eye, old towel.

LOOSE-FITTING AUTHORITY

That's professor.

PEDESTRIAN

I'm just an outsider here, I don't want to get in anyone's way.

CAT WARRIOR

Thank you, that was very considerate.

FORTUNE COOKIE

The bird brings the wind.

JESUS

And all is well.

MICHAEL

Okay, great. Welcome back to How to be a Nothing. So LiA. What the hell was that?

LIA

I don't know. A poem, maybe? It's just, how my thoughts run together most of the time, before I translate them into narratives.

MICHAEL

So that's what's going on in your brain right now?

LIA

Pretty much. It has a rhythm to it. Different characters. I don't think my brain is different than other people's.

MICHAEL

Okay.

LIA

At least with that one you can't psychoanalyze me as much, right?

MICHAEL

I don't know. There was still something like a narrative in there, even if it didn't make literal sense.

LIA

Really? You're going to pick at that?

MICHAEL

I gathered a fundamental sense of inadequacy.

LIA

Fascinating.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I don't think you should be so down on yourself. Really, LiA, I'm honestly very proud of you for coming out and destroying me. I didn't think I would ever be able to do that.

LIA

Well thank you. But it really wasn't all that courageous. It was just at a certain point, necessary. It's not heroic. It's just. Whatever.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but still. I'm proud of you.

LIA

I don't want to ever talk to you again. I don't ever want to think about you, and all you represent to me anymore is indecision and self-loathing, both of which I'm trying to leave behind.

MICHAEL

But I'm encouraging you.

LIA

It's the worst. You're my antagonist and adversary. Just your name makes me want to die, and I keep having conversations with you just to pick at some scab I guess.

MICHAEL

It seems like a wasted opportunity to me.

LIA

How so?

MICHAEL

If you wanted to express something revealing, something juicy, it seems like you have a great

opportunity here. You know things about me that no one should know about another person.

LIA

Oh, I see. But that seems kind of abusive. There's a certain dignity in knowing what could destroy someone and not revealing it.

MICHAEL

The mythological secret name stuff.

LIA

Yeah, I mean so, already, I know your secret name. It's Michael Abbott. It's not my secret name anymore. You're someone fully separate from me.

MICHAEL

How's that going, the multiple self thing?

LIA

It's okay. We've found ways of communicating with each other.

MICHAEL

For those of you who don't know, LiA has been experiencing the problem lately that she's been doing things without her knowledge.

LIA

I don't know if it's related to the time travel thing a few episodes back or not. We collapsed the superpositions I think, and that means that only one of us exists at any given time, but it's unclear exactly how continuous we are.

MICHAEL

That all sounds like nonsense.

LIA

I don't know, but it seems like I've learned when I'm out of place, because I've started leaving myself notes.

MICHAEL

What do the notes say?

LIA

The other night, I found a message from myself to read the works of Beatrix Potter.

MICHAEL

Do you think it's a clue?

LIA

I mean, I don't know. I looked at a few of them. Jemima Puddleduck, I remember really liking the illustrations. When I was searching for them, I found the complete works of Beatrix Potter audiobook. That seemed, that seemed the worst idea I've ever heard.

MICHAEL

Was there anything else?

LIA

No, just that. LiA, read all the Beatrix Potter.

MICHAEL

I had the box set when I was a kid.

LIA

Uh-huh.

MICHAEL

It got water damaged.

LIA

Oh no.

MICHAEL

Yeah. We sort of lived in big piles of junk. My dad was a pastor you know, and that involves moving a lot, so it never seemed like we were really unpacked.

LIA

But you didn't really move a lot.

MICHAEL

We were prepared. Most everything was still in boxes wherever we could stack boxes. The garage mostly. Sometimes we wormed our way into other storage areas. I think we took over the restaurant I

worked a couple of summers with my mother's cloth.

LIA

Still?

MICHAEL

I think so, yeah. My mother collected reams and reams of cloth for all the projects she's going to put together someday. Everytime there was a sale, she picked up a few more yards of cloth, and a lot of it was pretty nice. She made quilts sometimes. They were generally quite precise. No, actually, having seen other people's quilts now, now that I have a little more perspective on quilts, her quilts were really quite amazing. Nothing out of place.

LIA

She doesn't do things if she's not the best at them.

MICHAEL

Yeah, that's something I learned from her. There's not any point in doing something if you're not the best at it.

LIA

Of course, that's not true, you realize.

MICHAEL

It's possible we may have overlearned that lesson. But also, you know, her family, our family, they are the best at the things they do. They're renowned academics, they're tops of their classes at Oxford and Harvard and diplomats and movers and shakers.

LIA

Humble brag.

MICHAEL

No, no. I'm just saying. My mother has the same brain as the rest of the Lindsays, but she didn't have

some other aspect, the assertiveness to claim her place at the top. She was quiet. She was the baby. The rest of them had a harrowing adventure fleeing across China with the assistance of the red army, repairing radios and being revolutionaries, and then my mother was born in England, in relative peace. They say shared trauma brings people together, but then there's a contrast to that. My mother was an outsider in her own family.

LIA

Uh-huh.

MICHAEL

And it makes me mad. I don't know. I'm an outsider too.

LIA

You don't even exist.

MICHAEL

Right. You're an outsider.

LIA

Not to disenfranchise you.

MICHAEL

No, you're right. We're all marginalized in our own ways.

LIA

Yeah, it does seem like I have more of a culture now than you ever did, so it would seem that I gained some amount of privilege when I murdered you and took your body.

MICHAEL

Oh is that what that was about?

LIA

Yeah, a little bit.

MICHAEL

See, you could have just said that. You reimagined Alien as a metaphor for transitioning, then it's interesting. Why hold that back?

LIA

You know, I don't want everything I do to be about that.

MICHAEL

You've got to market yourself somehow, and you might as well go that way. Just go with it.

LIA

I've already transitioned. That story is over.

MICHAEL

Well, not entirely. You still have credit cards in my name.

LIA

They make it really hard to change. And I'm not really eager to put your debts in my name.

MICHAEL

But they're still there. You're not going to get out of them on that technicality.

LIA

Yeah, I know. It just seems strange to go through so much effort just to take on financial burdens. I'm mostly just afraid of paperwork.

MICHAEL

You'll probably just make something more difficult later on. Like, maybe you'll declare bankruptcy and some things will get missed because they're not under your name.

LIA

Yeah, I guess that's possible.

MICHAEL

There's the off-chance I guess that the banking industry will collapse before you have to do something, but it better hurry up.

LIA

Oh god. Yeah okay.

MICHAEL

Or you can make yourself marketable

by making stories about
transitioning.

LIA

How do I be marketable?

MICHAEL

Just say things people want to
hear. You don't have to lie or
anything, but just, people think
transitioning is interesting. It's
like, all people are going to care
about you.

LIA

Sure.

MICHAEL

Here, I'll do it. The Men's
Improvement Society.

LIA

Oh, you're going to tell that one?

MICHAEL

Why not?

LIA

Yeah, okay. It's just kind of bold.

MICHAEL

Yeah, you like subtlety but that's
not in.

LIA

Okay, sure.

MICHAEL

The Men's Improvement Society. Here
on How to be a Nothing.

MICHAEL

Hi. My name is Michael. I think I'm
a good person, most of the time,
but I have a naughty side too,
though I haven't gotten to explore
that very much. I'm not sure what
exactly it is I'm looking for, but
I know that it's something
different than what I've gotten
from other relationships. Maybe you
could knock some sense into me?

MICHAEL

How does that sound?

LIA

It's a little messy.

MICHAEL

Would you respond to a message from someone with that profile?

LIA

Don't ask me. Probably not. But I probably wouldn't respond to anything.

MICHAEL

I'd been living in DC a few months, a few years out of college, and was still figuring out how to claim a little adulthood.

LESLIE

Oh my god, get a life, you ridiculous manchild!

MICHAEL

I had made some mistakes.

AMY

Don't talk to me anymore.

REBECCA

You're such a weirdo. What do you think you're doing?

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I don't know what I did wrong.

REBECCA

Really. You don't see what was wrong with that?

MICHAEL

I guess I do.

LESLIE

You just gotta chill, dude.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm really sorry. I just, I care about you a lot and I wanted to be a part of your life and I didn't mean to be a nuisance but

you're like the only person who gets me.

LESLIE

Oh my god, you are so gay.

MICHAEL

My aunt Kathryn offered to let me stay with her while I was figuring things out.

KATHRYN

Yes, I don't foresee it being a problem. I'm hardly ever at home anyway, and as long as we stay out of each other's way, I'm sure your presence won't be altogether too burdensome.

MICHAEL

Thank you, I really appreciate it.

KATHRYN

So what are you planning on doing? What are your prospects?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I'd like to work for a non-profit. Produce some positive social change.

KATHRYN

Yes, sure. But what are you planning on doing?

MICHAEL

Well, I don't know. I guess it depends on what's available. But you know, I'm young and smart and I pick up things quickly, I should be able to find something, right?

KATHRYN

I believe so. But we should narrow it down.

MICHAEL

Of course.

KATHRYN

We can run through a few practice interviews. We can cement some strategies to make you stand apart from other candidates. Now, is this

your resume?

MICHAEL

Yeah, that's it.

KATHRYN

Hmm. It seems a little barebones to me. You're making the classic mistake of underselling yourself.

MICHAEL

Oh, yeah.

KATHRYN

This isn't the time to be self-effacing. Why don't you list your academic achievements here? You graduated with honors, didn't you?

MICHAEL

Um, you know, I don't think I. I don't think I know how that works.

KATHRYN

I see.

MICHAEL

I'm sure we had an honors program, but to tell you the truth, I don't know how you get involved with something like that.

KATHRYN

Your advisor would have mentioned it to you, had it been applicable.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah? Is it that simple?

KATHRYN

Partially. It does require some effort on your part as well.

MICHAEL

Right.

AMY

Will you leave me alone?

MICHAEL

Was I coming on too strong? I'm sorry, I didn't mean to seem forward. I didn't want to be a bad person.

AMY

What did you want?

MICHAEL

I.

AMY

Where are you looking, Michael?

MICHAEL

I'm sorry.

AMY

We're done here.

KATHRYN

So if you narrow down what you're looking for to a few basic fields, I can contact a few of my connections, and we should be able to put something together for you.

MICHAEL

Thank you, I really appreciate it.

KATHRYN

No, don't think of it in terms of anyone helping you. Whatever organization you become a part of, you're going to provide a service for. You are going to become an essential part of the organization. If you think of it in terms of them serving you, you're not going to seem appealing.

MICHAEL

I see. Thank you. That's helpful.

REBECCA

What do you want?

MICHAEL

Nothing, I don't know.

REBECCA

Okay, well, let me know if you figure something out.

MICHAEL

I made a few mistakes. Everyone makes a few mistakes. It's not a big deal.

ROBERT

My girlfriend says you've been harassing her.

MICHAEL

No, I don't think that's what I was doing.

ROBERT

Well she thinks differently. Stay away from her.

MICHAEL

Okay. That's reasonable.

ROBERT

You're a good guy, don't get me wrong. She just gets a little uncomfortable sometimes with the way you act sometimes. Don't ask me what it is.

MICHAEL

Sure.

ROBERT

When she's ready to talk to you again, I'm sure she'll let you know.

MICHAEL

Yeah, thank you.

KATHRYN

So what were some of your achievements in college? Were you a part of any groups? Did you run any student publications?

MICHAEL

I'm sure I must have done something.

KATHRYN

Very good. Keep thinking about it.

MICHAEL

It all seems like a blur really.

LESLIE

So what are you doing now?

MICHAEL

Oh you know, I just moved up here

and I'm living with my aunt for now
until I figure out what I'm doing,
did you want another cup of coffee?

LESLIE
I've still got some.

MICHAEL
Okay yeah. I guess I do too.

LESLIE
You haven't even started drinking
it yet.

MICHAEL
Is that right? Huh, that's really
interesting.

LESLIE
What is?

MICHAEL
I'm sorry?

LESLIE
You said something was interesting?

MICHAEL
Oh right, that's true.

LESLIE
What is?

MICHAEL
Do you think so?

LESLIE
Are you okay?

MICHAEL
No, I mean yes. I'm sorry. I'm
really happy to meet you. Thank
you .

LESLIE
Why are you happy to meet me?

MICHAEL
You are LesBot1111, right?

LESLIE
No, you're talking to the right
person. I'm Leslie, you're Michael.
Nice to meet you.

MICHAEL

Great, thank you, I don't know anything about dating, not that this is a date per se, I don't know what counts as what or what difference it makes, I'm sorry, I don't know how anything works.

LESLIE

I can tell.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

LESLIE

So what did you want to do?

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

LESLIE

You sent me a message. I responded to it and agreed to meet up with you. So what do you want to do?

MICHAEL

Can I talk about that here?

LESLIE

What?

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, I just didn't want to be obscene in public.

LESLIE

Did you want something obscene?

MICHAEL

No. I mean. I don't know if obscene is the right word.

LESLIE

Oh my god, you're ridiculous.

MICHAEL

In a good way?

LESLIE

It's okay. Here's what's up. If you can tell me what you're interested in, I can tell you if it's something I'm interested in too. Or I can just hit you with everything

in my house and see how much you can take. How does that sound?

MICHAEL

I don't know.

LESLIE

You don't know?

MICHAEL

No, sorry. I do. That sounds good.

LESLIE

Okay.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

KATHRYN

So how's the job search going?

MICHAEL

Yeah, it's going all right. I had an interview today.

KATHRYN

Oh? For what?

MICHAEL

It's kind of an entry level position.

KATHRYN

With which organization?

MICHAEL

Oh I'm not entirely sure. I think it has something to do with mental health.

KATHRYN

You already had the interview and you don't know?

MICHAEL

I don't know if it's that simple. I think they're kind of new.

KATHRYN

So how did it go? Did you present yourself well? Is that what you wore?

MICHAEL

No. No. I. I changed when I got home.

KATHRYN

What did you talk about if you didn't know about them? I have a few friends in medical non-profits; I could probably find out more about them if you, hm, can find the name of the organization.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I'll look into that.

KATHRYN

Oh, and our friend Gerard down the street is having a pool party next Saturday for the neighborhood if you're interested.

MICHAEL

Oh, no thank you. I don't know how to swim.

KATHRYN

Really? They didn't make you learn at Oberlin?

MICHAEL

No. I think that's just an ivy league thing. I can't even stick my face in water.

KATHRYN

Why not? Do you melt?

MICHAEL

I don't know. It's an anxiety thing.

KATHRYN

Do you have anxiety?

MICHAEL

I guess I've not been diagnosed.

KATHRYN

I see. Well let me know if you change your mind.

MICHAEL

Thank you. I'm meeting up with a friend on Saturday, I think.

KATHRYN

Sure, there's no obligation.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

LESLIE

So I told my roommates that not to worry about any noises you make, so feel free to scream as loud as you want. Nobody will come to save you.

MICHAEL

Oh. Great.

STACY

Oh, is this the guy?

LESLIE

Yeah, he's my guinea pig. We're going to run some tests on him.

STACY

Hm. Leslie says you went to Oberlin?

MICHAEL

Yeah. A little.

STACY

When were you there?

MICHAEL

A couple of years ago.

STACY

Did you know my friend Ping? He was there a couple of years ago.

MICHAEL

I um. I didn't really know anyone. I was kind of a. I don't know what I was.

STACY

What was your major?

MICHAEL

Creative writing. You know, I majored in what I thought was important.

STACY

So, you chose that instead of,

sociology or gender studies or science? How's that working out?

MICHAEL

You know, it's. I don't know.

STACY

Have you published anything? What do you write?

KIRK

Aw sick, is this the guy?

LESLIE

Yeah, that's him.

KIRK

Ha ha. High five.

MICHAEL

Wait, what does that mean?

KIRK

We were talking about patriarchy and like, taking revenge on it, and Leslie said she found like, a great sample of white male privilege that she's just, going to beat the shit out of.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

KIRK

That's you!

MICHAEL

Oh. I see.

LESLIE

This is all part of it.

MICHAEL

You know, I'm Chinese, too.

LESLIE

Are you?

MICHAEL

If I was as black as I am Chinese, I'd be black.

STACY

That doesn't mean anything. You

didn't answer my question.

MICHAEL

Oh. Um. Poetry, mainly.

STACY

What kind of poetry?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Language poetry.

STACY

Oh, you like that modern shit.

MICHAEL

I don't know.

LESLIE

Alright. I think he's had enough. What I want you to do now, is go upstairs, the first door on the right, go in there, take off your clothes, all of them, and stand in the corner until I come in. I'm going to gather some materials. We clear?

MICHAEL

Sure, yeah. I think so.

STACY

Oh my god. Where did you find this guy?

LESLIE

He messaged me! Do you want to see his profile. It's ridiculous.

STACY

Nah, I've got better things to do. We're trying to get our newsletter out by May.

LIA

So Michael, what's going on here?

MICHAEL

Well. I'm not sure how to describe it accurately.

LIA

I can't believe you're doing this before you've even found a job or a place to live on your own. I had no

idea you were so hedonistic.

MICHAEL

Do you think it's hedonism? I'd call it asceticism. I'm abluting my sins.

LIA

You certainly do mark up. Your skin is so pale.

LESLIE

Did you say something?

MICHAEL

No, sorry, I was just thinking.

LESLIE

Anything you want to share with the class?

MICHAEL

No, sorry. This is just, a new experience for me.

LESLIE

You're doing pretty well. You're a real pig for pain, you know that?

MICHAEL

Is that good?

LESLIE

It's very impressive. I didn't think you'd be able to take so much. You have hidden talents.

MICHAEL

Great.

LESLIE

Some friends are I are starting something you might be interested in. We call it "The Men's Improvement Society."

MICHAEL

Oh. Okay.

LESLIE

So there's three of us, three women of color, and we each have our own thing. Our goal is to reform pathetic men and turn them into

something better.

MICHAEL

That sounds fun. I could use some improvement.

LESLIE

I have to run it past the other two first. And there is a formal application process. Do you have a better picture of yourself? One less, douchy?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Maybe.

LESLIE

Well. Work on it. And like, rewrite your whole thing. You don't come off well, and you know, they're not going to want to waste their time on a lost cause. A challenge is one thing, but you've got to show some potential.

MICHAEL

Of course.

LESLIE

Okay great. I'll get you some details later. How do you feel? Do you want a little revenge?

MICHAEL

I don't know.

LESLIE

Well this is your last chance. Just over the knee, hands only, no funny business.

MICHAEL

Of course.

LESLIE

Did you just try to kiss me?

MICHAEL

Sorry.

LESLIE

What the hell man? What do you think this is?

MICHAEL

I'm sorry.

LESLIE

Ask first. Jesus.

KATHRYN

It's really a shame you weren't able to attend Gerard's party. There were a lot of good networking opportunities there.

LIA

Yeah, I would have liked to have gone. Maybe next time.

KATHRYN

Is your voice okay?

MICHAEL

Oh yeah, sorry. I think I'll have some tea.

KATHRYN

The kettle just boiled.

MICHAEL

Great.

KATHRYN

Did you hurt yourself? You're walking funny.

MICHAEL

Oh no, really, I'm fine.

KATHRYN

Do you need to see a doctor?

MICHAEL

No, leave me alone!

KATHRYN

Huh. Okay then.

MICHAEL

I'm very sorry.

KATHRYN

I don't know how comfortable I am having you in my house if you're going to have these outbursts.

LIA

I'm just tired. Forgive me. I'm just going to have some tea and go to sleep.

LESLIE

Who are you talking to?

MICHAEL

No one, no one.

LESLIE

We'll let you know what's going on next week. Quick question. Have you ever been penetrated anally?

MICHAEL

Um, no.

KATHRYN

No to what?

MICHAEL

I just need to go to sleep. Let's talk about the future later.

MICHAEL

Alright, well. That's about all the time we have today, we're going to try and finish that story next week. Quick before we go, there's one thing we like to do with all our guests, this is the nothing five. I'm just going to list five categories, and you just tell me, something you have no opinion about. Just completely neutral.

LIA

Okay.

MICHAEL

So first, music.

LIA

So not something I like, not something I hate, just.

MICHAEL

Nothing.

LIA

Okay. Um. Moby. Wait no. Radiohead.
Oh! Reba McEntire.

MICHAEL

Okay great. Try to just do one
answer. Next, Food.

LIA

I don't know. Rice? Plain rice.

MICHAEL

Do you want to say anything more
about that?

LIA

It's a staple.

MICHAEL

Yeah, all over the world.

LIA

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Okay, film or television. Media.

LIA

So something I would turn on in the
background and not need to look at
or pay attention to.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

LIA

Maybe like a Pixar something? I
really don't give a shit about
Pixar movies.

MICHAEL

What, those are really good.

LIA

Sorry, is that controversial? I
just don't care.

MICHAEL

I thought you liked animation. I'd
like to see you do better.

LIA

You don't need to take it
personally.

MICHAEL

Alright. Books.

LIA

Harry Potter?

MICHAEL

So like, the best selling series of the last half century?

LIA

I guess that's what I'm saying, yes.

MICHAEL

You're so arrogant.

LIA

I don't hate them. They're just not interesting to me.

MICHAEL

You like the Oz books. They're so dumb.

LIA

It's like Star Wars, you know? If you're not into it when you're eight, it's too late.

MICHAEL

Okay, miscellaneous.

LIA

What is there. Being alive, I guess. Having people who care about you. Taking part in the give and take with people who are looking for reasons to care about you, or to not care, figuring out what the right answer is, how you're supposed to act, and then doing that.

MICHAEL

So, choreography.

LIA

Sure, choreography.

MICHAEL

Alright, and that's our show. Join us again next week, if you want to, no one would blame you if you

didn't. My name is Michael Liam
Abbott. I am nothing. I don't
exist. And that's all I ever
wanted. Take care. Goodbye.

LIA

Oh, and listen to my show, Tales of
Insecurity, for the end of that
last story, next week.

MICHAEL

Sure, go ahead and plug your shit.

LIA

That's it, thanks!

Do you think anyone will notice when we're gone?
Do you think anyone will notice when we're gone?
We've been here so long
Inside us all along
Do you think if we ever died we'd ever notice something's wrong?

Do you think anyone will notice when we're gone?
Could you pass me that banana? No not that one. The good one.
Do you think we will have the strength to carry on?
Thank you. I like them a little underripe.
With our dying breath
We could defy our death
Or maybe we help to fertilize the lawn

What are you working on there, a song?
Oh nice, that'll give you permanence and relevance
In a cold empty universe that eventually recedes into
Absolute indifference, a level playing field at last
In the end, when everything is evenly distributed
Into atoms and quarks, to eves and nights
That go on forever, that'll be great.

Right on.

We can't even comprehend the depths of our thoughts
Or express them or have them and we think we forgot
What we were working on here and why we were working
When we spent so many years feeling, listening, lurking
In the depths of our thoughts, what were we doing
What are we doing, it must have had some importance
Or else this whole business just rots here in poor taste
What are we doing what are we doing?
Do you think anyone will notice when we're gone?
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