

**Endings
and the Tricky Problem
with Beginnings**

1

Endings

School started and ended like I knew that it would, but nothing quite prepared me for graduation. The odd mixture of emotion has left a lasting paralysis on my mind, I feel excited and prideful with the idea of receiving my degree, but dread leaving the place I spent four years actively and inactively curating my identity. I am happy to be done, but sad to leave. Now I realize I was given a teaser of this sentiment, at the end of high school, but only this time I am all too aware of the uncertainty towards which time pushes me. And that's the silly thing with endings, I eagerly strive towards them, and then feel a sense of loss when I achieve them.

What's really Ending?

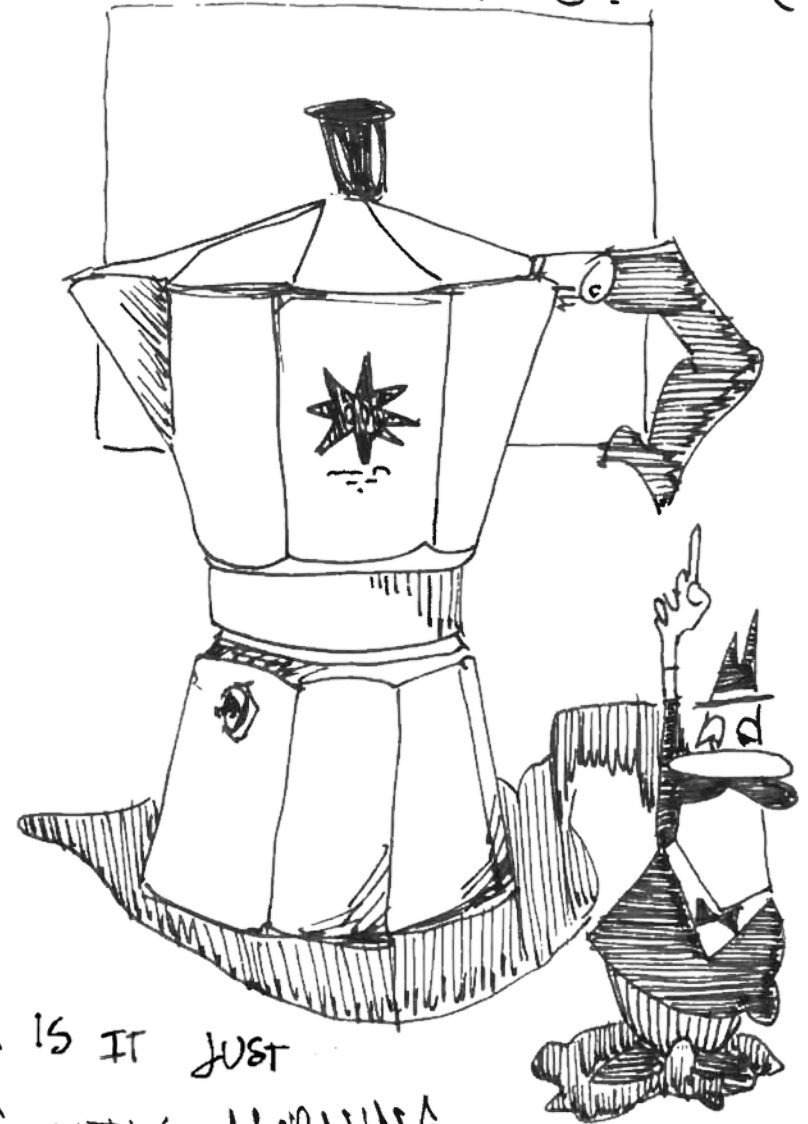
Why is that?

What am I losing?

And what is really ending?

In some superficial sense, I have come to realize that my degree is only a representation of the supposedly educated thing I've become. A marker, a scarlet letter of education. The attainment of my degree was the goal to justify my means, it was a reason to endure long and annoying assignments, morning classes, and the unavoidable sinkhole of money. But the gym-rats and I both understand the value of suffering for a why, with a goal in mind, and towards an end. I love the process because beginnings are hard and endings are hard too. There is comfort and security in the process and this is what I find hard to give up. In graduating, I am confronted with the end of a process, the end of the comfort I found in being an undergrad student. Naturally, the question is "now what?" How do I find my way into the middle of another justifiable process? In other words, how do I begin?

I WONDER SOMETIMES IF I
REALLY EVEN LIKE THE TASTE
OF COFFEE?



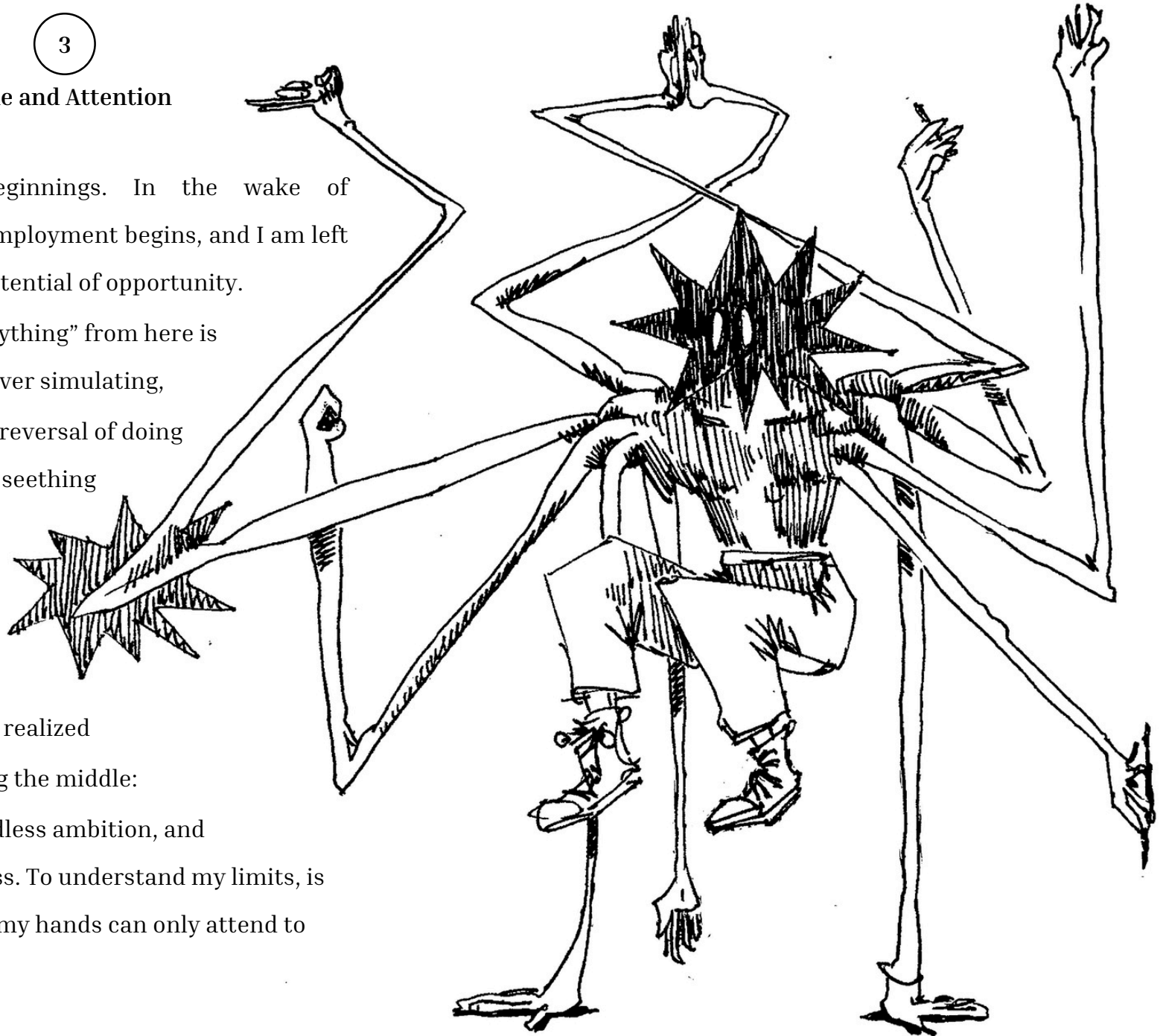
OR IS IT JUST
MY LITTLE MORNING
RITUAL...

Time and Attention

Endings bring beginnings. In the wake of undergrad, my unemployment begins, and I am left with the dizzying potential of opportunity.

Being able to do “anything” from here is incomputable and over stimulating, but the reactionary reversal of doing nothing only brings seething dissatisfaction.

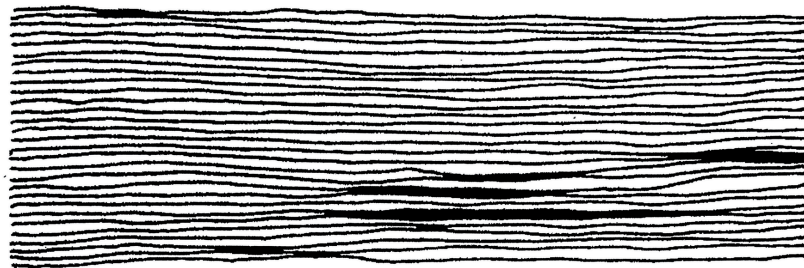
I find myself oscillating between the two, and in doing so, I’ve realized the value of treading the middle: some balance of endless ambition, and regenerative laziness. To understand my limits, is to realize that both my hands can only attend to one thing at a time.



The Land of Nowhere

Right now, I'm nowhere, school has ended and nothing has begun. I am hanging in pre-career purgatory. Existing in this space where the youth of school is fading behind me, but I don't seem to be moving. The ground is dried up because I stopped watering the ideas I had as a child. The air is dark and blurry, but that may just be my eyes, they've been worn down from the harsh blue light I use to try to escape this place. There is nothing here, and it exists nowhere, except in the emptiness of my mind. A land of nowhere.

I'm scared of the pressure that follows potential, and I avoid the discomfort of fear, and my personal land of nowhere expands. I try to do all the things I think I should, all the things that will set me up for a good life, but the land of nowhere only expands. So I accept it, oh well, I'll take a job with that obscure uncle and have a beer, I'll set up my lawn chair in the comfortable nothing.



Intention and Apathy

How do I escape my land of nowhere?

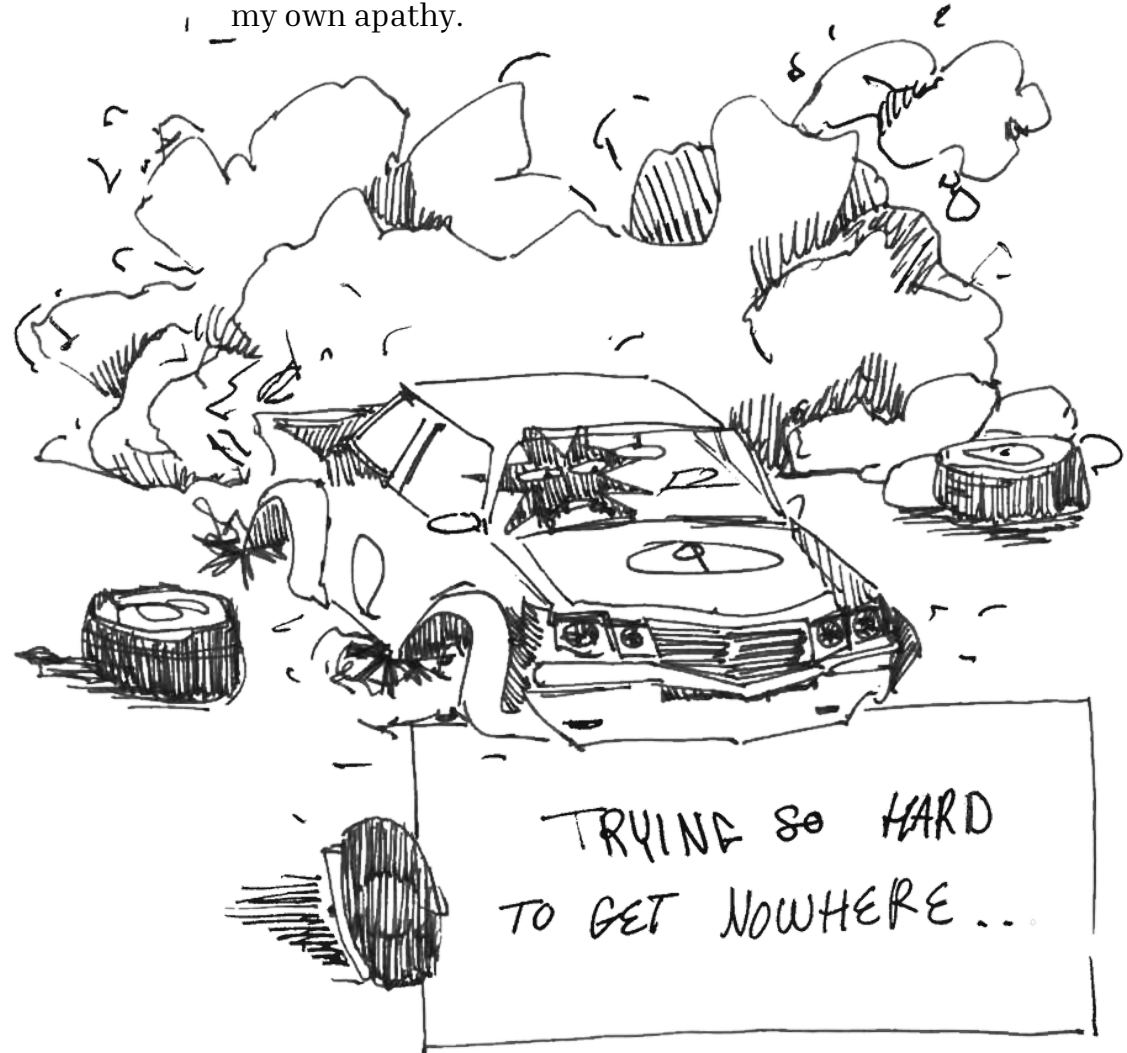
How do I begin?

The thing is, beginnings require intention, but in the nowhere of my frantic and ever searching mind there is only flaccid acceptance. Acceptance of the boredom, bureaucracy, and belligerence that tragically comforts me. How do I begin from the canyon of my mind, especially when grasping at every little twig is only tiring and no more progressive?

"Stop then,"

I say to myself, focus on one thing at a time. I have always found this incurably difficult. Focusing entirely on the nothing, instead of fighting or using my acceptance as a defense, I see the absent space more clearly.

- By taking inventory of the lack, my desires are given space to enter humbly. The constant pressure I put on myself to be something, live to the fullest, and escape the land of nowhere only hides my personal desires further in the blurry darkness. Realizing fully the land of nowhere, shows me what is there. And so, intention must begin with the realization of my own apathy.



Beginnings

As we reach the end of things, we also draw closer to the beginning of something else. But beginnings are difficult, we expect them to be swift and immediate, but they aren't. They're slow and antagonizing, just like me. I cling to the familiar and resent the things that will inevitably change. When the pain of the ending is still fresh, the change kicks dirt in my eyes, and in the clarity that is left when the pain and the dust both settle, we humbly begin.

