

This is Not Going to be a Bad Trip

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It was as if a firecracker went off in my brain. Sudden, powerful and unexpected—even though I was holding the proverbial thing in my hand before it exploded. It was the most THC I'd ever had in my system. To get an equivalent amount through smoking would have long since put me to sleep; with the innocuous-looking brownies, I never got the chance to be tired.

Maddy was scared by how powerful it was, since it was far beyond anything she'd experienced. After giving honor to the porcelain throne, she returned to the bedroom and slept. As I heard her steady breathing I began to realize just how stoned I was: really, really, really. My mind was in utter chaos, I was seeing trails, and paranoia was setting in. I knew that none of what I was thinking or feeling was real. I was under the influence of a very powerful drug--well, a very large quantity of an otherwise manageable substance--and it would pass. Everything was going to be okay. I simply had to keep it together. This was not going to be a bad trip.

I wanted to sleep, but I'd never felt less like sleeping in my life. Besides, it wasn't even 8pm. Hooray for small miracles, since the more time I had to ride it out, the better. The fact was, I had to go to work the next morning. Period. Even if I was up all night tripping my brains out, which certainly seemed likely. Hell, not only did I have to go to work the next day, I had an electrolysis appointment afterwards. The next 24 hours were going to be very long, and there wasn't a thing I could do about it.

what if i never come down? There's always that bit of panic when a drug experience is less than pleasant. Again, no matter how much you understand intellectually what's happening, that fear can still crop up. I was able to talk that one back down: you are merely a drug-induced figment of my imagination. *tomorrow you'll be out of my system. fuck you.* Unfortunately, it was quickly replaced by a deeper, darker and

more idiosyncratic fear: *you'll never make it, you know. you'll never fool anyone. you'll never pass, you'll never be taken seriously. how could you possibly expect otherwise? have you looked at yourself lately? do you realize what others see, how foolish you appear? give up. you haven't got a chance. even if you weren't too arrogant to believe in prayer, you wouldn't have one of those, either.* That one was harder to make go away.

I decided to follow her lead, to force as much of it out of my body as I could. After all, isn't that what vomiting is for? I stumbled into the bathroom, put a towel down in front of the toilet so I wouldn't be kneeling in scattered cat sand, and leaned in. Closed my eyes. Opened my mouth wide. Nothing. I was queasy, but nothing would budge. The space inside my eyelids started to flash and pulsate, as though trying to distract me. No. I opened my eyes, reminded myself of where I was and what I was doing. *this is not going to be a bad trip*, I told myself. *this is not going to be a bad trip.*

I leaned in again, closed my eyes, tried to ignore the flashes and patterns of the fireworks inside my head, and stuck my finger down the gullet. Closer, closer. It's tough, y'know. The gag reflex is well-guarded for a reason, and despite my tendency to romanticize the more drastic causes of weight loss (such as my not-so-secret love of heroin chic), I've never been a serious candidate for bulimia. The last few times I tried to induce vomiting I failed, though this time I knew I had to.

My gag reflex was stirring, but nothing was coming up. I could feel every single muscle, my throat opening up, readying itself for the outpouring of what I imagined would be mostly brownish puke. My body felt like it was inverting itself into the opening at the back of my mouth, as though my insides would be sucked through it like a black hole, with ripples running through my body like tremors, everything working towards the single goal of evacuating the substance which I should have been more careful with in the first place. My brain was happily providing the internal visual pyrotechnics in anticipation of the very external biological show about to happen.

Except it didn't. I slumped down next to the toilet, resigning myself to the fact that I was stuck with it for as long as it wanted to be with me. "This," I reminded myself, "is not going to be a bad trip."

I got up and walked into the living room. The new xmas lights we'd put up cast it in a greenish-blue glow which I hadn't yet become accustomed to. I looked around, took everything in, acknowledged my surroundings. This is my home. I'm as safe here as I've ever been anywhere. Certainly I've lived here longer than I've lived anywhere else in the last seventeen years. I've survived a lot, here; this, this is nothing. This, from an endurance point of view, is a cakewalk.

I sat at the computer. Read some email, most of it making no sense, and I realized it was all beyond me. It took very little for my mind to wander—well, not so much wander as scamper off in a random direction like the insane, chattering little monkey it was.

I went back into the bedroom and lay down. She was still very much asleep. Eventually, I joined her.



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