



LANZAROTE

# FOREWARD

I just got back to America after spending 9 months on an island just off the coast of Africa. Living as a bit of an isolationist left me time to work on my writing as well as numerous other passion projects. Included are essays, a couple of short stories, photos, etc. Also inside are general life updates because I know I'm terrible at keeping in touch and somehow am continuously getting worse. Hope you like it, and if you don't please don't tell me. Also sorry for any typos, I'm incapable of self editing.

# Catching up



If you didn't know, I spent the last 8 or so months living in a Spanish island off the coast of Africa called Lanzarote. I ended up here because I didn't want to get a full time NYC job immediately after graduating. Dillon told me he was applying to this program where you teach English to Spanish children for a year. In my head we would do this together, but alas I ended up being placed on an island and he ended up in a pueblo outside of Valencia.

And yet I persevered, bravely choosing to fuck off on a warm island for a year by myself. I was supposed to live with a girl I met on Facebook from Ohio who flew to the island and signed a lease with me. 4 days later, she sat me down to tell me how she missed home too much and had already booked a flight back. She straight up said she couldn't bear missing her little sister's dance recitals. After already buying a flight and finding a roommate. And getting on a plane. And signing a lease! She promised that she would still pay rent after she left until I found a new roommate, but low and behold the next month when I asked her to pay her rent she refused to respond until I started threatening her and then still didn't pay her rent. Any who, that's how I learned to never trust people from Facebook or Ohio.

The island, Lanzarote, is completely volcanic and only has palm trees with almost no naturally growing flora. It's is almost a 4th covered by their National Park, Timanfaya, which I could see when I walked outside of the school I was in. Such a surreal experience to sit in a coffee shop and stare directly at a volcano. I didn't get a car when I was there and as I was spoiled by the Northeast Corridor's public transportation, I foolishly thought a small island with poor infrastructure would be the same. Instead I took the bus everywhere, which was often an hour or so delayed, but even the half hour walk to the bus station was so beautiful I couldn't be all that mad. I've never seen a more stunning sunrise than on this little island, the whole sky would turn red and bleed colors.

Lanzarote also had pretty strict aesthetic regulations, due to the influence of the most prominent artist César Manrique, who I will talk more about later. There were a few buildings scattered around that were designed by him, white and built into caves with bright blue pools to match. All the houses on the island were painted white with green accents. The only city, which I lived in, was more lax on the regulation, a lot of ugly buildings near me but a twenty minute walk and they were all restored to matching. César Manrique's influence was probably the most interesting cultural aspect to me. One man was able to craft his home island into a vision that he alone saw. Manrique wanted to keep the island from massive and impersonal tourism conglomerates but in turn created beautiful structures that tourists flock to. A sad irony to be sure.

My absolute favorite part of the island was the little surf town called Famara. It was the only place where you could escape the invasion of British and Irish tourists who were spending their pension money with gusto. The whole beach was covered in dunes and a massive cliff loomed over it. Truly no photo could do this place justice, I thought it was one of the most breathtaking places that I had ever been. Any chance I could I went out there though the bus system only went twice a day sometimes not at all. It was here I tried surfing, which I was much worse at than I expected. In my defense, Famara is where all the Spanish professional surfers go and is therefore not all that beginner friendly.

I also tried scuba diving while I was there, very scary in the beginning. They make you breath through the tube before

you go down but when you're above water it just feels like you can't pull enough air through your lungs. Eventually when you get deeper in the water and flip over to your stomach it becomes much more comfortable. Saw some very cool fish while diving around, even some little seahorses which are very strange in person. I think I would do it again but not more than maybe 15 meters in depth, after that it gets dark and scary. I'm already afraid of the ocean so I don't need any actual reasons.

The island is Spanish although depending on where you are it might be confused for a British colony. The funniest part of living here was going to the airport and seeing 60 year old British men who have to explain to their office why they have white sunglass tan lines on their tomato red face. I may not tan amazingly but I thank God for not letting me tan like an Englishman on holiday. The Spanish is quite different than mainland Spain, lacking the lisp and leaning towards Cuban and Latin American. For example, instead of "autobús" they say "guagua" pronounced wawa which made me feel right at home. I think the people are also much more relaxed than the mainland, like any island's inhabitants. Nothing was ever open when you needed it to be and anything you wanted to get done took minimum 3 weeks- with a massive amount of effort at that.

From what everyone living there says, the overcrowding of tourists is the biggest problem facing the island. A population of only 150,000 cannot possibly support 3.5 million tourists annually. The single lane highway that runs down the island is bumper to bumper with rental cars. But the largest problem from tourists is lack of housing. I'm shocked I found an apartment as easily as I did because the vast majority of people have enormous trouble. I think Brexit staved it off for a couple of years as Brits were pushed out of the housing market but the Germans and Italians quickly took up the space. Spaniards who own houses on the island also refuse to do long term rentals, instead reserving their spare houses for airBnB and other short term rentals. A woman I tutored in English had 3 houses and would not rent out any of them to a long term tenant. The whole island really needs regulations on how many short term rental homes you can own because life long residents are being pushed out. A teacher at my school had to move out every year because his landlord wouldn't let him stay in the summer during peak tourism season.

Although my time here ended more abruptly than I would have liked, I'm extremely grateful that I did it. Even just proving to myself that I'm able to move to a place where I don't know anyone and have a language barrier with the majority of people was extremely rewarding. At times it was deeply sad, missing Thanksgiving and living alone without a community was hard. At one point I thought I had bedbugs and completely spiraled, turns out I just had mosquito bites but it was a rough 3 days. I missed my friends, my old apartment, and had general nostalgia for my time living in NYC. But instead I got to make new friends and found culture that excited me just as much as things in America had. I found the perfect local coffee shop, the best beaches, a Spanish teacher that always tells me I look like Miley Cyrus. Forged a life somewhere completely foreign to me which sappily is an experience that will shape who I am in the future.







# WHY DO WE DRESS WORSE IN THE HEAT?

7 months ago I moved from NYC to a tiny Spanish island just off the coast of Africa. Don't think Ibiza think the Canaries but don't think the one you actually know. I moved completely sight unseen, save a google or 2 to make sure the murders per capita were within my range.

When I first began packing I had the fantasy of what I thought it would be like. Running every morning, fulfilling but manageable work during the day, and of course cocktails with a surfer of my choice in a dress inappropriate for anywhere but scalding heat. In my daydreams I didn't realize that not only would this require a completely different island but also a complete change in personality.

But these ideas shaped the way I packed. So instead of reasonable clothing for spending every day in a school with children, I packed my small collection of mid tier designer clothes. The Issey Miyake skirt I bought on Depop was obviously packed first. I've probably worn this skirt once while here. Jil Sander leather slides, again found on Depop, were then added. Why would I think leather slides around sand and salt water would make sense? They haven't left my apartment save the balcony. My next addition were Ganni sandals with an impractically high platform. Bought on Vestair, I adore them but they fall off while walking every 5 seconds and I live here without a car. After one walk to the beach I left them rotting near the door.

Instead, almost daily, I wear years old tank tops my mom bought at the Gap, a pair of jeans I packed just in case, and sneakers that are practically falling apart.

What happened along the way? Sure I was never the biggest fashion icon, but I got compliments on my clothes. Not to brag but for NYU's engineering school I was a shoe in for best dressed. Daily jeans and tank top would've been an insult to the vibe I was curating.

Mostly it's just hot and no one else around me gives a fuck.

My first couple of weeks I promise I tried. Steamed linen pants, pastel shirts, even a sundress or two. Exactly what I thought people living on an island would be in. But looking around I shockingly had the best outfits at work.

When people think Spain or other European Mediterranean counties like Italy, they think about better fashion, leather goods, and reputable tailors. About how much better they dress than in America. Sure maybe Madrid, Milan, and Barcelona. But venture much further than that and it's mostly Zara blazers and COS sweaters. Even further and you get to where I'm living- where everyone stays in Bermuda shorts and crop tops.

The second week I was here, school was canceled for 3 days because of excessive heat. I then had to walk 30 minutes through this excessive heat in a full length skirt to the nearest bus stop. In what world was I going to dare to this again.

So skirts were officially out.

A couple of weeks later, still undeterred in pursuit of my island dreams, I pulled out a long cream dress. What I failed to remember is that I was assigned for the day in a 2nd grade class. Kids love crayons, who knew. Kids also don't hold clothing in high regard unlike I tend to. So I can't blame the little girl for accidentally scribbling on my dress, really it was just a difference of opinion.

Regardless, nice dresses and light colors were gone.

Even in my free time, my sense of style suffered. When going out, something that was a massive part of my life in NYC I would wear dark colors often sheer clothing with heavy jewelry. Here though, there isn't a scene for everyone and the queer techno events where I spent every weekend are here a long lost memory. Instead there are shitty reggaeton clubs filled with 50 year old island natives or 19 year old British tourists. Both aren't really my demographics so I somehow spent even less time getting ready here then back at home. Instead all my dark going out cloths lie untouched.

Embarrassingly that's a good 3/4th of my wardrobe that's no longer wearable.

Slowly this happened with all my island dream or even regular clothing. It was all whittled down to basic tees and shorts bought when I was 17.

So why do I dress worse? I see no reason to dress better.

There's moments of hope here and there though. I found the 'cool' coffeeshop here and while it's only a 5 minute walk I could do in my pajamas, I force myself to put on something at least half self respecting. Turns out one of my greatest motivating factors is mildly judgmental 27 year olds. I have to thank them though, the forcible dressing is making me feel myself again.





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ANNA KARENINA

4 years ago I bought this book, and for 4 years it has sat on my shelf completely untouched. Russian lit is one if those things which seems like a good idea at the bookstore but in practice I just can't force myself to read. Finally after getting back to America and succumbing to complete boredom, I opened it. Shockingly, I actually enjoyed it. Considering it covered years of time, I actually did not find the 800 pages to be completely overwhelming.

Also who doesn't love a novel where a troubled female protagonist kills herself at the end. Which sorry spoiler I suppose but it's also 150 years old so I don't feel bad. Now it's Russian literature summer and I'm halfway through The Brother's Karamazov. 7/10

DANTE'S INFERNO

Also another one that has been on my list for years but I never got around to. Like Ovid's Metamorphoses it's the basis for so much mythology that pop culture relies so heavily upon. While I think hell is briefly described in the Bible, the Inferno is where most people get their references from.

Also Ciacco is the sinner in hell for gluttony which is what my short story is somewhat based off of.

7/10 although rating something this old and important feels sacrilegious.

EAST OF EDEN

First Steinbeck book I've read. I loved this book so much I could not put it down for 2 weeks until I burned through the 600 pages. If nothing else, being forced to go to church as a child made me much more adept at understanding religious allegory. Which is obscenely necessary to get through this book. Although Steinbeck eventually hand holds the reader through the Cain and Abel stuff.

After long consideration I've decided to add this book to one of my all time favorites. 10/10

THE LEOPARD

Dillon gave me this book before leaving NYC so had not a clue what it was beforehand. Mostly it's a romance told through the eyes of an aging aristocrat with the backdrop of Italian modernization. I found the historical pieces incredibly fascinating as well as the narration.

Favorite quote: "Flames for a year, ash for thirty"

8/10

HONORABLE MENTIONS: JUST KIDS, ON THE ROAD, THE METAMORPHOSIS

BOOK LIST



WOULD ANYONE JOIN A BOOK CLUB IF I STARTED ONE? I'M GAUGING INTEREST



# CIACCO

## Short Fiction

Celia was born gasping and then gulping at the air.

Unlike the other children, she didn't stop when she was capable of breathing normally but swallowed like the oxygen was about to disappear. When Celia's mother first breastfed her, she refused to unlatch, suckling for every last drop until she was forcefully pulled away.

As she grew this continued, she would endlessly indulge in whatever was directly in front until someone else took it away. Her parents noticed something was wrong immediately after her birth and went to great lengths to keep the impulses in check. Her morning meal at 5 years old was as follows: 6 strawberries, a yogurt, a small omelet with ham and cheese and 8 oz of water put on the placemat directly in front of her. All cabinets were locked and no one was allowed to eat in the same room as Celia.

For years this continued with her parents able to keep Celia from harm by meticulously keeping track of anything put in front of her. One slip up occurred when she was 7, a cousin, not knowing the severity of her condition, left a raw chicken on the counter for what was meant to be a quick trip to the bathroom. Celia wandered into the kitchen and devoured the entire thing. She gagged at every bite of raw meat but continued shoving it in, gnawing at the bones until her mother discovered her minutes later.

Any art material had to be carefully controlled, given a box of crayons, Celia would sit and draw until the last one was an unusable numb and her hands were raw. A whole tube of paint would be spread onto a single canvas, torn off bristles scattered throughout. Thinking a doll would be safe from her condition, she was given a Barbie and allowed unsupervised access for her birthday. The next morning, this privilege had to be revoked as Celia's bloodshot eyes and the doll's messy haircut revealed she hadn't slept since her and the doll's introduction.

Wanting to give her a normal life, Celia was sent to a regular school to study, teachers had strict instructions to have everything under lock and key. Unsurprisingly, friends were few and far between; more than a few had their lunch eaten and markers bled dry. She had been invited to only one birthday party, another mother had taken pity on the lonely girl, and Celia was lectured for weeks beforehand about how she needed to behave. On the day of the party her parents created a shift schedule to make sure there was always someone watching every movement. The first three hours flew seamlessly enough until an unforeseen bathroom break left an unsupervised Celia alone with presents

and a beautifully iced cake. Both soon opened or eaten, the party quickly dispersed with a crying birthday boy and a remorseful Celia remaining.

As Celia became a young adolescent, she was keenly aware of the differences she had with the other students and increasingly noticed their distance each time she used another's eraser to shreds. The birthday party incident years ago had not only cemented her oddities in the social hierarchy but revealed to Celia the emotional destruction her illness could cause. She herself could not understand her affliction, she wished desperately to be able to stop her urges and fit in with the rest of her classmates and yet her brain forced indulgence. Even her parents showed wear in the years of caring for her; at one time a manageable task, each year Celia became harder to control, through strength and cunningness.

People could never understand her disorder, Celia least of all. The only way she could describe her impulses was like a man had her brain tied around a rope and dragged her towards the nearest vice. The only time she had a moment's peace was when he would switch directions and ground his feet once more. If Celia chose to try and free her brain from him she would land face first in the nearest cake, chicken, or dozen of boiled eggs.

Teenage years were the closest she felt to normality with her peers. Awash with hormones and angst, they too indulged in their urges, taste testing drugs and sampling kisses. Some of the other girls now restricted their diets too, counted their fruits and weighed their chicken just as Celia had been eating her entire life. One of her first real friends was a girl named Lola. At lunch, and at an arm's distance, they would eat their salad with 30 spinach leaves, 6 strips of chicken, a half tablespoon of feta cheese, 8 croutons, and 3/4 tablespoon of an unknown dressing. Lola was the first one to invite her out without her parents, a movie. A perfect outing with a definite end time. Her parents dropped her off and waited in the parking lot in case of a movie theater butter emergency, but Lola was the one who pulled her away from the popcorn.

Their hangouts became more frequent and less monitored. Celia's parents no longer loitered in a car outside and the two wandered around inseparably, mostly so Lola could control Celia if need be. At 16, Celia finally felt like she had some semblance of a normal teenage experience. They would wander around concerts, downing half empty bottles of beer and smoking dead cigarettes. Celia's first party ended with a hospital visit for alcohol poisoning, but 6 other girls from her class ended there for the same reason.

At this same party, Lola let Celia leave her side long enough for her to make out with the one boy in class that had ever shown any interest, and so began the indulgence in people.

For Celia, indulging in a person varied from the normal. With food or toys or books, the inanimate objects couldn't leave, a forced participant in Celia's disorder- people could. Whether after a month or a night together, sometimes even an hour in a club bathroom, a person could pull away. For the first time, Celia felt some semblance of control, while she couldn't

leave a person herself, she became an expert in choosing people that would leave her. The boy at the party wouldn't say hi to her in school the next day, giving Celia a perfect prototype of who to seek out.

Lola and Celia started spending nights out at clubs instead of high school basements. A high school crush was replaced with a revolving door of 25, 35, and the occasional 50 year old man. Lola seemed to be infatuated with what these men could provide: drugs, attention, the sense of maturity and erred on the side of caution with her promiscuity. Celia had no qualms about sex with these men, nor could she help herself if she had, and the promise of an end date was intoxicating. Occasionally, as often happens when they find a young enough woman, a man would try to cling on to her, refusing to leave after their mediocre orgasm. In these instances, Lola would provide Celia something she would normally be restrained from, forcing Celia's conquests to watch her devour a raw chicken or drink an entire bottle of olive oil. One particularly attached club promoter clung on until witnessing her eat a full roast pig, snout and all, at the barbecue he had begged her to come to.

Her reputation quickly preceded her and men now searched her out to waste a few hours together. They would ply her with meticulously measured drugs thinking her debauchery was rooted in a substance addiction and while she couldn't help but partake, it was completely unnecessary.

Her parents noticed her many disappearances, however, years of being forced authoritarians left them little room to care. Until her high school graduation, she was made to attend school but afterwards little was done to monitor her behavior. Even Lola, her current roommate, after years of spending their days together, wanted to move on. She no longer wanted to waste away at dive bars and skeezy houses, no longer wrote off Celia's behavior as teenage impulse but saw her now as a regular whore. As Lola refused to join her more and more, Celia's chaperones were now a revolving door of men.

Portions of drugs and alcohol were less monitored, more than once she had snorted enough coke to fuel a frat house, a mistake that could only be rectified by snorting the ketamine laying directly next to it. Sometimes her chaperones feigned worry, offering to call a medic or lazily bringing a glass of water. Celia could see the apathy of her new friends, and while they knew about her conditions, slip-ups were becoming increasingly more common.

Now 20, and in search of more reliable companion, Celia begged Lola to be set up with a friend of her new and seemingly stable boyfriend. Celia wanted the illusion of normalcy, a date without him knowing about her condition, free of any stigma. Restaurants were usually safe places for her, pre-portioned. Begrudgingly Lola obliged and the meet with this nice and normal finance boy was set.

The day soon arrived, Celia's mother even did her makeup for her, something she had never been able to for herself. For any unknowing eye, Celia had done it, she was by all appearances ordinary- at least for an afternoon.

The restaurant picked was a newly opened spot a 5 minutes walk from Lola and Celia's apartment. A short journey like this meant Celia could walk there without supervision, more likely than not without facing any complications. And after an uneventful journey, she arrived in front of a plain but kind looking man. Together they walked in blissfully unaware that this new restaurant just so happened to be a buffet.

Instantly upon entering, the imaginary man in Celia's head dragged her about the room-

First to the trays of pasta,

Then to the platter of sushi,

Up next was the pizza,

Then the fried chicken,

Fries,

Dumplings,

Burgers,

By time she made her way to dessert there was vomit covering her dress.

Slowly the bystanders came to their senses, the employees dragged her away from the plates, Celia's date backed outside horrified by what had just occurred. After an eternity of being held down by the employees, the EMT's finally arrived, outfitted with tranquilizers. Celia was sedated, like a wild animal. While she lie on the floor staring at the ceiling, shouting all around, she couldn't help but vomit once again. The sedation had taken its affect and there she stayed, choking on her own bile.







César  
Manrique  
Loved  
To Party





This whole island's aesthetics were created by the local and legendary painter César Manrique. After leaving the canary islands for art school in Madrid and then a brief but impactful stint in NYC, he returned back to Lanzarote at the same time tourism was beginning to spike. This alignment created the perfect environment for a multitalented artists to freely mold an entire island.

And while I there is so much to say about his impact on Lanzarote not only as a designer but an activist, I mostly want to talk about his houses. Because they're sick.

The first one, located in Haría, has been kept in the exact way Manrique left it when he died. The town itself is located far away from the main tourist hubs, the air too cool for vacationers and lacking a walkable beach. In the studio, there is a single shoe in the center of the room as if he will soon return to retrieve it. The paint cans are littered about, unordered in a way that seems like someone was just using them. The bathroom is lined with half empty perfumes waiting for the artist to give himself a spritz.

Visiting this house feels like an act of voyeurism, I half expected him to round a corner naked and yelp in surprise at all of the tourists invading his home. There are



towels laid out on the tanning chairs, surely for soon to be arriving guests. The guest bed is lazily made, the pool open and flip-flops strewn about.

The second of his homes is in Tahíche, more central to the island and more easily accessible. This one was the original houses of César Manrique, built in 1968. Now it serves as a museum to the artist, covered with art and photos, and mostly stripped of furniture. Even imagining it with its furnishings, this place feels less cozy than that of the one in Haría. Instead, really, it feels like a venue.

The pool downstairs, a beautiful white with bright blue water is waiting for someone to take a dip. Completely invisible from the outside world, diving nude feels the most appropriate but I'm sure the pool would accept a high waisted 70's bikini. In the surrounding patio live bright orange plastic chairs to contrast with the green palms. There also remains the home of transparent swing chairs with cushions the same color orange. There is such vibrance in the retro aesthetic here it's easy to imagine girls with big hair and smaller bathing suits lounging around the painter and friends.

Because the building was carved into the lava rock, there are winding passages that open into tiny caverns. Inside of these caverns sit long 70's style couches, inviting



someone to laze next to piles of cocaine that surely used to be there. These rooms are welcoming of debauchery with the dim and damp caves promising not to divulge your secrets. They explicitly told me nothing, but the ghosts of bodies once intertwined here remain imprinted in the cushions. Today, roped off from being sat in, the couches here still beckon guests to lie down, missing the parties thrown by their dearly departed master.

Maybe my imagination is running wild a bit, there's so much inspiration to work with but I know it's not that much of a stretch. César himself may be dead but the grandparents who used to attend his parties are certainly not. Many people that still live on this island have stories about the artist. My favorite was told to me



in Madrid after I mentioned I was living in Lanzarote. A proud grandson then regaled me with the tale about how his grandmother was from the Canaries and would often attend the infamous César Manrique parties. They were hardly a rarity, often were there people lounging in those inviting couches, hiding in each cavern and dipping in that pool. This grandmother still often mentions them, a signed photo by Manrique one of her most prized possessions.

Knowing the way the creator treated this place, it feels like a horrible crime that now it only exists as a quick walk through for tourists. Especially as César was always weary of the amount of them visiting the island. You can feel the vibrancy in the walls of this place, it begs for someone to return it to its former glory. Begs for debauchery and depravity. A museum about his art could be placed anywhere but this place feels much more special than that. It could be a safe haven for other artists and visionaries that inhabit the island, be used to foster the mind of the next great Lanzarote artist.

The home in Haría feels much more personal, a time capsule for Manrique alone. Especially as it includes his studio, it serves as an appropriate shrine to the



physical man.

I beg the island to reconsider the current assignment of the building in Tahíche. The spirit of Manrique lives there and yet they let him starve. This whole essay is a roundabout way for me to ask them to please throw a party here and please invite me.



*Yo soy así, como mi isla, lleno de pasión, de fuerza y al mismo tiempo de naturalidad. Siempre digo que a mí no me trajeron al mundo con calzoncillos y corbata. Me trajeron desnudo, y así intento ir por la vida, y así pienso que es mi arte.*

César Manrique 1977



8/24/24

## General Life Updates



As of now, officially back in America for the foreseeable future. Moving back to NYC and going to move back in with Eftalya. Finally completing the NYU Manhattan student to postgrad in Bushwick pipeline. My mom is about 2 months into her chemo. So far she has little to no side effects. It's unclear if it is working as of now but hoping for the best. Good days and bad for her and for me. It's been quite a lot of life change the last couple of months but I think I'm finally starting to get a grip on it. Hope everyone is doing well, I'd love to hear from you all. Text, call or I want to collect more letters this year so feel free to write. New address:

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Love,

Julia

