

Filtered

A Monologue

SCENE: A red leather wing chair in the middle of a stage, with an arc-light behind it. And a small side table nearby. There's a laptop, a notebook, a mug of pens, a stack of notecards and a mug of coffee on the table. A warm oriental rug defines an area of the stage. It's a cozy living-room like area. A writer's nook. Behind the chair are bookshelves. If you looked closely there'd be a mix of classics and star trek novels a cardboard cut-out – the kind that stands up – of DATA from *Star Trek The Next Generation* is also in the space.

WRITER begins the monologue in the chair, but she gets up and moves around as she talks, sometimes picking up the mug and sipping from it.

WRITER: When I hear – or read – the phrase "stream of consciousness" the first thing I think of is James Joyce and then I think it's time for a nap, because Joyce is a master of the that disjointed, unconnected, unfiltered, stream-of-consciousness style, which is very like the way our brains – human brains – behave as we're winding down and settling into sleep.

I, on the other hand, am all about control.

For years I wrote a blog that was all about me, but I managed to reveal very little of myself. I don't do selfies. I do not appear in snapshots. I have detested my smile since my mother's first husband made a rude remark about it when I was five and I've never gotten past it. (He was *not* my biological father.)

I have a long memory.

And I do hold grudges.

And to be honest, I think we often spend so much time trying to capture the perfect photograph of a moment that we forget to be in the moment.

So, you can fuck the concept of "pix or it didn't happen," and learn to understand that there's this thing called "object permanence" and move on with experiencing the moments instead of framing them.

Or you can have endless flash drives full of photographs without real memories attached to them.

It's your call, I guess.

Me?

I'd rather have the memories.

I'd rather have the flavors and the sounds. I'd rather jot down the line that one woman in the pink hat with the bobbing sunflower said to her husband as they pulled their table out of the sun because "Oh, Greg, you know I *freckle!*" but it would never occur to her to wear a long-sleeve shirt instead of a tank top.

Seriously, sheer cotton is cooler than bare skin anyway. Really.

(Writer looks over at the cardboard DATA)

Data – help?

(The cutout is singularly unhelpful.)

The truth is, I don't want to be doing this monologue tonight. I'd rather be writing fanfic.

I know that sounds weird. You can't sell it. So why bother. Well, let me explain.

I've been having issues with my migraine meds all day. All week really. See, I started Topamax for migraine relief last month, and while it's been helpful, it's also an appetite suppressant.

On the surface, that sounds great, right? The woman with an autoimmune hypothyroid disease that makes it impossible to lose weight is gonna now have a side effect that makes her not want to eat. Super! Except Hashimoto's also makes you insulin resistant. And I've already got this habit of getting so wrapped up in whatever I'm doing that I forget to eat til I'm shaking with hunger and then I eat whatever's easy which is usually bad for me.

But now... now I'm not even hungry before I'm absorbed. So now, I have to set reminders to drink protein shakes so I can take morning meds, and then to eat lunch and then to have snacks, only I just had dental work and mouth is still all weird so I can't chew much and I'm so sick of mushy things – there are no good mushy snacks that don't require being spread on crunchy snacks!!!

And fanfic – this epic *Star Trek: The Next Generation* fanfic - this Data/OFC romance that I've been working on for a decade now – is my escape. I write it between the stuff that's real. I write it when I can't focus on the sort stories I'm supposed to be polishing or the flash fic I'm supposed to be collecting or the podcast that literally only two people listen to.

And it keeps me sane.

I started writing it when my nephew died and I was trying to hold my parents together.

I kept writing it when I had my second miscarriage and realized I was never going to be a parent of human children. (Dogs. I have lots of dogs.)

I kept writing it when my thyroid started trying to kill me, and when my migraines started getting worse and yeah, I still write real stuff way more, but it's that world that keeps me grounded.

And I've made some amazing friends from the people who've given me feedback.

But most of them don't cross over.

They don't read my real stuff.

And the people who read my real stuff, even when they're fans, don't read my fanfic.

So even in my creative life, I'm nothing like Joyce.

Like the water the water that comes from the spout on the front of my fridge, like the way my blog posts, when they weren't all flash fic, were carefully constructed, truthful but never revealing.

I am filtered.