

Ed Makowski

## Explaining Battery Life and Relationships to my Child

Do you know that feeling  
when you reach out to someone  
and you're trying so hard  
to become friends  
or to get to know them better  
to find out what is bothering them,  
or if you hurt them, or to just find  
a simple common ground  
with that person?

Sure.

It's exhausting, right?  
My phone has been reaching  
calling out to network towers  
trying to make a connection  
through these mountains  
for hours now  
and it's tired  
and I'm giving up.

## Standing f,or Something

At a concert hall  
for the premiere  
of a documentary  
about motorcycle culture

I watch  
as people  
filter in from the  
side entrances  
and stand  
around the perimeter  
for the entire movie,  
meanwhile

dozens of  
open seats remain vacant  
in the middle.

These bikers  
with loud pipes  
and face tattoos  
and EAT SHIT patches

choosing to stand  
for two hours, to avoid  
the discomfort of  
whispering "Excuse me"  
while shuffling past a stranger  
in the dark

## The Container Itself

I walked into the break room at work  
and was greeted by  
a salad container with a note, written

### *HELP YOURSELF*

“Thanks for the advice,  
Salad.”

I said to an otherwise empty room.

I looked into the other side of the glass window,  
out onto a prairie blowing in the silence  
of the glass wall between us.

Humans have a staggering capacity  
to not understand a thing  
and so determine it a nothing  
a nothing that needs to be filled  
with a something of our choosing.

Like being uncomfortable with silence  
and filling it by rambling aspirations  
of meaningless progress.

We look at prairies  
and judge a vast rolling nothing

Except prairies aren't empty silence,  
they're filled with Eastern Meadowlarks  
and foxes and Sky Blue Asters  
and Rusty Patched Bumble Bees  
going about their every day,

which we replace with inbred bovines  
or pipelines or condominiums or  
failing shopping mall stores or  
diesel fuel storage containers.

I looked back at the salad on the table, opened the lid  
and it was empty. I guess the invitation  
was for the container itself.

## Snapshot of Expert Panelists

Listening to  
journalism experts  
at a journalism conference  
discuss the future of the craft:

The Indian American broadcaster  
presents himself as a  
story-gathering ambassador  
for the Indian American community

The African American woman  
gently offers her credentials  
prior to the data findings  
so that no one doubts  
her research

The Austrian research professor  
addresses fellow panelists by name,  
references their work,  
and fidgets when  
being called an expert

The white guy editor chimes in  
with a few swears  
Fuck, Shit  
to prove he's  
edgy, irreverent  
with the cool kids