

Portrait of a High-to-moderate Functioning Alcoholic

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Pack yourself and three backpacks full of clothes onto the green vinyl seats of a Blue Mountains Line train. Read your first-year uni textbook because you think people actually do that.

Solidify new friendships on St. Patrick's Day as one girl tells you about how some dude wearing a morph suit introduced her to his goldfish right before they hooked up. Drink Guinness happily even though you think it tastes like oats and watered-down vegemite.

Walk home from the station after a night out. Sing aloud to "No Scrubs" whilst wearing headphones as it is 3 a.m. and the streets are empty but for your wobbling, warbling self. Once inside, continue dancing in front of your mirror to discern whether or not you can actually dance. Accept the results of this experiment as the probable reason you have come home alone.

Receive a phone call from your mother cancelling your weekend plans for the third time in a row. Consider the fact that you honestly can't remember the last time you saw her. Mix yourself a G & T to toast a feeling that could either be relief or disappointment.

Buy one of those wheelie shopping carts that old ladies have to help you haul your groceries home. Hear the crunch of its brittle plastic wheel as you pull it off the bus. Drag it the four blocks to your door and cry over spilt milk.

Get invited to a gig your ex-boyfriend's band is playing at. Take a swig straight from the bottle when you see that the girl you are 98.2% sure he's fucking has also clicked "attending".

Consider masturbating but remove your hands from your pyjama shorts because you simply can't be bothered.

Plan to go dog watching in Sydney Park with a friend. Drink wine from opaque coffee cups and talk in grotesque detail about love interests who will most definitely not matter in three months' time.

Visit a friend in Melbourne. Go out for drinks with her and her workmates and meet a woman desperate for your group's attention. Stare blankly at her as she assures you, and only you, that she's not a homophobe- though you have done no more than introduce yourself. Scull your beer in a toilet cubicle while waiting for her to leave.

Throw back a glass of red to help you read *The Twyborn Affair* in the hope it will help you figure out what the fuck is going on. Close the book and finish the bottle.

Switch from coffee to green tea because its healthier. Meet up with friends and chain smoke in the Courthouse beer garden.

Write a bad four chord song on the cheap, bright red ukulele your friends got you for your 20th birthday. Regret selling your guitar to pay for the service on your '92 model Mazda that the scrap yard only paid you 50 dollars for six months later. Write a draft ad on Gumtree for other "Sydney-based musicians" seeking to start a band. Never publish it.

Down a six-pack naked alone in your room and wonder if the neighbours can hear you trying to harmonise with the bangers on your “get fit, bitch” playlist.

Invite your ex and his mate over for dinner. Elicit praise from your housemates and guests for the enchilada sauce you have made from scratch despite your culinary skills usually being of the chuck-a-jar-of-sauce-over-some-carbs variety. Sip your wine in silence as you watch everyone getting along, and feel. Feel your heart buzz in your chest like bees in warm honey.

Have pesto pasta two nights in a row because you don't have the energy to cook anything of nutritional value. Cringe as you remember the whisky sour and pesto pasta soup you left in your mate's kitchen sink on Mardi Gras weekend.

Try on the linen dress you bought in Poland for 378 zloty. Scoff with amusement at the fat peasant staring at you from the ill-assembled, strategically-placed Ikea mirror that sits in the corner of your overpriced matchbox bedroom in an attempt to make it look bigger. Laugh when you remember that you bought the dress specifically to impress the girl you fancy, the actress, who you once saw wear a shapeless dress. Think about the way that while the garment itself resembled a pillowcase, when she wore it she looked more like the type of

girl you'd love to drink cider with in the Botanic Gardens than one you'd just let decorate your bed. Accept the fact that the Poland Dress doesn't even pass as hipster enough to wear out in Newtown. Remember that you are \$5000 in debt.

Sit down to write a poem that's been swirling around in your head like shit in a flushing toilet. Scribble the title "Ode to those I've Loved, Fucked and Sworn I'd Never Text Again". Put your pen down to pour yourself a glass of the tawny port your housemate has left, opened, on the kitchen windowsill for an undisclosed period of time. Give up on the poem and message a girl on tinder.

Google "how to cut down on drinking" on your iPad at 1:34 a.m.

Resolve to have a sober night. Invite the friend you've slept with a few times over for dinner (the one *she* never liked). Tell him he can crash if he wants but decline his offer to pick up a bottle of wine from the bottle-o by the station. When he arrives empty-handed immediately decide you want to be drunk and alone. Hold your breath when he kisses you in an attempt to push past the fact he really, truly smells like plasticine. Eat in chewable silence and ask him to leave shortly after. Do tequila shots with your housemates in the kitchen when he finally does.

Research post-graduate degrees you don't want to do, at universities you don't want to go to, to feign productivity.

Send a risky text to an ex. Scrape a bottle cap across your wrist as you wait for her to reply.

Call your mother and ask about her new job. Put the phone on loudspeaker and begin doing the dishes, interjecting at intervals well-rehearsed over two decades. Tell her you love her and that you'll visit at the end of the month. Remain undecided as to whether you will.

Accept a casual Sunday shift at the job you spent four months trying to leave. Regret this on Saturday night as you wait for an Uber home from Oxford Street.

Pay rent and have \$14 left to feed yourself for the next fortnight. Spend \$5.30 on a bottle of wine.

Email a doctor's certificate to your lecturer for the day you were too anxious to get out of bed and slept until 4:21 p.m.

Taper off your anti-depressants and quit social media cold turkey. Stare at a blank document titled "novel" and wonder if you should have done it the other way around.

Ignore the train station request to stand behind the yellow line. Feel your hair lick your face as the trains squeal past you. Envy their mobility.