

Introducing 78 New Emotions

We updated Roger Hargreaves's Little Miss and Mr. Men universe as a suggestion to include some of our new emotions. Illustration: Zohar Lazar

This week, the Cut is exploring [a scientific theory that suggests we have infinite emotions, so long as we can name them](#) — and so we did, asking writers to identify new ways to feel.

Contents: *On Love and Lust | On Joy and Contentment | On Anxiety and Dread | On the Internet | On Work | On Other People | On Parenting*

Part I

On Love and Lust

Sex Poisoned

The state of being convinced after intimacy that you have romantic interest in someone you objectively do not.

Maybe the sex poisoner is 20 years younger than you and took you home to his basement apartment, where he

sleeps on a bare mattress on the floor. Perhaps he spent the next morning telling you about his problems with his mother, Adderall, or being expected to correctly pronounce “foreign” words. You remember that when you were gathering your clothes you saw a copy of *The Game* slung on his sticky bedroom floor, that he used the word *gay* as a term of abuse — but when you’ve been sex poisoned, it doesn’t matter. It’s like you’ve been hit on the head by a sexual hammer; you forget all the terrible things about his personality. You make excuses for his bad manners. Maybe he was nervous, and that’s why he said all that stuff about his “insane” ex-girlfriend’s eating disorder? Maybe I just need to lighten up! I mean, I feel so close to him. As with food poisoning, your only recourse is to wait it out. Drink lots of water and stay away from whatever made you sick. Don’t think about him naked or touching you. Don’t masturbate to thoughts of him or stalk him online trying to convince yourself that, really, he could be okay. Be very careful about what you consume while poisoned — drugs and alcohol will only make it worse. —*Alexa Tsoulis-Reay*

Death-Happy

A prickling awareness of one’s own mortality, induced by newly found life contentment.

Over the past few years I’ve been bugged by flashes of dread when I stop to consider all of the incredibly stupid

ways I could die. Crossing the street, eating leftover pizza, “challenging myself physically.” It seems significant that the frequency of these thoughts has risen in my mid-30s, as I’ve fallen in love, married, and mapped out my life with my partner. The central tragedy of my death would no longer be the “loss of a bright future,” but the end of my newly discovered satisfaction. Now, each time I tiptoe across a wet subway tile or sense a car passing too closely to my bicycle, the shock of dread is almost always accompanied by gratitude. —*James D. Walsh*

Jealousy

The feeling of being jealous of someone while also having a crush on them.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

You want to be them *and* you want to sleep with them. Like staring into the sun. The worst of all feelings. Possibly the reason some murders are committed. —*Edith Zimmerman*

Libido Snap

The quick, vague flicker of arousal that you don't share with your partner, because you don't really feel like having to get naked and have sex.

Something is alight. Alive. A tiny piece of me that was dormant a second ago is awake and alert. I was just sitting here reading *Normal People*, like you—reading about Connell admiring Marianne’s slender, milky-white neck and her delicate clavicle as prominent and specific as “two hyphens”—and *phwop!* There it came, its heat buzzing around inside me ever so lightly, like a free radical seeking an electron: needy, momentarily insistent. And, also like a free radical: so small, so brief. I could act on it. I could lean over to my husband, make a show of closing the laptop he’s staring at, initiate some mutual unbuttoning, offer him a spontaneous caress. But then I’d have to put down this book, pull off this warm blanket, remove some clothing. And what was once so ethereal would become so ... earthly. Is it even there anymore? I try to locate it more specifically, knowing that as I do, it will dissolve. I turn the page. —*Maggie Bullock*

Abundamort

When you love someone or something so much you feel like you will die.

Your chest feels tight, you’re short of breath, you can’t possibly take this feeling for another single second. You are bursting with love, looking at your child, or dog, or small expensive trinket — and it is too much. —*Kelly Conaboy*

Lenniness

The overwhelming desire to pick up a small cute thing and hug it tight, regardless of the consequences.

Brought on by puppies, babies, Pikachu, the red pandas at the Prospect Park Zoo, and certain appealing raccoons. It's named, of course, for Lennie from *Of Mice and Men*, who always loved too hard. —Izzy Grinspan

Itinerant Love

The feeling of unfettered closeness and guiltless exposure that comes from spending an intimate night with someone while knowing that you won't see them again, despite it just being really lovely, thereby giving you both license to share more of yourselves than you ever would otherwise.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—Bryan Washington

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Heartbreak Adrenaline

The strange feats of strength that can be accomplished after a devastating breakup.

Moved a couch on your own somehow? Heartbreak adrenaline. Applied for and got ten different job offers? Hell, yes, you're sad, and it's giving you power. —E.Z.

Naz

The desire to be wooed.

Naz is a term from Pashto. It's a multifaceted term, which can mean something akin to "desiring affection" or "being in the mood for affection." But it can have a negative connotation. If you were to suddenly become silent precisely because you wished to be wooed out of that silence (whether consciously or unconsciously) with endearments and tenderness, then you might be doing naz. You want your silence, or your shyness, or even your anger, to be intuitively read as a desire for affection, without even necessarily knowing that that is what you are desiring, unless, of course, someone calls you out on it, which, if you live in an Afghan household, someone absolutely will. —*Jamil Jan Kochai*

Part II

On Joy and contentment

Creditphoria

The sickening regret, mingled with

**pleasure, denial, delusion, and mania,
of walking into a store you don't
belong in and buying something you
cannot afford.**

—*Stella Bugbee*

Fitjoy

**The burst of satisfaction that comes
from putting the correct words to a
feeling, like in that child's game where
you slide the round peg over various-
shaped holes until, finally, it fits.**

—*E.Z.*

Gleemort

**Happiness felt during an otherwise
sad event, like seeing an out-of-town
loved one at a funeral.**

—*K.C.*

Laugh-Holed

**When you're laughing so much with
someone that it feels like some part of
you dips briefly into another**

dimension. Afterward, it makes the concept of an afterlife or other-life seem conceivable because what was that? And how can I make it happen again?

—E.Z.

Ugleauty

The magical feeling of, after many, many, many years, coming to terms with something traditionally unattractive about yourself and knowing that it's possible, maybe, to turn it into an asset.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—E.Z.

Angstalgia

Feelings of acute nostalgia for a time to which you would dread to return.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—Andrew Solomon

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Moral Masturbation

The solitary pleasure of being right.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

You were wronged. The memory of the initial incident has worn smooth. Now it's no longer a source of pain or anxiety — it's something to pull out recreationally. The familiar contours feel good. You know exactly which parts of the story make you experience your moral superiority most acutely, which vistas from the high ground have the best view. Fondly you rehearse the same plot points, imagine slight variations and hypotheticals, cherish the knowledge that the ending will always be the same — it's you, now, irrefutably right. Afterward, you feel a little gross. —*Molly Fischer*

Pearning

Yearning for the pond.

Each July, a very small group of friends and I spend seven days together on a remote, miles-long pond in Maine. (I don't know why it's called a pond as opposed to a lake.) To get there, you drive about two hours on the highway, then another hour on country roads, then 20 minutes down a dirt logging road, and then you catch a boat to this place — an old Maine fishing camp, though none of us fish. There's no internet and no cell service there. We

stay in little cabins and spend our days on one of a series of tiny, uninhabited islands reached by canoe, sitting by the water in folding chairs, surrounded by tall trees, with not a sound around us — no airplanes overhead, no cars or even roads for miles. We are truly disconnected. We read books and play cards and start cocktail hour at 5 p.m. and sleep better than we do all year long. Nobody has a phone to check or an email to return for seven straight days. We've done it for more than 20 years now, and every year — as the technological noise has increased — it's mattered more and more to have seven days of true silence and community with close friends. (Even our teenagers love it. And each year we literally pray that nobody builds a cell tower on one of the surrounding mountains.)

Anyway, about this time of year exactly, all of us — each one of us a working professional, overburdened, maxed out, and thoroughly sick of winter — starts doing something we call “pearning.” It's basically “yearning for the pond.” It's trying to summon the feeling of taking a midday nap on your beach towel on the pine needles, just listening to the breeze in the trees and the loons calling on the pond. It's longing to be unreachable and fully present in exactly one place in one specific moment. It's about the deepest and most specific form of longing I know. —*Sara Corbett*

Part III

On anxiety and dread

Too Much Birthday

Joy so overwhelming it's actually not fun anymore.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

In *Too Much Birthday*, in the Berenstain Bears series, published in 1986, Sister Bear gets a little too excited for her 6th-birthday party, arranges too many games, overindulges in cake, and writes an excessive guest list. By the time the party's in full swing, she totally flips out and starts inexplicably sobbing. She's having too much birthday.

It's the sensation of feeling so much joy at once that you almost feel lonely. You can't really enjoy the happiness surrounding you. It's the reason one Irish good-byes from parties right at their peak, and why playing with a new puppy for too long can somehow be agitating. It's the sensation at the heart of that monologue from *American Beauty* about the plastic bag. "Sometimes there's so much ... beauty in the world," Wes Bentley's creepy character, Ricky Fitts, mumbles. "I feel like I can't take it, and my heart is just going to cave in." If I were Thora Birch in that scene, I would have taken his hand in mine and felt his pain deep down in my soul. "Yes, Ricky," I'd confess. "Sometimes I also have too much

birthday." —*Annie Armstrong*

Buralysis

Paralyzing anxiety when confronted with bureaucracy.

The first time I experienced buralysis, I was, of course, at the Department of Motor Vehicles. I was trying to register my car in the new name I had acquired upon marriage in the new state to which I had moved to be with my new husband. As proof of my new name, I had: a marriage certificate. What the agency would accept as proof of my new name: a Social Security card. What was on my Social Security card: my old name. The solution was simple: go to the Social Security office and get a new card in my new name. What I do instead: go back to my (new) apartment and lie down on the floor.

Bureaucracies are as clumsily constructed as the First Little Piggy's house but as sturdy as his more patient brother's. The richest among us can pay someone else to endure its indignities; the rest of us pay in time. Which is why indulging buralysis feels at first like a kind of victory. Bureaucracies want your time; what better way, then, to tell them "Fuck you" than to deliberately waste it? Alas, once you've wasted your time, the bureaucracy comes back around for your money. Eventually, I got up off the floor and mailed the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts, \$180 so I could take my maiden name back and enjoy the

privilege of paying yet more money to register a car under it. And the bureaucratic system, unruffled by my huffing and puffing, accepted my money and resignation both as its due. —*Miranda Popkey*

Rembarrassment

An overwhelming feeling of humiliation at the memory of an awkward or shameful experience from long ago, often acute and unrelated to current circumstances.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Sara Nović*

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Indecision-Appreciation Disparity

The inability to enjoy the outcome of a choice you didn't actively make.

—*Stella Bugbee*

Mid-Meal Regret

The unsettling feeling that arises when eating one thing while simultaneously knowing you'd rather be eating

something else.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

The agony isn't exactly the *loss* of a meal, but the loss of a *promise* of a *plausible* meal. You're mourning for a thing you could've had (an achievable thing!). Maybe you're flummoxed by the revamped American Chinese takeout menu (too many options, all of them delicious), and you've chosen the lo mein, but the noodles haven't even hit the table before you're daydreaming about 11 crab wontons. Maybe you're chewing charcuterie (meh) at the bright gay bar with 42 neon lights, when you'd rather be scarfing pork and kimchee at home. Maybe you're on a diet prescribed by your doctor (or yourself), and you're eating that salad, while the midday breakfast tacos are in the back of your mind, staring you down. This feeling circles the corridors of anxiety, but it isn't quite as bad. Which maybe makes it worse. —*Byran Washington*

Itchy Teeth

The restless urge to explode your own life by doing something that can't easily be undone, like getting married, moving, becoming pregnant, starting a fistfight. Lesser teeth-itchers: a dramatic haircut, a different job, a large tattoo.

—*E.Z.*

Liegasm

The sick pleasure of knowing you're lying and getting away with it — you feel it a little bit in your bellybutton. A quickening of the heart; a bit of bile in the throat; a hot, wicked shame.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*S.B.*

Nitwhoppering

The unnerving feeling of finding yourself engaged in a ridiculous and terrifyingly complex lie, usually — but not exclusively — to avoid an unwanted social invitation.

There is also an associated experience of being nitwhopped, which is the painful realisation that you have just been the recipient of said variety of preposterous lie. There is also a related noun, nitwhopper, denoting the teller of the lie. —*Joanna Kavenna*

Pretedium

The mixture of frustration, ennui, and anxiety that washes over you when you realize you've been cornered by a known long-talker.

—*Genevieve Smith*

Hinterhuff

A sense of latent fury that afflicts a person especially on mass transport, or while waiting for food.

—*J.K.*

Anker

To feel compelled to fight back.

My parents still live in Northern California, near where I grew up, and as the fires have become a normal part of their life, refreshing the emergency-services map has become a normal part of mine. This last season they evacuated and then, chased by the smoke, were evacuated from their evacuation. I know what's coming for my home state. I feel cornered by history, and you can do two things when you're pushed into a corner: curl up and die or lash out. Anker comes from the ancient Greek *ananke*, which was the name for the primordial serpent goddess of necessity who cracked the egg of the world

into existence. It's also a political idea. The historian Thucydides used it for nations forced into war by threat of invasion or escalating rivalry. Anker when applied to climate change is a way to talk about — and maybe better feel — the revolutionary urgency our ecological situation requires of us, whether we like it or not.

—*Malcolm Harris*

Force Majeure

A vague sense of humiliation that accompanies an instinctual flight response to a perceived danger. Named for the Swedish film, in which a man runs away from his family to save himself from an avalanche and thereby is diminished by his fear.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Mark Epstein*

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Ambivatained

How you feel when you keep watching prestige-TV shows even though you don't think you actually like them very much.

Attempted Apathy

The feeling of trying to convince yourself that the thing you really care about and isn't going well doesn't matter.

Watching TV, you are nauseated. Your team is losing or the election results are coming in. You're pissed off. You're more than pissed off; you're irate. Your jaw is clenched. You want to scream. But calm down, you tell yourself, it doesn't really matter who makes the playoffs. And even, I'll be fine if America chooses its worst citizen to become president. It'll be annoying, but it won't actually affect anybody's life. You know, even as you're trying to convince yourself, that you're lying. Every clenched muscle fiber knows that these things matter, and as hard as you try to unclench, your body is stronger than your brain's attempt to protect it. You are tense, holding tightly to your own delusions. —*Brian Platzer*

Cine-Void

The guilt that follows browsing Netflix and seeing an "important" film that you know you should watch — and if you do watch, you will probably love and talk about for weeks — and yet

you choose *John Wick: Chapter 2*, a movie you'll convince yourself you've never seen before.

—J.D.W.

Butwhatifits

The uneasy sort of "Chrissy Teigen face" grimace of wondering if, maybe, despite all the work you've done, you might actually kind of have it all wrong in the end.

Or like that the whole thing you've built your life around is stacked on a faulty premise. The pea at the bottom of the quilts is in fact a lentil. Or just the queasy feeling that there will never be a "right." There will always be a worm wriggling in the corner. But what if it's ... —E.Z.

Desire Atrophy

Sudden and inexplicable loss of interest in the thing you thought you most wanted. Accompanied by numbness and a callous disregard for other people's feelings in the moment. Also, a wonderful sense of calm.

—S.B.

Nocturnal Admissions

The swirling feeling of self-recrimination can only arise in a state of middle-of-the-night semi-consciousness, when normal psychological defenses against despair are disabled.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Greg Jackson*

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Groundhog Day–ity

The sinking feeling upon realizing that the lesson you learned last week, and the week before that, and last year, and that other time eight years ago, is the one you also “learned” again just now.

Will you ever learn this lesson? Is it not a lesson? Is your inability to learn this one crucial life lesson — or your inability to make it stick — somehow the only part of you that is eternal and fixed? This inability to remember that your current mood won't last forever — is it, in fact, the thing that *will* last forever? Will it be the one golden kernel

at the bottom of the ash urn? —E.Z.

Confusional

A momentary disorientation in which one realizes the possibility that one may in fact be delusional.

—*Rafael Prieto*

Doglessness

The special grief of losing a canine.

I almost lost Memphis several months ago. I'd rushed him to the animal hospital when he awoke from a nap making a horrible screaming sound. There, I learned one of his vertebrae had shattered, and the sharp shards were poking into his spinal cord.

During the days Memphis was gone, the house had a different kind of quietness to it. He usually sleeps at my feet when I write, and in his absence I couldn't really write. My feet felt cold and exposed. I hadn't realized how tightly he was woven into the texture of my time. Every day around midnight I take him for a walk, and now I found myself pacing the bedroom floor instead. I felt dangerously floaty, disoriented, and pierced. It occurred to me that the leash I use is as much to tether me as it is him. I actually took it out and wrapped one end of it

around my wrist, gripping the nylon cord in some kind of kinetic prayer. *Don't let him die. Please and not yet.*

But if not yet, then when? Who is ever ready to let their canine go? In the end, most of us kill our pups. We tell the vet to inject the stuff that ends their lives. After that happens, you walk out into a world that is as empty as a dog dish once filled with bloody steak. Licked clean and sparkling cruelly. —*Lauren Slater*

Part IV

On the internet

Chagrinternet

The lingering feeling of minor humiliation endemic to participating in a social life online.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Dayna Tortorici*

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Hupokringesis

The queasy feeling of having harshly judged and/or shamed someone online, although you are aware —

somewhere in the deepest recesses of your consciousness — that you yourself are guilty of something very similar or worse.

Verb: *hupokringe, hupokringing, hupokringed.*

Derivatives: adjective, informal, *hupokringeworthy.*

Slang, U.S., 21st C., noun-phrase *the hupo-kays*: The second I pressed send I got a bad case of the *hupo-kays*.

Origin: From Greek *hupokrisis* ("acting of a theatrical part; to play a part; to pretend"); From *hupo* ("beneath; up from under" + *krinein* "to decide, to pass judgment"); *kringe*, from the Middle English *crenge, crenche*, related to Old English *cringan, crincan*; "to bend, yield, fall in battle," related to the German *krank* ("sick; to experience an inward shiver of self-disgust or shame"). —*Zadie Smith*

Premoji

The feeling you get when you're searching on your smartphone for an emoji that doesn't exist.

You want to use it. It ought to be there. You swear you've seen it before — a preying mantis, a pickle, a tampon, anything that will signify hair. But no matter how carefully you swipe through the menu, no matter how many synonyms you type in to activate the predictive emoji feature, you just can't find it. It's the digital version, in

both senses, of a word being on the tip of your tongue.

—*Namwali Serpell*

Textual Dread

The nausea of knowing those three blinking dots are going to say something you don't want to hear.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*S.B.*

Tweetscendence

The joyful, buoyant, manic feeling of watching retweets, likes, and comments roll in to a recent tweet you made at a pace that indicates it is a truly, genuinely good tweet, maybe even a great one, such that you want to be like, "First, let me thank the Academy," and you feel like there is a decent chance that you will never? Feel bad? Ever again?

—*E.Z.*

Instagrief

The destabilized sensation you get on

vacation, or visiting somewhere, or maybe just in daily life, when you have before you a beautiful scene, or something shareable, an adorable family moment, say, and you become caught between two impulses: the desire to be engaged inside the moment in a Zen way, to just experience it, and, at the same time, a desire to find your phone, get the camera on, and take a postable photo.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

Inside this moment, and part of Instagrief, is the sorrow of knowing—with a flash of intuition — that by the time you get the phone up and the camera on, the moment will be gone. This is the paradox that infuses a moment of Instagrief with existential dread and lends it a horrific, undignified pathos. At the same time, Instagrief — in that magical way of namable emotional states — acts as a reminder of time itself, the instability and fragility of particular moments (outside social media) that once, years ago, were simply good moments worthy of recording but usually missed, left behind in the sepia backlog of old memories — wherever in the brain these images are buried — to be recalled, perhaps, upon your deathbed.

Derivations include, **Instagratiction**, the delight of

accidentally catching an even better, funnier, more adorable or beautiful moment than anticipated, and **Instambivalence**, the sensation — avoiding Instagrief — that you captured the moment or the scene but in doing so annulled the true human value of experiencing the moment itself, while at the same time feeling the full glory of knowing the image is immediately out there being seen by the world of Instagram. —*David Means*

System Reboot

The feeling of “coming to” after you’ve spent an indeterminate amount of time brainlessly using your phone or internet-enabled device.

It is a sudden awareness that you have reentered material reality after a period of having been blacked out, or on autopilot, or somehow attentionally removed from the earthly plane. The sensation combines unease, guilt, and mystification in equal quantities, not unlike waking up from a nap you weren’t supposed to take. Unbidden naps, however, are easier to recover from: We’re constantly reminded in mundane ways that we lack control over our bodies, but to concede that we also lack control over our minds is a creepier prospect. —*Molly Young*

Part V

On Work

Creatiphobia

The anxiety that you cannot possibly make another thing.

Thoughts move into a maw, a gullet of certainty that I don't know enough about what I'm supposed to write about next. Wanting to give up. Here. Now. Make it stop. Pangs move through the eyes, then shoot into tear ducts, producing adrenalized dry-lightning strikes of doubt. No tears, wanting to cry. Why can't I cry? This weather system gathers into gloomy clouds of funk. Darkening. Distracted by this — even when I'm with others. Soon I can't be with others. Into the tunnel again.

Wanting to quit; afraid to quit; wishing I were someone who could just live without doing this, without needing to see out loud, get the attention, be loved by strangers. Crumbling internal emotions turn into shale chipping away, collapsing now over the interior vents of pity. I'm closed off again from the world, I think. Procrastinating; palpitations; bitterness; false thoughts; the failure flocking, ominous. —*Jerry Saltz*

Creatiphoria

The heady certainty that what you're making is brilliant.

Other inklings. A deeper divination of some future place? A wilder shore? Rising-up emotions, attempts to read, take notes, Google an idea. Push further into the work. Stare out the window at the traffic. Drifting. Soon, something I didn't see coming produces small thought-warblings and nano-releases. A composing of chaos, something that turns into something else. First in the mind, partly writing it down on paper; rolling it around, feeling it's shape and sound; looking for language, length, pace. Is it too much? Not enough? Is it beautiful?

I know it's close now, very close. Pulse rising with fear. Soon, a wriggling feeling. Maybe deluded grandeur, a quailing acuteness of confidence. Just enough to open another Word document. A solar barge moves inside me. I submerge into a first line; anything, words in a row; keep typing. A spiraling gyre arrives. Something's here! I've charted this course, I think. I may know where I'm bound a bit. How? That's too big a question. Make a first sentence declarative, give it a resounding whiff of where I want to go. Own something. Be vulnerable, strong but not obnoxious, open. Don't stop. Snapping at any interruption, going as far from the shore of foulness as this first assailing of fears can possibly take me until I no longer feel the ground beneath my feet, knowing I have to swim now, make this happen. Temperature changing. Different motions of inner waters, ponderings, depths felt or suggested, bottom falling away in wonderful ways. Don't think about it. I am carnivorous to finish. —J.S.

Widgi

("Wish I didn't get involved"); pronounced *wid-gee*: Dread and regret, coupled with a desire to flee or disappear or take back your statement.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

A sinking feeling that no good outcome is possible. Irritation at your failure to correctly predict the outcome of your situation. Antonym: **Wigi** ("Wish I got involved"): The guilt of not speaking out when you know you should have. —S.B.

Inverse-Impostor Syndrome

A glorious, guiltless respite from self-doubt.

Impostor syndrome is the feeling of being unworthy of the life you've created; that your achievements were lucky breaks rather than hard-earned. Its inverse is the particular kind of joy that comes from channeling another person; that feeling when you're faking it so well that you've even fooled yourself. It's the reason people have alter egos, why Beyoncé invented Sasha Fierce and David Bowie invented Ziggy Stardust.

I've tried to chase inverse-impostor syndrome with costumes and props, like an old game of pretend, and have found that when I'm wearing a leather jacket, I become someone who feels less pressure to smile at a bad joke. But mostly, the feeling strikes when I don't expect it. Late at night during heavy conversations at bars with strangers I'll never see again and, once or twice, while interviewing for a job for which I was decidedly unqualified and found myself breezily asking invasive questions about my interviewer's emotional state. I'm convinced it's the feeling that leads to beginner's luck; there's an easy confidence that comes with having nothing to lose. Inverse-impostor syndrome is a weird kind of high when something seems so impossible that all pressure dissipates and you both know you're faking it and feel utterly invincible. It's not the first step on a long path of self-improvement. It's the combination of a dead end and a great ride. —*Jessica Weisberg*

Worklessness

The reliably terrible feeling of not having done the kind of work that feels valuable to you.

—*E.Z.*

Yesokasity

The feeling of knowing you have to do something and, instead of putting it off, you just do it.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—K.C.

Idioschlock

The embarrassing realisation that you have spoken in public for many minutes and made absolutely no sense at all.

—J.K.

Highwired

Rattling nervous energy that persists after a nervous-making event — a ceremony, a confrontation, a meeting, a speech — has come to an end.

For example: you walk offstage; you're fine. You're fine! You're fine. But you can't tell if you're breathing comfortably, yet. Your heart rate still feels somehow unreliable. You try to participate in conversation and can't find the rhythm of normal speech. You say things and they seem incorrectly calibrated, either too loud or too fast. But it's over! There's nothing left to be nervous

about. Knowing this only makes you more aware of your strangeness, which doesn't help with the normal speech. You pause to breathe, although you are already breathing. You're fine. Go have a drink. It'll pass. —*M.F.*

Ramo

("Relief at missing out"): The release of tension that comes with losing an objectively worthwhile opportunity that the least foresighted part of yourself did not feel like pursuing (thus gaining the right to guiltlessly stick with what's comfortable or convenient instead).

In a sentence: "When the job offer was rescinded, his family was heartbroken for him — but in truth, he'd been dreading the move to D.C. and felt nothing but ramo."
—*Eric Levitz*

Part VI

On other people

Abysmal Kinship

The humbling recognition of similarity between yourself and others whom you might prefer to disdain.

I credit my husband for identifying this sensation. My husband credits his brother; his brother thought maybe he got the phrase from Conrad; it seems to have actually come from Heidegger. (He writes in his "Letter on Humanism" of "our scarcely conceivable, abysmal bodily kinship with the beast.") Abysmal kinship is what you feel when the dumbest person you follow on Twitter posts about how much they're loving a book that you love too. Your pretensions are denied. "One of us," abysmal kinship says. This is how my husband felt attending a Grateful Dead cover-band concert in Brooklyn last year. (Jam-band fandom abounds in abysmal kinship.) He looked out on a crowd he described as "clean boys in Online Ceramics" and he knew — even if he wasn't wearing an \$80 tie-dyed T-shirt — that he was among his kind.
—*M.F.*

Anger Trip

The feeling of self-righteous elation that layers on top of your fight-anger when you *know you're right*, which causes you to express it despite your best judgment.

—*Boris Kachka*

Miniastrophic

A feeling of apocalyptic dread at what

is in fact a small incident.

—*Melissa Fay Greene*

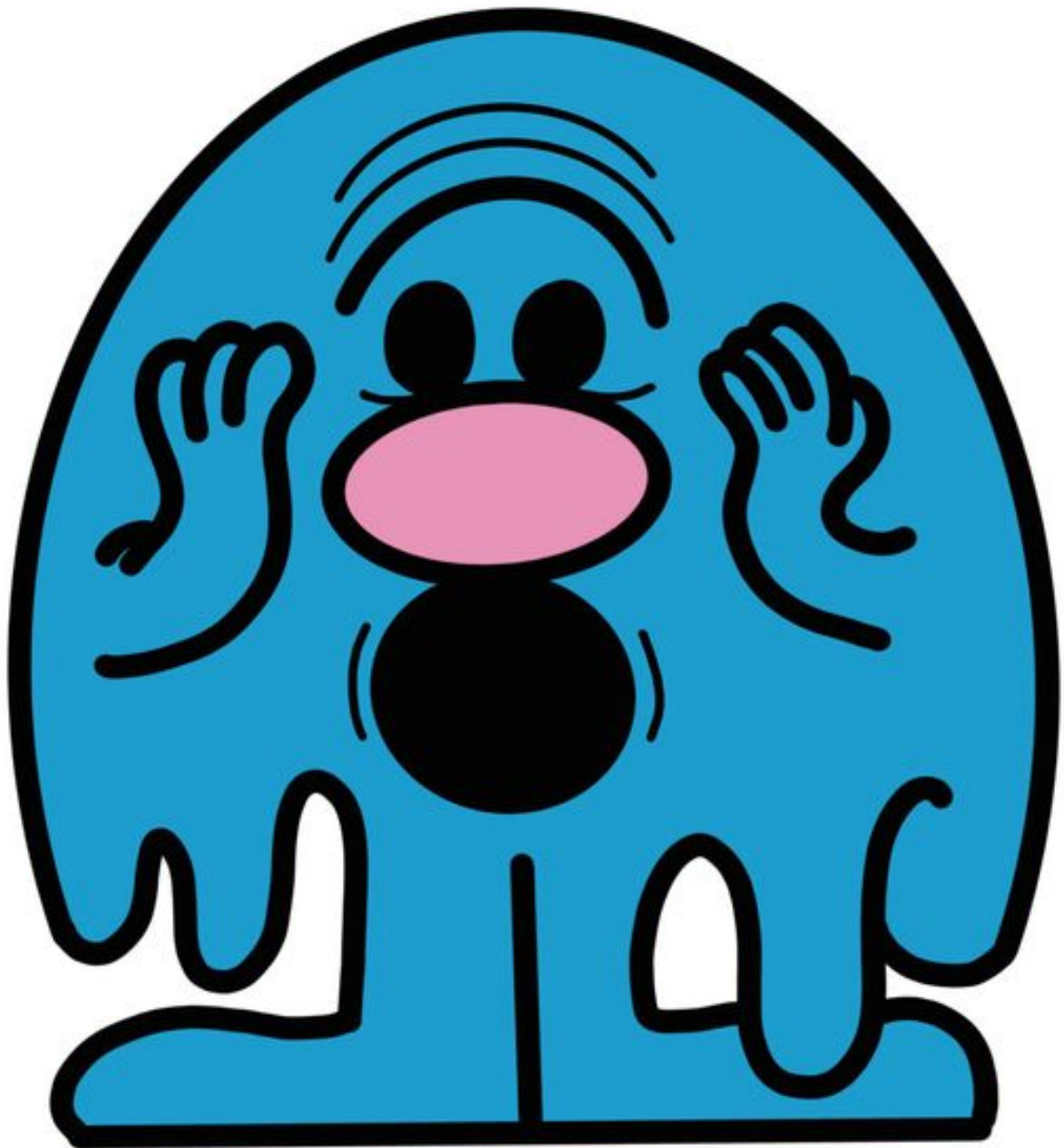


Illustration: Zohar Lazar

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Planked

The cessation and ecstatic aftermath of sustained psychological projection.

Onset is marked by the abrupt realization that you are, in fact, riddled with the fault you've been calling someone else out for. This mental symptom (self-insight, humility) causes a slightly painful shortness of breath, like being startled, and speechlessness followed by a feeling of heat, typically described as "a fiery poker," which, after blossoming at the crown of one's head, slips down and lodges in the lower abdomen, where it reportedly ripens into something sickish and also hella melty. (The hotness, often mistaken for guilt or shame, is actually distinct when it occurs as an intermediary stage of feeling planked.) "It's me —" you suddenly think, "I'm the one who's been doing that." (Variations include: "I'm also doing that." Or, "I'm actually doing crap that is so much worse." Or, simply — and much more common — "I'm not perfect either.") A few moments later, however, you feel liberated, unsheathed, breezy, and celery-fresh. This snowballing sense of rectitude is braided with unexpected euphoria: an experience, however delicate, of the knowledge that you are shot through with every other living and non-living thing. In a sentence: "That epiphany was harsh dude, but worth it — I'm now super-planked." Traceable back to a story in which a famous spiritual leader chastises a villager "You hypocrite," he allegedly says, "Maybe lecture your neighbor about the speck in his eye after you have taken the enormous plank out of your own." —*Harry Dodge*

Loktif

The anxious, dreamlike feeling of being trapped pointlessly in an eternal argument that can never be resolved.

Prevalent during family holidays and long car journeys.

—*J.K.*

Feminamity

The warm glow you get when another woman hypes you up.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Jenny Tinghui Zhang*

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Hypeomania

The feeling of strange pride when you dislike or don't understand something everyone else loves.

—*M.R.*

Ingrown Jealousy

The feeling of knowing that you should be jealous of someone, and you are, or you are on paper, because they truly

are more beautiful and/or talented than you are, or both, but for whatever reason, you like them.

—E.Z.

Ozing

The shot of self-confidence that comes from a peek behind the curtain at a respected individual faking it, underperforming, or otherwise acting recognizably fallible and human.

—J.D.W.

Freundes Schaden

The joy of connection with someone who shares your pain.

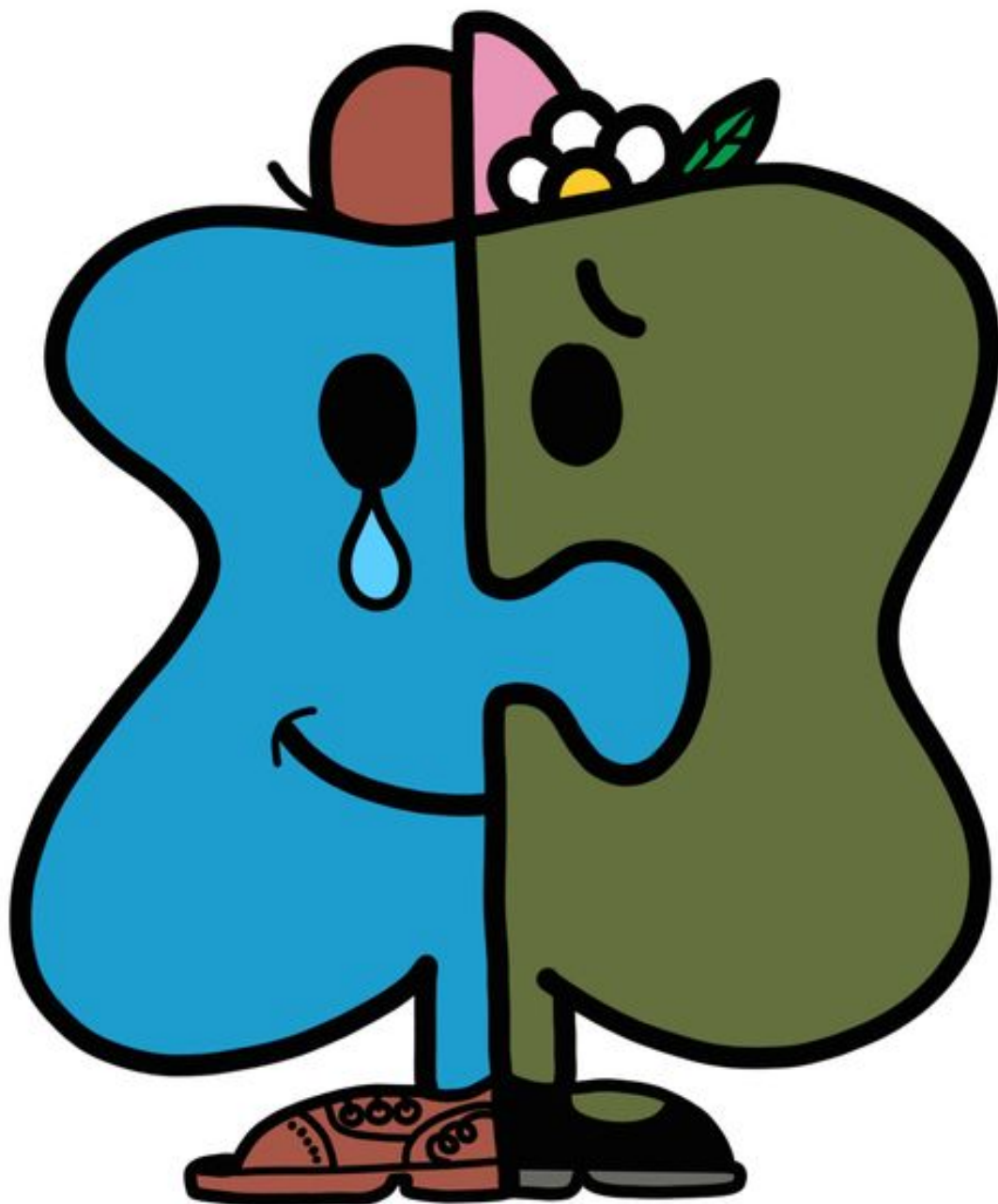


Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*Nell Scovell*

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Patheodeficiency

The wrung-out feeling of being so emotionally spent you have actually run out of sympathy for anyone else.

—G.S.

Rickitickitembo

The wilted feeling of realizing that you've bullshitted your friends enough about how great they're doing and how beautiful they look that you no longer believe anything anyone says, pretty much.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—E.Z.

Social Remorse

The vacant, probing humiliation that follows a social encounter during which you comb through every interaction in search of missteps.

All the things you shouldn't have said and all the ways you probably looked foolish. Most often, this feeling descends the morning after socializing but can, in rare instances, occur while still mid-conversation, causing a temporary verbal paralysis and a slight sensation of disembodiment followed by a general feeling of panic.

—G.S.

Trick-Mirror Panic

The feeling of being confronted by misinformation about yourself.

—*S.B.*

Hetswet

The sweaty, disbelieving sense of panic that mounts as you fail to locate every object you need in order to leave the house.

—*J.K.*

Ventastic

The fabulous and exhausting feeling right after a particularly animated and energetic venting session.



Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—S.B.

Part VII

on parenting

Filsamis

**(French, pronounced *fees-a-mees*):
The warmth that comes over you when
you watch your offspring playing
nicely with the offspring of a friend of
yours.**

These second-generation friendships are often forced by parents, so when one genuinely blossoms, it creates a special kind of pride and joy. —N.S.

Red-Line Repentant

**The regret you feel when you've
impulsively drawn a red line and now
know the rest of your night is ruined.**

It's bedtime for your 3-to-8-year-old, and you're tired and hungry. You've read her two books, rubbed her back, gotten her a Band-Aid for her pretend injury, refilled her water, taken her to the bathroom, and applied lotion to her "itchy neck." Now she's asked you to tuck her in. You refuse. Which is odd, because you always tuck her in. Tucking her in is no big deal, especially after all that other stuff you've done in order to avoid a blowup. Also, tucking her in is probably your favorite part of the day. But in a moment of parental frustration and random assertiveness, you've drawn an arbitrary red line, and she looks at you, and you look at her, and you must decide

whether to give in or to stand your ground, and you can't let her think she can change your mind by whining after you've used your serious voice, so you don't budge. "No," you say, "I won't tuck you in." She screams and cries and screams, and you brace yourself, knowing you might never sleep or eat dinner again. —*B.P.*

Self-momscious

A feeling specific to new mothers, triggered by insecurity over their parenting skills and irrational fears of being judged by other people for their parenting.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

Produces a need to speak louder to your child and apologize in advance, fake smiles, light sweats, and a desire to flee, followed by indignant stress eating. —*S.B.*

Sleeplonging

A crushing desire for your sleeping infant.

The baby has been awake since 4 a.m. You are tired beyond tired. Consciousness is a state you don't fully enter but never completely leave. Finally, after it feels like she has been awake for a thousand days, her eyes fall

shut, the nipple drops from her mouth, and she goes soft. You lower her into the crib and magic trick of magic tricks, she does not wake. A shower, tea, the quiet, are waiting, but here is the surprise: As the warm water runs over you, you miss her. In your robe, you stand above her curled form, her cheeks sleep-pink, and you lean down to smell her, the dew of baby sweat, her hands softer than when she is awake. Though you have waited all morning for her to sleep, now you want her back. You reach in and scoop her up and take her to the nursing chair, where your arms will go numb, your neck will tighten, you will get no chores done, no emails written, and you will listen to her breathe, watch a dream flutter across her eyelids, and regret nothing. —*Ramona Ausubel*

Homerriment

The feeling of being greeted by a pet or person who is unself-consciously delighted to see you.

Your young child screaming “Daddy!,” arms open for a big lift-hug. Your dog barking, tail wagging, jumping up to your chest with jubilation and lick-kisses. Your just-moved-in-together romantic partner giddy to have you home. What a thing. That you — complicated and moody — have found another living being who could be so excited about you! Hearing footsteps as your key enters the lock makes your heart beat faster. You find yourself smiling. You feel lighter. You want to be exactly here at

exactly this moment. —*B.P.*

Pa-su

("Parental superiority"): A feeling of pride and relief, mixed with gloating and an underserved sense of responsibility, when your kid isn't as bad as somebody else's kid.

Illustration: Zohar Lazar

—*S.B.*

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