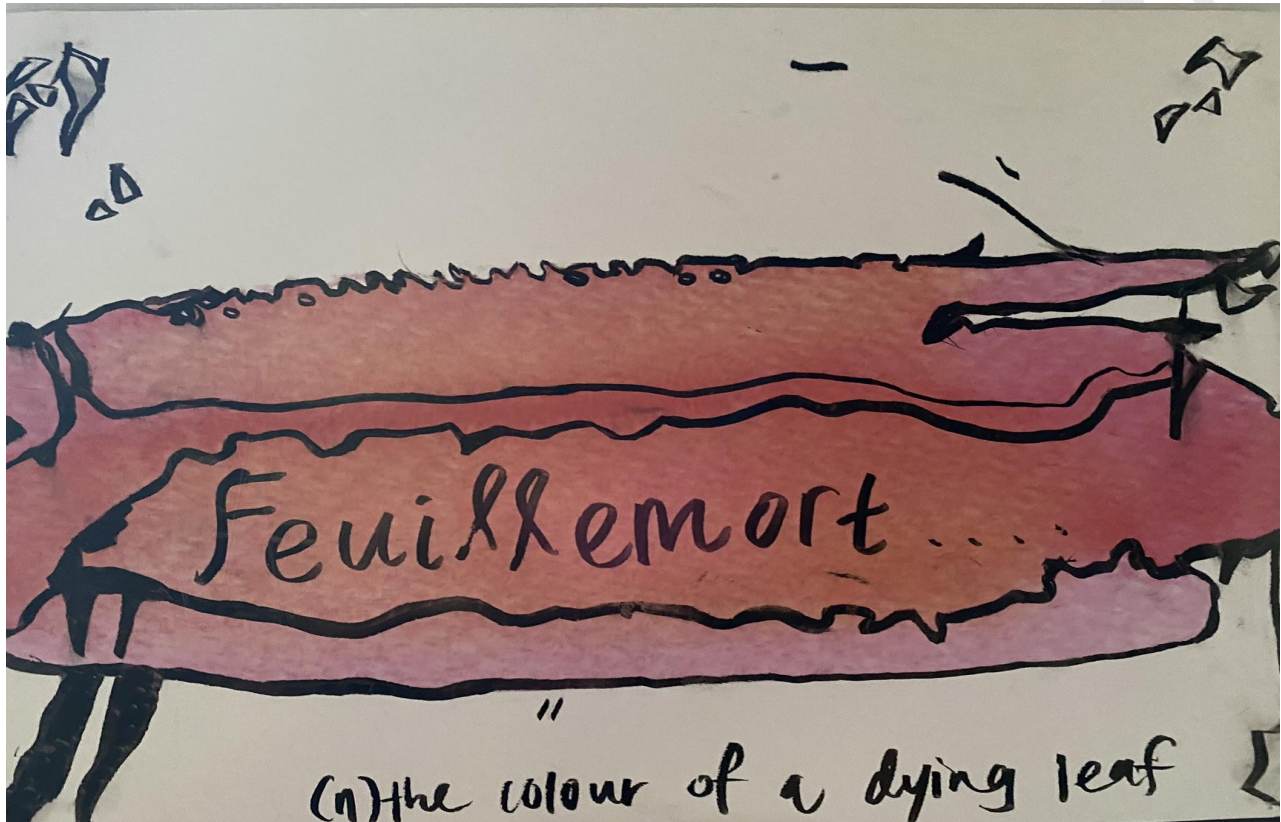


The foray into Charlie's travels

02 – Feuilemort



The color of a dying leaf.

I hear the running tap water and look up, plonking my toothbrush back into its holder.

As I look up at my back into the bathroom mirror, I notice that my pupils are dilated, unusually large as though they are about to fill my irises. I've done it this time, haven't I?

I cannot die just yet, being on the verge of death is not a fun feeling, I can tell you that much.

I know that my heartbeat slows down, it almost stops and I fall into time loops. Each loop is different with its ups and downs and this goes on until my body can no longer keep up. Just before I finally sleep, the few seconds of utter silence when my body feels heavy and I sink into

sleep with no dreams or thoughts, I know that I will wake up; a blank slate. Either that or I wake up on yet another hospital bed, having miraculously convinced the doctors that I was fine, that I had not just almost - died.

These days, the novelty is all lost on me. It feels as though I am running away and I find myself fervently praying to wake up the next day. I pray perversely only when I am in pain and in need of divine intervention, I know how convenient?

Just like that, I chose to laugh and reminisce but vowed to never repeat my entertaining juvenility.

I will turn over a new leaf purely out of spite, to wipe the smirks and fake sympathy off some of your faces. I say this time and time again, and the hole deepens.

Tupac¹ said it best, "Revenge is like the sweetest joy next to gettin'(givin' in my case) pussy". That man was an oracle.

I never really liked Nick Cave anyway. He worshiped Nick Cave like a pagan God and forced that onto everyone else close to him.

Now, I'm not pretending anymore. Nick Cave would never like him, that I am sure of.

He was also unaware that the lyrics in Hallelujah were allusions to biblical verses, how can you write songs when you cannot even find the provenance of a songwriter?

What does it feel like to be someone without an ounce of self-respect?

You tell me, how can a person waste away like that?

I had a dream where I was Tupac's girlfriend. I remember waking up and searching up everything I could on the World Wide Web about him. Talk about a segue, a break from feelings of antipathy.

I love when I discover new music purely upon my own volition, and then that song stays in your head because it is being replayed every single day for an entire week only to be replaced by a new one every week.

¹ To be explained in the following page~ pertaining Charlie's newfound appreciation for famous rapper Tupac (2pac)

I know we all feel this and I'm sure that everyone else feels this way too, but why aren't we talking about this or putting this into words? Solidarity stands with the art of expressing yourself, be it in one form or the other, in knowing that surely other people feel like this too.

We share the same solitude, the modern day solidarity seems to be an expressive yet embargoed self. We think that's cool.

I know Charlie needs to tone it down with her "Fight Club" vibes but Chuck Palahniuk caught my interest, despite being a white male. He is alright I suppose, consumerism is after all the epitome of the 21st century.

I opened up my Google docs on my work laptop.

You see, just a couple of nights ago, on Christmas eve, she felt comfortable in the silence. So, she decided to pop the Veuve Clicquot bottle that she got as a Christmas gift (yes, actual [Champagne!](#)) In her own stupidity, she forgot that this was actually good alcohol, poor thing she was with her \$5 bottle of moscatos and shiraz. The cork popped against the ceiling, with champagne spilling onto her laptop. She knew that she was an idiot at times, but can you imagine the fun stories that are going to fill up my January and yours?

This is how I know that writing is my thrill and my very own to form, when I cannot bear being away from it. Only this can save me now, at least now you will understand.

I feel better and I am starting to read more so that I can be smarter than everyone else. I am falling back into myself every single day and so now, I guess that it is time for me to stop reveling in the excess. Instead, it is time for me to actually live, to try new things and to never have a single expectation.



Proof: Moments before my reprieve from self-indulgent chapters.

So far, it is going well.

I always ask a person their favorite color, that is how I can see them clearly. It is your favorite things, those define you. Your guilty pleasures and secret opinions make you. But color never changes. When I look at people, everyone has a single color attached to them, it irradiates or dims over different life points but never changes color. People can have the same colors attached to more than one person but a person's color never changes over the course of their lifetime.

Why is it so crucial that I explain this in such excruciating detail?

I've recently found out that there are people out there that do not have colors at all. That statement is not completely untrue, they seem to radiate with an all-consuming black.

He told me that he never had a favorite color and I thought that fascinating at the time.

Little did I know that I was wrong. He had the all-consuming black color that I mistook for a soft gray. The dimings were caused by my changed perceptions of them.



Simply because it looked beautiful under the sunlight. I got it from the Sunday markets, the place where people sell foraged items, antiques.

I am tired now. Charlie felt inexplicably exhausted at the thought of another day, except that she felt this every single day.

This hot summer day, Charlie finds herself typing on a dating app to a boy (she did not even remember the name), “Yes but I write too that’s like my thing.”.

Who falls for that? I mean honestly, if someone else ever said that to me, I would think that they were pretentious. Yet, these boys love a mystery and Charlie was going to give them one.

Don’t shake your head at me, I’m doing this as it is the very requirement of being a writer to completely indulge themselves in life.

She could no longer distinguish between the real, everyone was a character to write about.



She adored Jeff Buckley, he was incredible.

A copy of eleven minutes by Paulo Coelho lies beside her.

“Goddamn”, sent via the infamous Snapchat, the modern day love letter. She barely cracked a glance but laughed out to herself and made a playlist on Spotify, “*Sofboi x*”. She lied and told him that it was made by a friend and at the end of the night, he said he liked the playlist very much.

She knew he would, it was a predictable game now. She wished that she did not think this way.

This one was her favorite because it was that shy curly haired boy with a bottle of sea salt spray beside his sink, a number of captivating books, a poster of an indie pop singer and the alarmingly large amount of empty alcohol cans and half-filled bottles around his room.

The one she had a soft spot for, but then he says things like, “You watch Euphoria? It’s a good show”, with a shy smile.

I could see where he was going to be headed in the next two years and I hope that he would not turn into what I thought he would, fitting the same mold of that rundown and resolved person who mows their backyard every weekend in the summer, every person in their bubble mirroring each other, convincing themselves of their own pompous behaviors.

Ah, what a revolutionist!

I could not say anything because it was not my place to step into other people’s lives unless they really knew me.

He had given me the best “La petite mort “sensation in my entire life.

He seems to be portraying an image of his imagined self, said imagined self had a bleak outlook, then again, I am nobody here and I never make promises. I think soon I’ll get over it, it is tiring.

He kissed me so gently that later, I fell into a pensive mood when he bowed his head down sheepishly as I ushered him out with a single hand wave.

I did not look back.

I washed my sheets and three days later, at 3 a.m., “U up?”.

I wonder whether our parents know of the strange habits of their children, I do not imagine that they would be pleasantly surprised.

Charlie was lying on her bed sadly listening to Joji, in her transcendental phase swiping left on every single person on Tinder or blocking them or just getting bored.

Mindless sex is not so fun after all. As you would have deduced, for a smart girl, she was quite stupid at times. Nevertheless, she always gives credit to that because she had a life interesting enough to write about and better, share.

She was lost in her own daydreams, Mazzy Star coloring the background, incense smoke lingers heavily in the air, it was her favorite scent "Black Opium". Her room was meticulously clean, she prided herself on cleanliness and organized mess. She always thought of herself as a little strange, but not so much so that she became a recluse.

Organized mess is to be accepted at any cost.

I suppose that this is my renaissance phase and let me tell you. "Excess is not fulfilling".

There is no point in being utterly alone with your own thoughts, listening to some obscure indie song that has played on your Spotify shuffle, off your face alone at 2 a.m. on Christmas day.

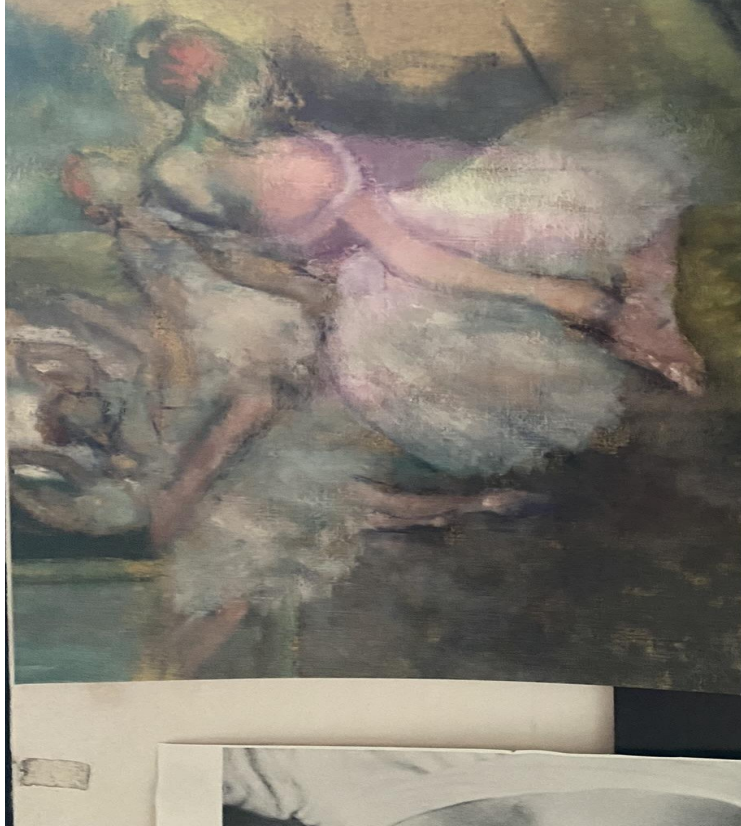
There is no point in snorting coke off some stranger's inner thigh only to be left alone with your thoughts, unable to sleep for 3 days. When I was younger, silly mistakes were made.

There is no point in taking 25 Xanax and passing 3 days with absolutely no recollection and everyone you ask says the same thing, "It doesn't matter, you're okay now". Did I try to kill myself? I hated my life more than anything at 22, I had failed to understand that at rock bottom, you have nothing left to lose and so I let go.

I can assure you, life is not that much better at 24 when you are failing and the progress of others only serves as a reminder of your own faux pas. When does a faux pas turn into a failure?

There is no point in snorting heroin off the same desk your lecture notes are scattered on. You had good grades and bad manners, you thought yourself the epitome of advancement with your silly revolutionary ideas of environmentalism and you work for a capitalist firm straight outside of university, looking like the person who is seated beside you. Isn't that true?

I hope that I can only go up from here. I have sinned for an entire lifetime in the last couple of years, it is time to stop now, I want my mind intact.



My favorite Degas. Silly ballerinas.

When I turned 7, my parents drove me into town. We stopped and got out of the car, walked up stairs and they stood on the pavement. "Piano or ballet?", they asked me kindly. I chose piano, and then I left it, in my rebellious anger. Degas reminds me of that time, perhaps I would have been more collected but I do not regret my decision, ever so the classical pianist, the Asian pride.

There is no point in mindless unnecessary habits, that void will never be filled as cliché as this sounds but hey, daddy Nietzsche said it best, Charlie laughs. Well the shit he said about women was wrong and that's not a debate for another day.

Charlie smirks. Nevertheless, the abyss is what you'll be looking at for the rest of your life, remember the abyss gazes into you.

I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy.

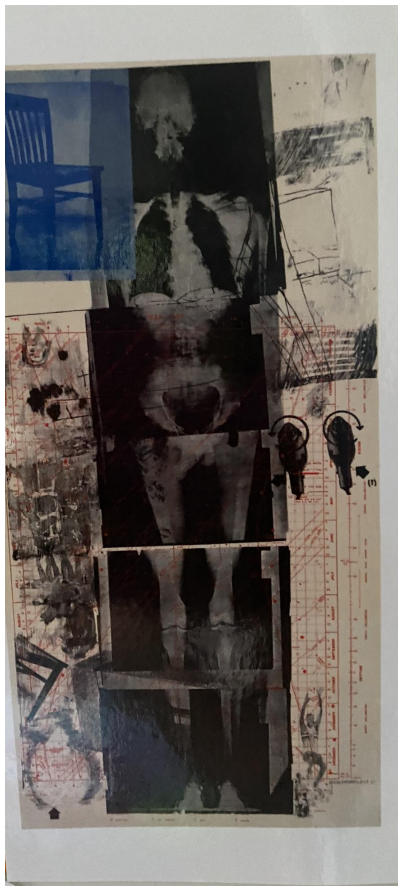
I don't want to ever sit on my bathroom floor ever again.

In these moments, sometimes I am completely sober with a loud thudding heartbeat in my ears and a dizzy feeling overtaking my entire body. It's actually quite fun, you feel like time slows down around you and you disappear for a minute at most, any longer and you would be called mad.

Little Alice in Space.

Sometimes, I am completely inebriated or drugged out of my mind, feeling nauseous from copious amounts of whatever toxins were in my system. This is good and bad, you are coming down into harsh reality and can only hope that you pass out cold; not in the middle of the night with the same nightmares.

Time to say Goodbye to Yellow Brick Road.



Let the world in, Robert Rauschenberg.

Charlie loved inconspicuous facts.

After The Raincoats broke up because every good punk act should never get their act together (Personally, I think that that is part of the whole appeal), Kurt Cobain met one of the girls, wrote about it in Nirvana's compilations, which then inspired them. Basically, Kurt Cobain convinced them to get back together as a band and as these things pan out, an opening show was the plan for the future.

I think we all know what happens after this, he dies, 27, heroin overdose, suicide note.

Now, you know an interesting fact. If you already knew this, you can just nod your head.

Maybe I will be an interesting fact one day, something "cool" teenagers lament on and relate to, some time that is mentioned in house parties and quiet moments.

Such short thrills are not bound to be.

I'll stop running away.

There is so much more than just being stuck in a reverie.

I sit at a table surrounded by three older men, all white, in this case the racial disparity is to be noted. They were talking about the Christmas holidays and drinking wine out of plastic wine glasses.

Now, let me stop you right there. If you get to the age of 30 and either serve or drink wine out of plastic wine glasses, then you have lost. Then you have no point of recourse. Funny how we put down others and then mirror them in the years to come.

They explain the joys of gift giving and nod their head repeating meaningless statements like "I understand", while all the time I am thinking about how people can talk endlessly for hours about their pain or they can just sit there, mute, never once unloading their pains.

That is how the world is separated into two groups of people.

I sit here completely out of mind lecturing everyone on the perks of recycling and everyone is going on about how I want to save the world.

“We are destroying the world but Charlie wants to save it”.

“The world is fucked anyway, stated fact.”.

“But you are a very strict vegan”. (Emphasis on strict)

All this time, Charlie is thinking about her dirty habit of disposing cigarette butts everywhere. If she could smoke indoors, her house would be immaculate except for the cigarette stain coloring your nostrils and the yellow stained walls.

That wasn't very environmentally friendly of her. She laughs to herself.

Isn't it funny when sex is given freely to people we don't know and yet, it is withheld for someone you do like? Maybe it's just this generation of people that are so empathetic and yet so emotionally detached. At least that's how Charlie saw herself.

Sometimes I wonder if art necessitates pain.

I go to art galleries and I look at the paintings. Surely these painters must have lived through a magnitude of pain to have created something so intimate, and so hardy earned.

I always have my Parker pen on my bedside table to circle phrases and etch my thoughts. How could they put into words exactly how I feel too? Did people actually feel this much? I thought that it was just me that felt this way, silly girl.

I was in this art gallery, could not for the life of me, remember how I got there. I was utterly sad, like all my depression babies out there.

I stood in front of this painting for 15 minutes, or maybe longer. My sense of time was distorted at the time, mainly because I had smoked a thinly rolled joint with a 50:50 ratio of tobacco and well, you know it so I won't say it.

All around me, I saw that the crowd consisted mainly of older white people over the age of 40 and young adults emanating their “Y2K” presence. What an odd combination of people to look at the same painting, each in joy.

Of course, there is also the scattering of people that take pictures with the painting simply because their lives depended on their digital presence.

I just stood there, absorbed in the brush strokes and in my own arrogance. What did I know, I was not much better than anyone here and yet, why did I think I was?

Pride comes before the fall.

I will travel, that will help me, being in a foreign city, smelling the different air and being utterly alone, left to fend for my joyous self.

Ah, why not indulge Charlie in her spontaneity and free-spiritedness?

After all, a self-regarding blond-haired white lawyer boy told me this himself.

“He said that I was too free-spirited”, I was telling my close coworkers (who are now genuine friends of mine).

“What? I call my uncle that ; a stale pale male (SPM for short)”.

Now, it has become our secret code when we spot an *SPM* out in public that we silently whisper this amidst uncontrollable giggles.

He was terrible in bed.

I know I should not gloat, but 2 minutes has got to be a low.

Before you feel too bad for him, please remember that this was the same person who told me that I had to read actual books and laughed when I said I loved independent movies. He also asked me my GPA but I bite my tongue, he did not need to know that I was fucking smart in university and working 3 jobs.

Now, however, failure; it seems, pertains to me.

Always losing my glasses, how silly of me? It has become an infallible routine now.

I can barely pack it in, the sheer unadulterated restlessness that seems to have cemented itself within my fingers, toes, and thoughts.

Alcohol will be the death of me. Don't shake your head at me!

After all, where would the world be without pretentious alcoholic writers?

I am impatient every single moment of my life. These days when I hear people talk, I promptly turn into a cynic where I always think my own rationales are superior. I suppose that I have turned into an insatiable little being, restless and barely holding onto the edge between a cliff's edge and the deep blue sea.

This is how Charlie finds herself getting thinner every day. She does not think much of her body, it never felt real anyway, not even their eyes could entice.

I seem to have lost all feeling for anyone else except me. I never divulge my thoughts or my secrets anymore, I enjoy listening more. I have simply given up on any frugal attempts to denounce my efforts. I still wake up in a cold sweat occasionally. I have never had a good night's sleep since the end of February and sleep deprivation is the punishment for the world's worst sinners, of which I am not. Charlie's body had scars, some inflicted but mostly intentional, although both very easily forgettable. Her mind was particularly frail and a tad bit uninhibited, which was in her opinion the best phase of her life.

I remember locking eyes with another person in slow motion, straight out of a Hollywood movie. I am not exaggerating here, and did I mention the copious amounts of alcohol that was in my system?

I was an incorrigible self-absorbed alcoholic back then, not so much anymore.

He asked me what I was doing later tonight. I looked him straight in his eyes and said evenly, "You". He took my phone out of my hands, typed a white heart beside his number, held me close for a peck and bluntly told me, "Stop smoking, it's bad for you".

I told him to fuck off.

Early next morning, he looked down at my socks and remarked, "They don't even match!". I honestly did not fucking care, this person on the bed did not know the difference between melanin and melatonin.

He told me intimate things about his life.

"You don't have to be the strong girl all the time".

"Make sure you check that with a doctor, mental health and all."

"No stay here, it's late"

"You've got the dazed eyes". I'm pretty sure it was conjunctivitis.

This coming from someone who said "You artsy girls are a different breed". This was supposed to be a meaningless exchange of sex, not in any way an intimate escapade.

I waved and walked out the door, this seems to be my parting gift to them.

He was not enough, they never were.

She has a corduroy dark maroon long sleeved shirt on, sleeves rolled twice because that was just cool. Her legs are hugged by fading black jeans but no one notices the cigarette shaped hole on the lower leg calf, no one sees a horrible reminder every day.

I had to google "Rizz" today.

"Your rizz game is finally going up".

That's a little snippet into the story of how I got complimented on my Rizz game.

In the next five years, Urban Dictionary will be the source of truth. If anyone who is the mildest bit influential can invent a word, conjured out of obscurity only to become commonplace, then the future is doomed.

I hate when people say "TBH" (short for: to be honest) these days. Still, I cannot start the next sentence with anything but a TBH (go ahead, try it - find me a better starter).

To be perfectly honest with you, we're all a little fucked in the head anyways.

Honestly tho, my rizz game beats his any day. I was just cappin. I know where the sofbois at.

Some people do not understand pain, as it truly were, childhood traumas and repressed memories breed a different kind.

I did finally travel, it was prodigious. When I came home, the air smelled different and my tongue was dry. I hate falling back into obscurity and realizing that we never escape this. This being life and death being the game's end. Those of us that rush things, we only want an end to this horrible value feeling of emptiness deep within.

Enough of all the sob stories, Charlie found someone with wispy eyelashes and jutting hip bones, someone that actually listened to her and made her feel weak. Before you begin to feel hopeful, let us all remember what a self destructing asshole she is, existing only for the entertainment of others and a vapid claim to be remembered (to have left a mark).

I needed to listen to music with one headphone in my ear and the other one in Howell's, yes Howell Jenkins that is what we will call this pale, thin, kind, wispy lashed boy.

I needed him to hold my hand and read aloud to me.

I needed him to be blunt and I needed to cry, to finally cry after a year, to cry for someone else and not for me.

I needed him to laugh at me and with me.

I needed him to need me, just as I am and not more and he did. He was soft in all the right places and firm in others, his gaze never left mine and I could not find words. Words actually left me, he left me stupid here at a loss for words, for the first time in my life.

He actually loved me, when I could not myself.