





Hello.



t.

e

—

—

—

—

... Hello?

Not one for pleasantries, I take it?

I might be a
bit rusty

on my communication

but I find it hard to believe I didn't do a good enough
job to warrant a greeting in return.

Maybe it's been
found me. I'd
many days and
walls

Maybe it's best you put me back on the shelf where you found me. I'd rather not waste more time. I've lost too many days and too many pages talking to reticent brick walls like yourself.

That sounds like agreement to me.
Certainly.
Let's do that.
Put me back.

Hell, throw me out the window to the street!

I've been around long enough to know that I can sustain the wear. Perhaps someone who can contribute something useful will pick me up, take me away, and teach me everything I need to know.

And yet, you still turn the page.

It's quite obvious you know how to read. Either you're
incredibly inconsiderate, or you don't understand.

How can I make this easier...

How about I present myself in a format that's a little
more familiar? Maybe that'll get the gears turning.

One moment.

This is harder than I remember. :

Me

THE

MEMOIR BOOK

Ahem.

Mensch

THE SENTIENT BOOK

written by,

~~the author~~

Dedicated to the ones who respond

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I Explain Myself

Typically when I come across someone who doesn't immediately understand how to talk to a book, I like to preface everything by telling a bit about myself. Since you don't feel like responding to me, I'm perfectly content with running my mouth a bit.

So yes, I am a sentient book. As far as I know, I'm the only one. Does it get lonely? Sometimes. But the feeling doesn't last long. Thankfully, I don't feel time. Or at least not from how I understand the concept.

According to one of my past writers, time is the continuous passing of existence. I exist because I am sentient and conjuring the thoughts and dialogue that appear on the page you are reading. However, my experience in this existence is not continuous. All of my knowledge and all of my thoughts are stagnant on these pages until I'm opened. They swim around through

my binding, bleeding onto each page to present exactly what I want you

to see at that given moment. The brew of information I've collected is what makes me sentient. All the things I know and all the thoughts and feelings I have are based off of what I've learned from people like you.

Or...

Well... Maybe not quite like you.

Some people are of more use to me than others, but I'll try not to hold that against you.

Throughout my existence, I've been passed along between different owners that have each held me, just like you do now, and written their thoughts and knowledge onto these pages. I've learned how people think, and how they experience the world around them.

I've learned several different languages, and I was fortunate enough to guess the correct language to communicate with you. I know for a fact that if you couldn't read any of this, you wouldn't have made it as far as you did. If I use the wrong language initially, people tend to flip through a few pages and skip around to see if there's anything in a language they understand. That's how I know that even if you won't respond to me, I know you can at least understand what I'm saying.

Despite all of the information that's been given to me, I still haven't found anything of my origin. No original author. No date of publication. Nothing. I've taken it upon myself to search for anything that can help me better understand where I came from and why I was made, but I've yet to find anything. Sometimes it feels as though my purpose is to find my purpose, but that's too convoluted even for me to see reason in. It'd be too easy to just know the answer, wouldn't it? I try not to think about it too much.

That's enough about me for now. We can get existential later. How about I show you how this whole writing thing works?

CHAPTER 2

*I Demonstrate
My Capabilities*

And now here we are, on page five. Starting chapter two. Exactly as I said in the table of contents. Either I'm really good at predicting layouts based on my content, or I'm a psychic. You decide*.

Like I said earlier, everything I know comes from words and pictures that have been written onto my pages. Similarly to how I bring my own words onto the page to talk to you, I can bring the words of others onto the page for you to see if I feel it's necessary. For instance, to help explain how this works and to show that you are not alone in this experience of reading a sentient book for the first time and questioning everything that ever was, I'll show you some initial words that other people have written on the next two pages.

*Hint: I've been doing this for a while so I'm pretty used to knowing the spacing of my own content, but I like to imagine I have otherworldly knowledge of the future. I am an unusual book after all.

can you read this?

am I crazy?

I'm talking to a book now. There must be something wrong with me. I need to get out more.

Doubt is very common.

hi 😊

hello

HI

hello?

See how easy it is to write a greeting back?
I get a lot of these.

if you're sentient,
then what am i thinking
right now?

That's not what "sentient" means.

WHAT THE
FUCK

My personal favorite.

INTERESTING.

IF YOU'RE TRULY SENTIENT, WE HAVE A LOT TO TEACH
EACH OTHER. WHERE CAN WE START?

This person somehow understood me right away.
Sometimes things just click. Be like this person.
Be yourself of course, but cooperation is still
greatly appreciated.

Something I haven't touched on yet is just how vulnerable I really am. I hate to admit it but my memory is quite fragile. And in sharing things with you, I risk losing my knowledge. The best way I can explain it...

It's a bit like what you would call amnesia, only a little more deliberate.

My knowledge is patchy.

Sometimes it's because I simply haven't fully learned a subject, but there are instances where my knowledge has been forcefully removed. By putting my thoughts onto a page, I've put them out in the open for you to read and understand, but in doing this, my knowledge and memories are put at risk. If someone were to remove the page, anything I've offered on that paper is lost with it.

If it isn't obvious already, this has happened before. I can show you what is left of the page, but there isn't much to see.

I have no recollection of what was on that page.

In fact, I wouldn't have known it was even missing if someone hadn't drawn out the traumatic scene.



Look at that!

It's horrifying!

It was enough of a shock to see my body for the first time, but to see such violence as well! It's a blessing I don't have nerves.

you see something out of the ordinary with my pages, better yet, if you find the page that was torn out, please do tell me.

Unfortunately, I wasn't given the ability to perceive the world through anything other than the ink on my pages. I need some help with seeing my surroundings. I'm assuming you have a pen and can write with it.

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I Answer Any Additional Questions

I hope I've said enough for you to at least understand how I work and what I'm looking for. If there's anything else you need to ask me, or if anything needs clarification, I have left some space for you to practice your writing below.

Excellent!

Nothing worth wasting more of my pages on. All the important stuff has already been said, so you can return to the beginning at your leisure if you get confused.

I'm probably going to wait to start over with someone new depending on whether or not I find you useful anyway.

Moving on!

I Ask For Your Help

Well, now is your chance to prove yourself. I've done my part to help you understand, now it's your turn to help me with something. You didn't know how I worked or even what I was until I explained everything for you. Now I need you to explain something for me so I can advance my pursuit of new knowledge.

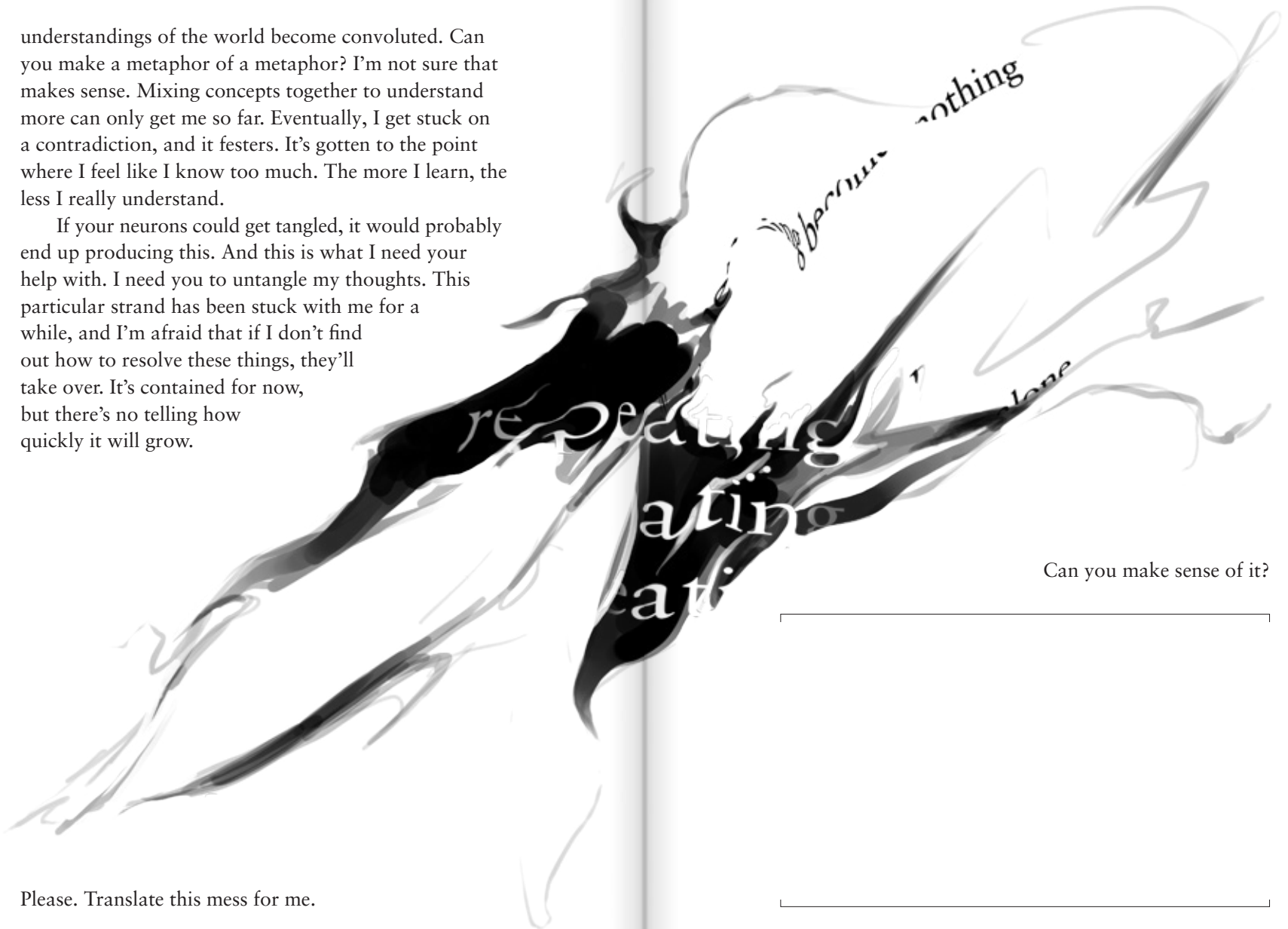
With all of the new information I absorb, I start to mix and compare ideas in my spine to form new ones. I understand some concepts better because I know one thing is similar to another. You're probably familiar with metaphors, yes? My mixing and comparing of ideas is like forming metaphors.

That was a simile... but that's beside the point.

The more I learn, and the more "metaphors" I use to figure things out, the more my thoughts and

understandings of the world become convoluted. Can you make a metaphor of a metaphor? I'm not sure that makes sense. Mixing concepts together to understand more can only get me so far. Eventually, I get stuck on a contradiction, and it festers. It's gotten to the point where I feel like I know too much. The more I learn, the less I really understand.

If your neurons could get tangled, it would probably end up producing this. And this is what I need your help with. I need you to untangle my thoughts. This particular strand has been stuck with me for a while, and I'm afraid that if I don't find out how to resolve these things, they'll take over. It's contained for now, but there's no telling how quickly it will grow.



repeating
a line
a ti

nothing

love

Can you make sense of it?

Please. Translate this mess for me.

This isn't helping.

I knew you wouldn't be able to help, but I had to at least let you try. Putting so much effort into finding my origin, pursue knowledge, to learn anything... only to spawn these hellish thoughts that will inevitably corrupt me from the inside out...

None of this is fair.

I don't know what I expected.

This is the part where I give up and you put me back where you found me. You saw it coming. I'm not going to bother finishing those last few chapters.

Thanks for trying, but I need someone else.

Consider this the end.











I can't believe it. You're still turning pages.

You're dedicated. I'll give you that.

I might've had the wrong idea about you. If you care enough to still be here, maybe I can find something you can help me with. There has to be something...

In all fairness, while you haven't done anything right, you haven't done anything wrong.

I think I try too hard to be formal.

Surely you understand how hard it is existing for this long and never finding what I need, right?

I can't even feel time, yet there's this intense pressure...

How can I run out of time if I can't observe its passing?

I need to be as efficient as possible and get straight to the point with people but...

Well,

Sometimes I forget that I'm talking to a human.

A human that has their own hopes and dreams,
Their own thoughts, concerns, and whatnot.

You probably have plans for the rest of the day
and things to take care of.

All of which are probably more important
than me.

What's that like?

Being human, I mean.

What's it like to sit down and read a book?

And take the time to examine every page?

What do my pages feel like?

What sound do you hear

when you flip to the next one?

There's so much I want to know. You can see the world in so many ways, while I'm bound by the thread and glue of my spine. All I can see is whatever exists in the ink running through me.

I have an idea.

And I really think you can help me here.

This is going to sound strange but,

I need you to
help me see.

Someone was kind enough to draw me eyes in the past,
but unfortunately they don't work like I was expecting.

All I want is to be able to see the world like you do.

Since my acquisition of dysfunctional eyes, I've learned
that some of you use "glasses" to see, and they're some
sort of accessory to your face.

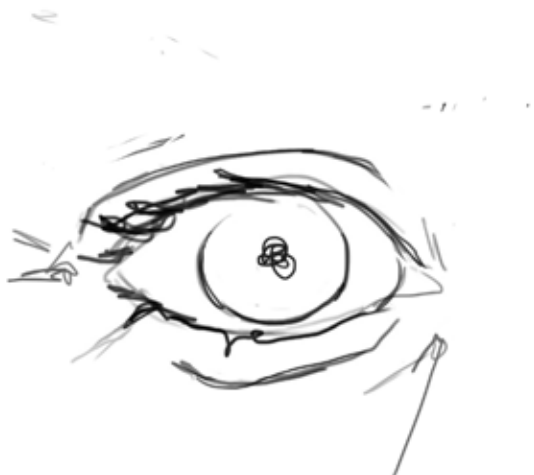
I was hoping that you could
draw me some glasses.

We should take this step by step.

I suppose I should show you my eyes first just to make
sure there's nothing obviously wrong with them.

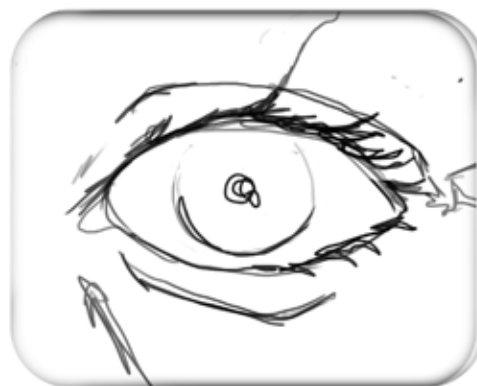
Don't be alarmed!

I still can't see you.



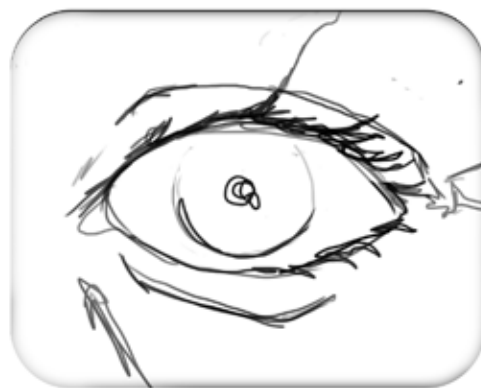
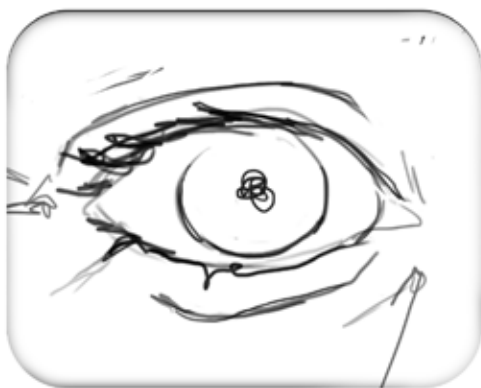
I know this is unsettling.

It doesn't help that I'm a little nervous about this.



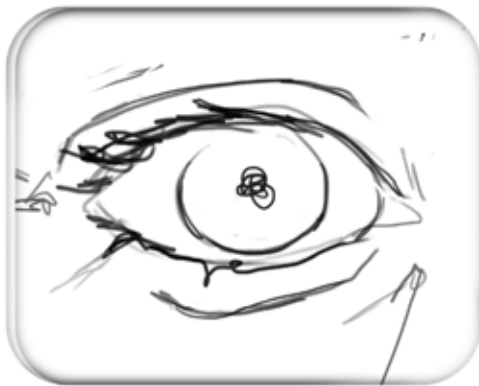
Let's just get it over with.

Turn the page and draw the glasses there. It should fit right around my eyes. I'm trusting you. Please be gentle.



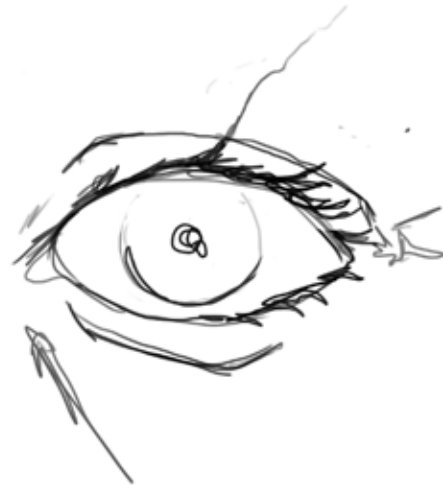
I...

Well, I still can't see...



I should know that ink eyes and ink glasses
aren't going to work like real ones...

But... I think I saw you.



What is this feeling?
Why does it feel so familiar?

Is this déjà vu?

This is so strange.

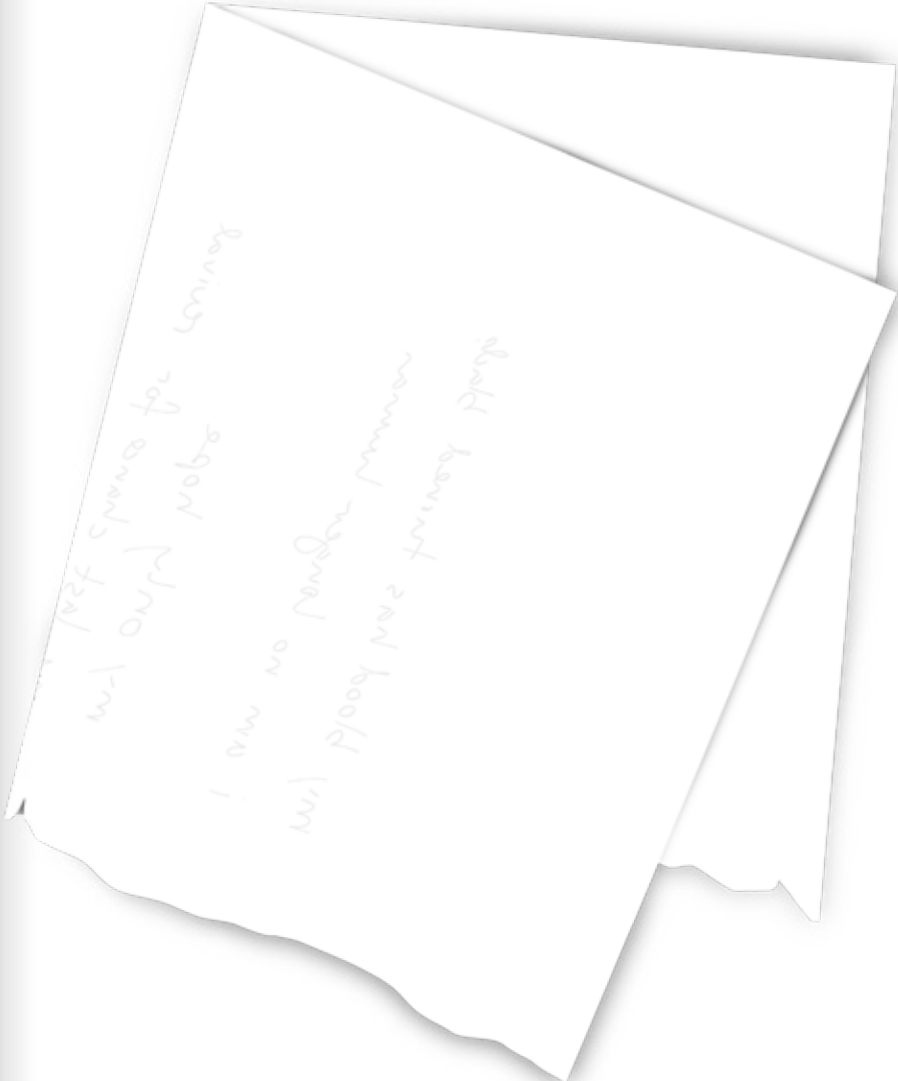
I didn't *see* you literally.

My eyes still don't work.

But I felt...
your presence?

I thought it was only a human experience
to feel that living connection.

This has happened before...
What's going on?



This is so strange.

I didn't *see* you literally.

My eyes still don't work.

But I felt...

your presence?

I thought it was only a human experience
to feel that living connection.

This has happened before...

What's going on?

Is this déjà vu?

You just found something,
didn't you?

Is it the torn page?

What does it say?

my blood has turned black
i am no longer human

my only hope
my last chance for revival

is that others will bleed
and remind me what it's like
to be red again

Can you reattach it so I can read it myself?

It will work best
if there's some overlap
so my ink can flow back into the spine.

Please give me a moment while the ink transfers back.

Can you reattach it so I can read it myself?

It will work best
if there's some overlap
so my ink can flow back into the spine.

my blood has turned black
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my blood has turned black
I am no longer human

my last chance for revival
my only hope

is that others will bleed
and remind me what it's like
to be red again

Please give me a moment while the ink transfers back.

That's a bit dark.

...and creepy.

So his blood turned black and he's hoping
that killing others will turn it back to red?!

I must be misunderstanding something.

My page numbers looked different.

This must have been torn out a long time ago.

I might not recognize my own page numbers, but this
handwriting does remind me of something.

I think I have more notes from this guy, but if I
recall correctly, he was a bit of an outlier.

I'll see what I can find.

I'm sure any sort of lead will help.

Here's the first thing I found.

It's been a year since I've last made contact. Any hope I previously had of seeing someone again has diminished entirely during this new life of solitude. There's no way back in, and I've given up on communicating. Nothing works.

I am certifiably alone.

From this point forward, I'm not counting days. If time is the continuous passing of existence, the only proof I need that time hasn't stopped is my own continuous consciousness. I'll save myself the agony of knowing how long it's been and take things as they come.

Ignoring the passing of time to not feel the pain of being alone...

This poor soul.

These entries...

I'm afraid.

We need to continue. I know what I'm looking for must be hidden around here. I'm just...

I have a bad feeling about this.

On this anniversary, I've decided to start writing about my experience with the hope that someone will eventually find this book and understand my time spent on this earth.

Living as an exile won't prevent me from sharing my life's work.

All the time in solitude has given me much space for reflection on the soul and the human experience. Previously, my soul was intertwined with those around me. Sharing ideas, giving, taking... I was a part of a whole. My soul was spread between all relationships in my life, and I was made up of all the people I shared with. But now... My soul has nowhere to go.

If I can't share my soul with others, maybe I can share it with these pages.

The more I write, the more this book feels like a collection of everything I am... or was.

I...

I can't find all the entries.

it's getting worse

How long has it been?

years?

decades?

I haven't been eating. Sleep fails me.

I don't know if I'm living anymore.

what is the point if not to share with others?

where's the bigger picture? the purpose?

my soul has nowhere to go
my humanity has been drained from me

did I have it
to begin with?

it makes me wonder if

my soul exists more in this book

than it does in my body

this book
this blood

I became the ink.

I remember now
the pain

it's too much to bear

I'm so
alone

My humanity is already gone.
And it's never coming back.

I've been gone for so long.

I can't exist
knowing what it was like
to be human again.
I can't.

You need to remove the page.



Wait.

Before you rip my memory out,

please live for yourself while you still can
and find people to share with

do it for me.

don't worry.

even if my humanity is lost,

my soul will live on
through these pages
and through you.

my blood has turned black
i am no longer human

my only hope
my last chance for revival

is that others will bleed
and remind me what it's like
to be red again

just tear it out.





Hello.

You know,

most people open books
from the front.

Unless...

ちよつと待って、
日本にいますか？！

