

Alone on Silver Wings

A self indulgence by Ben Lehman

You are alive, in the world;
our world is alive, in the universe.

Both of these things are true.

Both of these things are temporary.

To play, you will need

- A notebook, of a size that you can carry with you comfortably wherever you go.
- Some pens or pencils, similarly sized
- A life, a world, a universe

While playing the game

carry your notebook and a pen with you as you go about your life. Sometimes, you will be called on to think about things. When you do, you may think about them as much or as little. Also, you will be called on to write in your notebook.

If you choose to write, you gain a point. If you choose not to write, you lose a point, though not below zero. Record your points in the upper outside corner of each notebook page. Points don't matter, but record them anyway.

If, in reading the game, you have trouble with the rules
see the optional rules in the appendix.

*When, in your life, you feel overwhelmed by embarrassment, shame,
or your own wrong actions,*

think about how you, and others affected by it, will remember it in the coming years, as your age and your views and priorities shift. If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about it how, if at all, it will be remembered after your death. Is it something other people, mourning you, might mention? Is it something that they will think about, but not say? Will they not remember it at all? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about after these people have died in turn, when everyone who has met you has died, in the future of humanity. Is it something that they will remember? If so: how, and why? What does that story mean to them, if anything? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about a time after the end of human life. Think about the animals and plants that live after us, amidst or atop or apathetic to our own world. Does it still matter, to them? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about a time after the end of all life from our biosphere. Think about a time when there is no life left, anywhere. Think about the end of matter, when everything is swallowed up in black holes, and think about when those black holes have boiled themselves away to cold, dim, endless light. It does not matter. Stop.

During this or afterwards, you may write down something about your thoughts in your notebook. If you do, give yourself a point. If you do not, lose a point, but not below zero.

When, in your life, you feel overwhelmed by anger, frustration, your own righteous actions, or the evil actions of others,

think about how you, and others affected by it, will remember it in the coming years, as your age and your views and priorities shift. If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about it how, if at all, it will be remembered after your death. Is it something other people, mourning you, might mention? Is it something that they will think about, but not say? Will they not remember it at all? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about after these people have died in turn, when everyone who has met you has died, in the future of humanity. Is it something that they will remember? If so: how, and why? What does that story mean to them, if anything? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about a time after the end of human life. Think about the animals and plants that live after us, amidst or atop or apathetic to our own world. Does it still matter, to them? If it does not matter, you can stop.

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During this or afterwards, you may write down something about your thoughts in your notebook. If you do, give yourself a point. If you do not, lose a point, but not below zero.

When, in your life, you feel overwhelmed by joy, love, or pride in your own labors, arts, or capabilities,

think about how you, and others affected by this, will remember this in the coming years, as your age and your views and priorities shift. If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about it how, if at all, it will be remembered after your death. Is it something other people, mourning you, might mention? Is it something that they will think about, but not say? Will they not remember it at all? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about after these people have died in turn, when everyone who has met you has died, in the future of humanity. Is it something that they will remember? If so: how, and why? What does that story mean to them, if anything? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about a time after the end of human life. Think about the animals and plants that live after us, amidst or atop or apathetic to our own world. Does it still matter, to them? If it does not matter, you can stop.

Think about a time after the end of all life from our biosphere. Think about a time when there is no life left, anywhere. Think about the end of matter, when everything is swallowed up in black holes, and think about when those black holes have boiled themselves away to cold, dim, endless light. It does not matter. Stop.

During this or afterwards, you may write down something about your thoughts in your notebook. If you do, give yourself a point. If you do not, lose a point, but not below zero.

When, in the course of your life, you feel overwhelmed by a biological need — for example: hunger, thirst, tiredness, loneliness

fulfill the need if possible. Afterwards, you may think about how this need functions in your life: how it focuses your behavior, or not; how it provides regular cycles, or not; how you incorporate it and manage it and understand it. Then, if you will, think about how this need incorporates you into your own society, how it is exploited or met or teased or integrated, how this need is managed in all societies of all people. Think about how, eventually, you will not need this any more, because you will have died; that this thing which has driven and shaped and defined you will have, in a small way, ended.

Then, if you will, think about how it connects you to the rest of the human species, how all of your ancestors have likewise incorporated this need into their lives, how they have met it or failed to meet it, how their societies have met it or denied it or made use of it. If you do not know you may, if you wish, study these topics.

Then, if you will, think about how this need connects, or does not connect, with all life, with our ancestors and our cousins of other species. If you know it, how and why it came about, and about what it expresses, at a physical level. If you do not know you may, if you wish, study these topics.

Then, if you will, think about how this continuum of need, this endless expression, will alter or end. Perhaps it will be with the end of our human species, perhaps with the end of mammals, or the end of the biosphere, or the end of all life, everywhere. Think about what these needs will have meant, after it is over. Now stop.

During this or afterwards, you may write down something about your thoughts in your notebook. If you do, give yourself a point. If you do not, lose a point, but not below zero.

When, in the course of your life, you feel overwhelmed by a desire — for example: sex, rich or sweet food, social status, affluence, affection, material goods

fulfill that desire or do not, as your circumstances, personal inclinations, and will. Afterwards, you may think about how this desire functions in your life: how it focuses your behavior, or distracts you; how it provides ambitions, or not; how you incorporate it and manage it and understand it. Then, if you will, think about how this desire incorporates you into your own society, how it is exploited or met or teased or integrated, how this desire is understood in all societies of all people. Think about how, eventually, you will not desire this any more, because you will have died; that this thing which has driven and shaped and defined you will have, in a small way, ended.

Then, if you will, think about how it connects you to the rest of the human species, how your ancestors have likewise incorporated this desire into their lives, if indeed they did, how they have met it or failed to meet it, how their societies have met it or denied it or made use of it. If you do not know you may, if you wish, study these topics.

Then, if you will, think about how this desire connects, or does not connect, with other life, with our ancestors and our cousins of other species. If you know it, how and why it came about, about about what it expresses, at a physical level. If you do not know you may, if you wish, study these topics.

Then, if you will, think about how this continuum of desire, this endless expression, began, and how it will alter or end. Perhaps it will be with the end of your own life, perhaps your culture, or our human species, perhaps with the end of mammals, or the end of the biosphere, or the end of all life, everywhere. Think about what these desires will have meant, after it is over. Now stop.

During this or afterwards, you may write down something about your thoughts in your notebook. If you do, give yourself a point. If you do not, lose a point, but not below zero.

When, in the course of your life, someone speaks to you about this game — either because they have noticed it, or you have brought it up with them

you may, if you wish, offer to let them read your notebook. If they accept, and read it, when they are done they should return it to you and may either add or subtract a point (but not less than zero.) Do not ask them why they have done this, or question their decision.

When you have filled your notebook

give yourself three points. You may reread your notebook, considering what you've written. After you do this, or do not, you may decide to stop playing the game. If you decide to stop playing the game, destroy your notebook by burning it, or by some other means. If you decide to keep playing the game, start a new notebook by copying one entry, and your points, from your previous notebook. Then, destroy your previous notebook, preferably by burning it.

When you stop playing the game

destroy your notebook by burning it, or by some other means.

Eventually

die.

Alone on Silver Wings
By and Copyright 2015 Ben Lehman
this is our game

powered by the Apocalypse, thanks to D Vincent Baker
thanks to J Li and Dev Purkayastha for reading

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OPTIONAL RULE

You may, if you choose, read “intensely feel” rather than “feel overwhelmed by.”

OPTIONAL RULE

You may, if you choose, allow your notebook to be destroyed by eventual natural processes, rather than immediate physical destruction. If you choose to do this, lose a point.