

Unpremeditated

By

Thomas Heine

WHY I LIKE IT: Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes...

Writing out of Nashville, Thomas Heine literally teaches German about 5 miles from where I live at Middle Tennessee University. His story, "Unpremeditated," is one of those beautiful reasons why I find it to be such a small world and a great reminder that you're always surround by those who love the craft.

There is a cat that is dead and we're just here for the ride.

This story acts as more a monologue that I would watch someone give at an acting audition rather than just an explanation for why there is a dead cat, but therein lies the beauty. It could be myself reciting these lines for you, a child who is telling his reasoning, or, what it is, a story about how the cat, of which we haven't quite decided upon a name, is dead.

I think my favorite part about this piece is the humor – it really is one of those farcical situations in which a cat does not have nine lives.

"I hate it when people laugh or even smirk when you're actually quite serious about something."

A cat is dead and were just here for the ride.

This story is a damn fun ride, it's nice to chuckle every once in a while.

Thanks, from all of us, Mr. Heine.

Read this story.

Laugh.

Admit to yourself that it's pretty goddamn clever.

Nice work.

QUALITY QUOTABLE (for the love of language...)

I hate it when people laugh or even smirk when you're actually quite serious about something. Do I have to explain everything? We all have our reasons. I have mine. Of course, it's also a little embarrassing when you forget that your name tag says, Don't talk to me, and then you start a conversation. That confuses some people and I can relate to that.

UNPREMEDITATED

First of all, let me say that I'm sorry about what happened to Linda's cat Lydia or Lydia's cat Linda. Whichever. I'm sorry that the cat was found dead on the pavement and that it caused such an uproar. Frankly, nobody's going to convince me that a cat with a name Linda or Lydia is any more significant than a nameless one and I've seen plenty of those squished in the street without a crowd around them wailing and carrying on.

Cats are only slightly larger than rats and are the natural enemy to birds. All birds. I wouldn't say that to Lydia, of course, or to Linda. I can't keep names straight and that's one of the reasons I don't like having a lot of people around. In a big group I can't remember who's who and you can only ask so many times, "what's his name?" or "what's her name?" or "what's its name?" before somebody loses their patience and says, "It's David. Not Greg. David."

"Well, OK, David. I'm glad we've cleared that up but your tone of voice has pretty much put an end to our conversation." As long as people know who you mean when you say this or that then the name is just a detail, isn't it?

So, OK. The cat's dead because, name or no name, cats can't fly.

I suppose one way of keeping things from getting out of hand is to wear name tags. On mine, I'd write, "Please do not talk to me right now. I'm thinking." which would be my way of saying, I'm trying to get the details, names, etc. straight. Of course I'd look pretty silly wearing a name tag like that if no one else was wearing one. First of all, I'd be calling attention to myself when all I was trying to do was to give myself a little space, a little breathing room. Who invited everybody over anyway? It must have been my sister. It would have been good of her to tell me in advance. And if she did but I've forgotten, then she should have reminded me.

I do know, however, and this I know from experience, that if you wear a name tag with a personal message like I described, you run the risk of people taking it as a joke. I hate it when people laugh or even smirk when you're actually quite serious about something. Do I have to explain everything? We all have our reasons. I have mine. Of course, it's also a little embarrassing when you forget that your name tag says, Don't talk to me, and then you start a conversation. That confuses some people and I can relate to that.

I didn't have any name tags ready when all the people started arriving. What was the event anyway? Is it somebody's birthday? Are congratulations in order? Surely the gathering wasn't spontaneous. People were showing up with covered dishes. Some even brought their pets. My sister should have warned me about that.

Well, after I had been pretty much forced into conversations that turned into name calling ("Not Greg. It's David."), I went up to my room which is where I should have been the whole time except that I didn't want to appear unsociable or give our family the reputation for inviting people over and then slipping into private rooms and closing the door. Not that I personally invited anyone.

And I wasn't mad either. I just needed to collect my thoughts and make a few name tags. I thought it would help.

I didn't know that someone brought a cat. If I had known, I would have locked my bedroom door because I know that cats are drawn to birds. Any kind of birds. Even mechanical ones. And so of course, that cat with a name starting with L was in the middle of my birds Roger, Philip, Squeaky and Pip none of whom have the wherewithal to escape on their own. You have to wind them up. Linda or Lydia probably would have expected me to wind them all up but instead I just grabbed the cat and flung it out

the window. Then I put the birds in a box and shoved it under my bed in case there were any other cats around. Then I went downstairs with the name tags. Mine said, "Please don't bother me. I'm thinking."

THE END

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In writing monologs and dialogs – at the risk of sounding goofy – I listen and take dictation. One day the speaker in the story popped up and he led me through it. I'm a big fan of Kafka and how he keeps his narrative slightly out of focus and like David Foster Wallace, he has a great sense of humor.

AUTHOR BIO: Writing in Nashville Tennessee, Thomas Heine's prose and poetry have appeared recently in Adelaide Literary Magazine, Shot Glass Journal and Minute Magazine. Heine teaches German at Middle Tennessee State University.
<http://adelaidemagazine.org/2019/08/19/not-quite-so-blind-by-thomas-heine/>