

TITLE

by Eric Boyd

Enter text here.

Someone had shown me a page on the internet where writers could have their stories analyzed, seeing whose work their piece was similar to. Normally, I only went on the computer to find apartment listings and pornography. This writing page seemed interesting, though. The idea of a computer telling someone who they were like, sounded like, wrote like, was funny. It was funny in a sad way, because it was probably true.

Everyone sounds like everyone, now; nobody is nobody anymore. Who would I be like? Who was I? Who was Fredrick Anderson?

I looked over a few older stories, and none of them seemed good enough. I wanted my best work to be analyzed! If I put some piece of shit I wrote while I was half-drunk... No. That wouldn't be right. Maybe It would say I sounded like Kerouac? Hemingway or Joyce? Were my sentences short? Were they long, drawn out sentences with bullshit similes; the tallest sunflowers, bending against an unforgiving, dying sun? What did I write? Why? Who knows. Who cares. I did. No idea why.

Questions are stupid. Don't ask, I thought. Just go.

GO.

I didn't mind sending my stories to magazines, editors, friends, my girl. If a piece was ready, I didn't care who saw it. People are forgiving because they are stupid. Nobody reads. When they do, they think it's good, because they have nothing to compare it to. But still, everyone I had ever shown a story to said I was a genius. I agreed. "Someday," someone had once told me, "the name 'Fredrick

Anderson' will be known. You'll be known!" It felt good to hear that. It felt very good to have a secret like that. Nobody in the world could take that away from me. I had always been writing.

My girl, Lucy, and I had spent months sending letters to one another while I was in jail. Before that, there were screenplays. Song lyrics. Poems. Rants. Banter. Crap.

I had always written. Always. It was easy! All I had to do was sit around and steal people's memories. I overheard conversations on payphones, buses, grocery store lines; I overheard entire lives. There is no boring. I spent hours and days thinking about other people's moments, turning it into something of my own.

I stared at the computer screen. Who would I be like? My eyes hurt. I tried calling a friend. They didn't pick up. I needed something to help. Forcing myself to write was never easy. There was a bottle of Jameson in my freezer. I put some honey on the rim of my glass and poured the whiskey in, mixed with water. It tasted good, but didn't help. I just fell asleep.

I woke up an hour later, used the bathroom, ate a slice of bread, and went back to the computer.

I started typing.

'Someone had shown me a page on the internet where writers could have their stories analyzed, seeing whose work their piece was similar to...'

When I was finished, I turned on my internet, which was still dialup, and waited ten minutes to open the writing analysis page. I put my story into the page and hit 'enter.' I waited five more minutes. The internet was slow.

I waited.

Who did I write like? Who was I?

**YOU WRITE LIKE:
ERIC BOYD**

“Who in the Hell is that?” I said out loud.

I laughed. It couldn't say a writer I had at least heard of?

