

Ryan G. Van Cleave

SEMICOLON

Sure you run across them every time you crack a book, but it takes a moment of meditation, a flash of introspection to get beyond the idea of punctuation mark of intermediate value between a comma and a full stop; surely there's deeper significance here and Nietzsche was hard at work on it when the world swallowed him whole at 49; it reminds me of my Great Aunt Ethel, who tried to read the entire World Book Encyclopedia collection, end-to-end, so she would know everything; turns out she got a little light in the head at 90 (somewhere around U-V, we believe), and gave us a groggy demand between medications to feed her fingers to the pineapple Jello; we didn't, and maybe that was the wrong judgment call to make, because just maybe she knew something we didn't after reading the section on semicolons and pondering how pregnant two blotches of ink can be, making us pause and consider our own existence and its relation to a text and the stars and our parents and even our first kiss no matter how sloppy, if even for a microsecond; when I see one now I panic; there's so much to it, but it's so astonishingly simple, like the falling of cedar leaves or the purpling of the sky at dusk; like after eighty thousand light years of traversing the cosmos you come upon a stellar phenomenon, a single white dwarf with a phosphorous comet streaking towards it, sucked in by the glowing sphere's opulence and magnetic draw; it's a signpost, all right, a promise that says sure you've come a long, long way, but there's more ahead;

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