

REINVE
STION
OF THE
S E & F

it's friday. you feel weighed down, like something needs to change. everywhere you look is an endless scroll of people you don't know, or used to know, peacocking for the imagined observer; a role you slip into seamlessly. you lock your phone and drop it on the bed beside you, immediately reaching for it because you had the urge to check it again, like it might be different this time. like it's a fridge in the middle of the night after all the shops have closed and you're a hungry teenager with no pocket money and no car.

* CLICK *

a widget displays an algorithmically generated slideshow of people you no longer speak to, flitting between lives while

* TAP *

a saccharine stock music jingle plays over the top

* TAP *

you open facebook and your first girlfriend just got engaged, sandwiched between an advert for a shirt you bought last week and someone you don't remember ever meeting lamenting that nobody ever talks to them any more

* TAP *

the comments are full of names you sort of recognise telling them that they're amazing

* TAP *

they went to your university

* TAP *

New York 2013

* TAP *

they never deleted the photos from the parties they went to when they were a teenager

* T A P *

tag your friends!! the messy one the funny one mr always late the fussy one the angry o-

* C L I C K *

the phone hits the mattress again, cushioned by the back of your hand. it's warm, sweaty in your palm, like it's thinking hard. you're thinking hard. none of this is fulfilling but you want to go back in already. it might be different this time.

* C L I C K *

your face is scanned by thousands of infra-red sensors, mapping the topography of your physicality and reducing it to pure data. it is compared against the stored data. you are similar enough. this time the widget is displaying a photo of your beloved pet, who died a year ago. you glance at the top of the screen, and realise it's been two hours. when did this stop being fun?

you consider your phone as though a map of fixed points. apps, which contain neatly over ten years of your personal history, and seem to have no qualms with firing it at you at random. and because it's so you, it all has feelings attached. it's not the same as a bucket of everything, because a bucket of everything would be mostly other people. not everything would hit. in fact, if something in the bucket of everything hit even one of the hundreds of points that light up every time a new featured image pops up on your home screen it would be lauded as a miraculous coincidence. you would chase it and find out where it lives - following it down a hypertext rabbit-hole instead of letting it decay under the surface of the looking-glass.

* T A P *

staring down the barrel of your privacy settings, you sift through menu after menu until you spy a gleaming ruby at the very bottom, in a sea of desaturated blues.

* T A P *

delete account

* T A P *

are you sure?

* T A P *

this account will remain on our system for 30 days, if you change your mind

* T A P *

please wait

oh god what if this is a mistake. what if i miss them. what if i lose touch? how do i keep track of who i'm missing? do i need to start writing things down? does anyone keep a physical address book any more? maybe i should have posted and asked for phone numbers before i did this. does that look desperate?

your account has been deactivated. to reactivate it at any point in the next 30 days, simply log in.

the app reverts to a minimalist view - a button reading log in above a button reading sign up

* S W I P E *

* T A P *

are you sure you'd like to delete this app? you can redownload it at any ti-

* T A P *

it's a week later, and you've deleted all the apps on your phone that make you feel empty. it sits a pristine black rectangle, untouched, on your bedside table. under the covers, you sleep and dream of public transport. you miss every train, waking soaked in sweat. out of habit, you feel around for it, waking the screen on contact and illuminating the ceiling. it reaches into your eyes, saying nothing, and you hear it. you put it back on your bedside table, face down, and wait for the sun.