

# Friday

In the chapter titled "Friday," we follow Cyrus Shams as he reflects on his life while walking from the Brooklyn Museum to Prospect Park. His mind is filled with Orkideh's recent comments about martyrdom, causing him to contemplate the nuances of existence, particularly the distinctions between wanting to live and wanting to die. As he adjusts to his surroundings, the mundane act of tying his shoes becomes symbolic of his struggles—he consistently purchases the same dark blue Vans, torn between authenticity and consumerism in a capitalist landscape.

Cyrus muses on his roommate Zee's choice of attire—forest-green camouflage Crocs—which Zee insists represent a sort of anti-fashion statement. This leads Cyrus to hold a silent admiration for his sneakers, feeling they serve as a quieter form of political statement. Observing life in the park, including a woman humorously lifting a blunt to a statue of John F. Kennedy, he is reminded of the beauty and simplicity around him.

As he grapples with his thoughts, Cyrus wrestles with the significance of gratitude in light of suffering, debating whether a trivial appreciation of life could overshadow the tragedy experienced by others, particularly those less fortunate. He questions whether the privilege of gratitude is itself an indulgence, pondering the ethics of viewing gratitude as something that complicates rather than simplifies hardship. His reflections lead him to consider the often-dismissed idea that those in desperate situations may be incapable of appreciating small joys.

In contemplating the implications of his perspective on gratitude and the struggles of those around him, Cyrus acknowledges his desire to perceive himself as someone on the "right side of history." However, he admits this desire is partly driven by a need for external validation. The chapter ends with Cyrus noting Orkideh's bare feet during their earlier encounter, prompting him to remove his own sneakers as he embraces a more grounded existence on his return trip to the subway.