

# On Your Mark

by

Michael Bettencourt

67 Highwood Terrace #2, Weehawken NJ 07086

201-770-0550 • 347-564-9998 • [michaelbettencourt@outlook.com](mailto:michaelbettencourt@outlook.com)

<http://www.m-bettencourt.com>

Copyright © by Michael Bettencourt

Offered under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

## DESCRIPTION

Louis and Lewis, two brothers, contemplate good reasons not to complete a choreographed suicide. It's a very short, and not altogether convincing, list.

## CHARACTERS

- LOUIS
- LEWIS

## SETTING

- Table, two chairs, bottle, two glasses

\* \* \* \* \*

*LOUIS and LEWIS at a table, drinking shots from a bottle. Throughout one or the other will pour. Both slightly stewed, not over the edge. Maybe a tea candle on the table, fake flower, napkin dispenser—something.*

LOUIS

What is sloth?

LEWIS

Why?

LOUIS

Amy accused me of it the other day. Actually, both of us.

LEWIS

You know what a sloth is?

LOUIS

The three-toed thing.

LEWIS

There's a two-toed version as well, I believe.

LOUIS

Okay.

LEWIS

Do you know?

LOUIS

Slow, right?—moves slow.

LEWIS

Slowly. Upside-down. For years. In the same tree.

*They drink.*

LOUIS

That's not me.

LEWIS

I don't think Amy was meaning "tree."

LOUIS

You mean the slow part.

LEWIS

The slow "you never get off your ass and make something of yourself" part.

LOUIS

I'm built for comfort, I ain't built for speed.

LEWIS

It's not just about slow, from what I understand.

LOUIS

Lazy, you mean.

LEWIS

Lazy in your soul, not just body. Lazy in not doing good deeds, the will of God.

LOUIS

Kind of evil by default.

LEWIS

Evil is always a default. The world runs on default. This has always thrown Amy slightly—off-center, hasn't it?

*They clink glasses and drink.*

LEWIS

What she said of you she means of me as well.

*They sip again.*

LOUIS

Six others, right?

LEWIS

Six of what?

LOUIS

Sins, right—seven deadly—

LEWIS

Pride, envy, gluttony—

LOUIS

Yeah.

LEWIS

—lust—

LOUIS

Yeah.

LEWIS

—anger, greed—

LOUIS

Yeah to both.

LEWIS

—and—

LOUIS

Sloth. All seven, of one degree or another, exist in me.

LEWIS

The world runs on one degree or another, as Amy would observe, disappointed.

LOUIS

How could it do otherwise? Look at us.

LEWIS

Yes, look at us.

LOUIS

I think that's what Amy's doing more of these days—looking.

LEWIS

At you.

LOUIS

At me. At you, too. What she sees is—

LEWIS

What she's got.

*This dismays LOUIS.*

LEWIS

Another skidmark on our souls.

LOUIS

How did it turn out this way for us? How did we go from the exuberance of a child to—

*LEWIS indicates the bottle in front of them.*

LOUIS

Right. To a life where we take a perverse pride in feeling lust and greed, yet envy those whose gluttony is, well, more gluttonous and glamorous than our own—and then slothfully do nothing about anything to change a thing about ourselves.

LEWIS

The point of it all is—

LOUIS

The pointlessness of it all.

*LOUIS belches, which he hides behind his hand.*

LOUIS

Sorry.

LEWIS

This is the point we come to, isn't it, at this point in the evening, usually.

LOUIS

Except—except that we have chosen this day as our Passover.

LEWIS

Why is this night different from all other nights?

*They both reach into their jackets and pull out pistols, which they lay on the bar.*

LOUIS

Good thing we live in Florida.

LEWIS

We are standing our ground. There is an eighth deadly sin, you know. The worst, from what I hear.

LOUIS

You were the seminarian—you tell me.

LEWIS

The sin of despair.

LOUIS

All seven rolled into one?

LEWIS

The opposite—not even mustering the energy to sin.

LOUIS

That might be a great disappointment to God. Is that what we have done? Are doing?

LEWIS

Apparently, the sin is not in feeling despair but in giving in to it—to reject the love of God by an act of selfishness.

*At this, LOUIS lets out a full belly-laugh—as long and loud as he wants to laugh it out.*

LOUIS

Oh, that's good! That's rich! Whoo! He Who Must Be Obeyed sends us a shit-storm called "life" and then has the balls to call the logical choice of self-slaughter—

LEWIS

You do know your Hamlet.

LOUIS

You must've had a fun time at the seminary.

LEWIS

I can't say the teaching is wrong—it is a selfishness.

LOUIS

With which we are born. As Amy our dear sister would judge us, and fault us—and fault herself, since she does have the fault of completehonesty.

LEWIS

To Amy, our perpetually honest and pained sister.

*They drink.*

LOUIS

She won't like being an only child.

LEWIS

She will turn to her faith for guidance.

LOUIS

Unlike us.

LEWIS

Well, come on—the question of the age, any age, has always been “give me a good reason not to do it.”

*LEWIS holds his glass up to the light to look at the amber liquid.*

LEWIS

I just find, of late, that I find no good reason not to do it.

LOUIS

Same here.

LEWIS

No counter-argument.

LOUIS

Not a one that carries any weight, though the arguments in themselves might be good and forceful. I wish we were wrong.

LEWIS

I do, too, brother, I do, too.

*They muse.*

LOUIS

There is, however—

LEWIS

What?

LOUIS

Well—pleasure. Yes? I mean, lust does feel pretty good, both in the anticipation and the—ejection, so to speak. And sloth can be a rebellion against the craziness of capitalist over-work.

LEWIS

You have a point—several—

LOUIS

So why wouldn't pleasure—pleasures—be enough—"reason enough"?

LEWIS

Because they don't last, they don't sustain—a life pursuing pleasure—how exhausting, assuming that the body can even keep up with it—and you know, the perverse little shits we are, it wouldn't be enough, ever enough—

LOUIS

Moderation, then—

LEWIS

Another word for being a wuss—"I'll only have this much so I won't go over the edge into indulgence, addiction, release, liberation"—boring.

LOUIS

Buddhism.

LEWIS

Can't trust anything based on breathing.

LOUIS

If not the pleasure of sin, what about the pleasures of virtue? Seven of those, I believe, as well.

LEWIS

That's what Amy would say.

LOUIS

It's almost as if by my saying it, she were here saying it.

LEWIS

Selflessness. Self. Less.

LOUIS

So that we wouldn't contemplate—wouldn't actually "do"—

LEWIS

Our sin of commission.

LOUIS

Amy is all about omission if it gets you through the day.

LEWIS

It certainly gets her through her day.

LOUIS

And are things any the worse for wear by her doing it that way?

*They drink, muse.*

LEWIS

No. I envy. That.

LOUIS

It's not certainty with her. It's what soothes.

LEWIS

I wish that were enough.

LOUIS

I wish anything was enough—being a sloth has failed me utterly.

LEWIS

Me, too. All right, then.

*They put down their glasses. They slide their chairs close together. They put their heads together, temple to temple. They pick up the guns and place them against their own outside temples.*

LOUIS

Sure-fire, eh?

LEWIS

If the right one don't get you, then the left one will.

TOGETHER

I got sixteen tons, and what d'ya get / Another day older and deeper in debt—

*They hold their suicidal pose for the time it takes for them to think through what they're doing and decide what it is they want to do.*

*They lower their guns to the table, then put them back in their pockets.*

	LOUIS
Damn.	
	LEWIS
Not this time, either.	
	LOUIS
Damn. Damn.	
	LEWIS
Amy will be pleased.	
	LOUIS
Yeah—more opportunities for her to read us her riot act.	
	LEWIS
It's a decent riot act.	
	LOUIS
Decent—how nice.	
	LEWIS
Beware of anger.	
	LOUIS
Ha. Ha. Are you pleased that we couldn't make it happen <u>again</u> ?	

*LEWIS takes his time to answer.*

	LEWIS
No.	
	LOUIS
What makes it so—all right, I'm going to say it this way—	
	LEWIS
Amy's probably listening.	

LOUIS  
So fucking hard?

LEWIS  
For us.

LOUIS  
For us! Why can't we just—ease in, let things be—

*As LOUIS talks, LEWIS silently mouths the refrain to "Let It Be."*

LOUIS  
—accept, find the good, "let go, let God," be in the present moment, purity of heart is to will one thing—and please don't sing "Let It Be" under your breath, it really really irritates me, it has always irritated me.

*LOUIS pours them each a small amount, picks up his own glass. LEWIS picks up his. They drink.*

LOUIS  
Just a wuss. Just a sloth am I.

LEWIS  
Sometimes I feel completely unfit for living—not machined well for the present times.

LOUIS  
I suspect that we would not fit into any time very well, given how we're built.

LEWIS  
How we're built. You think nature would've gotten rid of the melancholics somewhere along the line.

LOUIS  
Why? Without Eeyore, Winnie the Pooh would be even more insufferably gooey-sweet than he is.

LEWIS  
There is all that honey.

LOUIS

We keep reminding people what they don't want to be, which keeps them moving the species forward rather than killing themselves when faced with the pointlessness of it.

*LOUIS pours again.*

LOUIS

We serve the vital Darwinian function of "there but for the fucking grace of [fill in the blank] go I." Aversion therapy, that's us, and for that service, our genes are allowed to persist. To drink. And indulge in seven weather-beaten and threadbare sins.

LEWIS

And virtues, if we choose.

LOUIS

More by default.

LEWIS

The world runs by default.

LOUIS

We've said that before.

LEWIS

More-than-once-said doesn't make it not true.

LOUIS

Whatever you say.

*They drink.*

LOUIS

Of course, it would make a world of difference if the guns were loaded. Though sometimes, in my anguish, I forget that.

LEWIS

So do I, brother, so do I.

LOUIS

Is the forgetting-that-they're-re-loaded a kind of wish?

LEWIS

I think it's more important that Amy is not assaulted by a world of difference of our making.

LOUIS

What's the harm in wishing?

LEWIS

So long as no harm comes to Amy.

*They toast each other.*

LOUIS

So that no harm comes to Amy.

LEWIS

Amen. We have done a virtue again.

LOUIS

Let's just not get too Winnie-the-Pooh about it, all right?

LEWIS

As always, agreed. I love you.

LOUIS

I love you, too.

*They drink.*

*End of play.*