

Sua Yoo / POY BORN

two americans

When he'd bought the landfill, his mother had greeted the news with some indignation - mostly, it should be said, because she'd seen an episode of a medical procedural where a boy becomes quite sick after being exposed to a piece of a radioactive detritus at his own family's scrapyards.

She also, reasonably, had some apprehension about his move from the underemployed educated urbanite class to the (presumably Republican) small business owner class, a move she found distasteful in itself, but was especially unsure of given that the avenue of this transformation was the disposal of waste.

His father, on the other hand, had always encouraged him to take up a trade - like plumbing or HVAC - and this game, like those, would never go out of style. Plus, the equity component inspired no small amount of pride.

He spent most days on the bulldozer, distributing and flattening the trash deposited by the dump's - was customers the word? During the long hours, the callouses on his right hand developing a layer or two with each assertive low-range gear shift, he thought mostly of a popular spiritual ASMR streamer he was likely in love with.

He was divorced, though only 35, and he supposed he'd been in love with his ex - but he supposed what he felt for the young streamer was love too. Or perhaps it was what the analyst felt for his therapist, though he largely dismissed psychoanalysis as Jewish pseudoscience.

Sometimes, when he crushed something interesting with the bulldozer and it made an unusual sound, he thought of other sounds he'd heard.

Once, while on a gigantic video session with the boy streamer and thousands of his fans - they sat zazen and watched, silent, as the boy lit candles and triggered slow scrolling low-res gifs of turquoise water - they'd heard, together, the strangest sound - the sound of the background noise of thousands of bedrooms harmonizing, the sound of hundreds of cars on roads out windows, families in the next room, computer fans and refrigerators whirring, filtered by the aggregate response pattern of hundreds of different kinds of microphones in thousands of phones and laptops, breaking out of the din of static into a single accordant hum.