



pretend i'm me

Randy Prunty

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pretend i'm me

pretend i'm me. now pretend you're you. now pretend the pretend you and the pretend me can tolerate each other.

pretend i'm me and you're auctioning me off piece by piece and you're making pretty good money and you haven't even got to the big ticket items yet.

pretend i'm me and dogs and children love me. cats and adults, not so much.

pretend i'm me: mature, ripe, but well this side of telos.

pretend i'm me, a false positive result of "everything happens for a reason."

pretend i'm me and even though it's sandal season i've decided not to hate you for painting my toe nails again last night while i slept.

pretend i'm me, suddenly earnest and sure of myself having just learned to write without irony.

pretend i'm me but be careful because the pretends we pretend, pretend us.

pretend i'm me and after dreaming every night for 32 years about going back to college and finishing my degree, i finally went back to college where i was taught that dreams have no purpose.

pretend i'm me and the proliferation of eBooks is depriving me of the only social skill i have: loaning books.

pretend i'm me and my application to move to Boulder was rejected. they were impressed with my 17 years of yoga and that i brew my own beer, however my triathlon times were just a little too slow.

pretend i'm me and you're helping me gain just 65 more pounds so i can move to Pensacola and buy that Harley-Davidson Electra Glide.

pretend i'm me. ask me how!

pretend i'm me and i just got my 12th body piercing from which you hang yet another bell.

pretend i'm me and i've just been named one of the 100 Most Handsome Men from Mingo as selected by the Mingo County (West Virginia) Consortium of Public Librarians.

pretend i'm me and the 51 weeks a year of peacefulness i feel by not keeping receipts
is worth the anxiety i feel the 1 week before my taxes are due.

pretend i'm me and the 8759 hours a year i don't think about flossing is not worth the yearly hour of scolding by my dental hygienist.

pretend i'm me and i just asked you if horses have wrists. what do you say? uh, no, i'm sorry. although your answer is technically correct, i can't accept it because you were not pretending i was me.

pretend i'm me, cleared of pilfering-on-the-job charges and i get to keep my position at the landfill.

pretend i'm me and my hair is on fire. you tell me to sit down lest i ignite the ceiling.

pretend i'm me and a friend has phoned to say he's not worthy of the Harry and David gift basket i sent him. i tell him he's underestimating himself. he says, "maybe, but you haven't tried these cashews!"

pretend i'm me and i walk into a bar full of banjos and accordions. they start telling tired old jokes about me.

pretend i'm me, surprised at how difficult it was to reunite my 70's one-man band.

pretend i'm me carefully avoiding using certain words (doily, herb, buffet) in my poetry because i usually mispronounce them.

pretend i'm me suggesting you might want to start believing in the power of suggestion.

pretend i'm me and i'm not enjoying my court-mandated sensitivity classes. oh well, only 2 more weeks of this crap and i'll have my "Just a Delight to Be Around" certificate.

pretend i'm me. now pretend to understand string theory. same difference, right?

pretend i'm me. of the hundreds that have, few have felt it was worth the effort.
however, after pretending i was me, 3 men and 1 woman rated their tolerance for
experimental poetry as "somewhat improved."

pretend i'm me whittling bags and bags of charcoal briquettes into the exact size and shape of Legos. i have a plan.

pretend i'm me *sans* alcohol. now pretend i'm me *avec* alcohol. which me speaks better French?

pretend i'm me maybe untouchable but please keep trying.

pretend i'm me, a minor celebrity in Infomercials thanks to my "before" abs.

pretend i'm me and i've perfected the art of arriving late/leaving early to the point
i'm never there.

pretend i'm me and my memory is full and now i have to decide which ones to delete.

pretend i'm me vowing that today i will do everything humanly possible. or, failing that, i will count down from 100 by 7's.

pretend i'm me, fascinated to learn of my past lives and my role in human history.
for instance i was once a paramecium in a rabbit that was eaten by Attila the Hun!

pretend i'm me, The Gull, and you're you, The Gullible.

pretend i'm me working on a 365-word poem by writing down a one-word thought every day for a year - whatever thought happens to be passing through my mind at exactly 10 AM. here's what i have after the first week: pen, coffee, wall, barking, Bic, multi-grain, dog.

pretend i'm me. if you're still saying "wait, what?" every time you hear the phrase "pretend i'm me," then you may be a winner.

pretend i'm me and we're making plans to co-author a best-selling novel. you're better at math so i'll do all the text and you do all the page numbers.

pretend i'm me, so often linked to Freud because we share a fear of ferns. we also share a fear that someone will discover a Jungian explanation.

pretend i'm me, mystified as to why my dog liked to sleep under my bed at night. but i tried it and was amazed at how safe and snug it felt. now i sleep under the bed every night and my dog has switched to sleeping on top of the bed.

pretend i'm me and i have a chance to change my life for the better. should i go with morphine or shoe inserts?

pretend i'm me, fired from my day job for being nocturnal.

pretend i'm me but a little more in line with reality as seen on tv.

pretend i'm me offering you a signed copy of my book. you say you'd prefer it in digital format.

pretend i'm me, one of the quintuplets who co-wrote these pretend i'm me pieces.
the five of us had intended to read them to you in unison, but unfortunately Sandy,
Andy, Candy, and Mandy were unable to be here tonight.

pretend i'm me. i have just 3 words for those who say my poetry has too many food references: pimento crab bisque! . . . ok, maybe 2 more words: coconut macchiato!

pretend i'm me and i learned to read silently just last week. doubtless those around me in coffee shops appreciate my new skill. i, however, experience a tragic loss of meaning and enjoyment when i read without using my tongue and ears.

pretend i'm me trying to escape from an old dualism: depressing people write fun books and fun people write depressing books.

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Donna Kuhn's *Not Having an Idea* (2005)

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lars palm's *Mindfulness* (2006)

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Randy Prunty's *pretend i'm me* (2016)

The e-books/books can be found at <http://www.moriapoetry.com>.

POETRY

If contemporary poetry were an arcade, Prunty's *pretend i'm me* would be a souped-up game of Whac-a-Mole, where the moles are trading wigs and costumes below the surface of the machine. These poems joke, slide, and slap: *pretend i'm me* is a necessary spider dancing fantastically across our 21st century web of social media profiles, targeted advertisements, and government surveillance. The collection asked me to ask you: I know you are, but what am I?

--Amy King

Pretend I'm me, a friend of Prunty's accustomed to publicly professing my love for the kindness of his self-inflicted wit and the generosity of his whimsical misdeeds. Prunty used to pretend he's me, but this way is much better because the cost of pretending to be someone else is so high these days.

--Megan Volpert

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