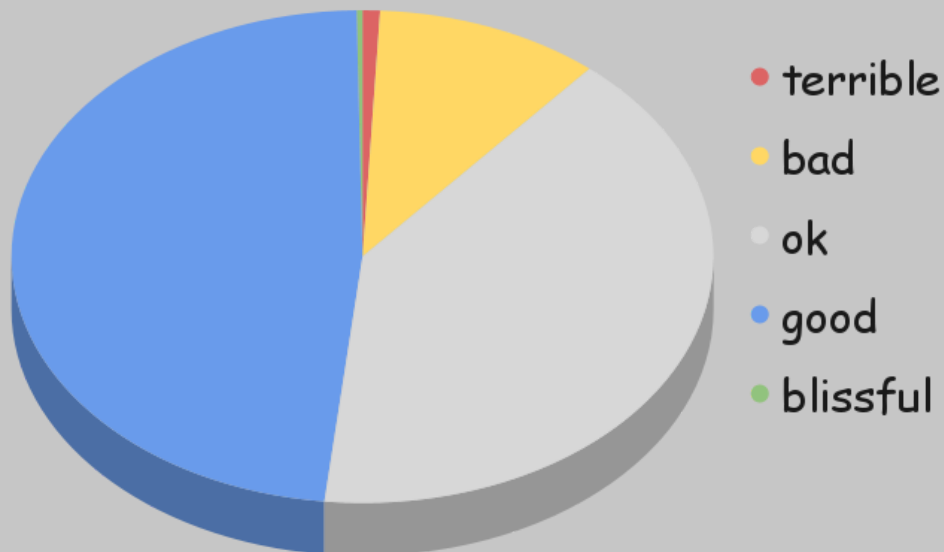


mood



Since mid-December 2024 I've kept a log rating each day on a 5-point scale. I'm **pleasantly surprised** to see good days outnumbered neutral ones.

And I only had three really terrible days. Those were the lowest points of the **spring**, which was a low season for me in general. I was struggling with feeling that I'd been irresponsible with my time and money in the preceding months, and **anxious** about the stock market and the tech job market. (This was when "AI-might-eliminate-my-profession-soon" fear peaked for me.)

Since starting a new job in June I've felt much more calm.

book recs

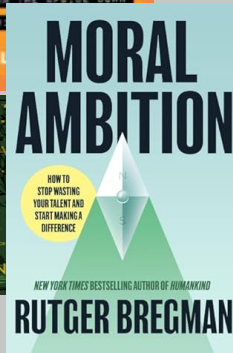
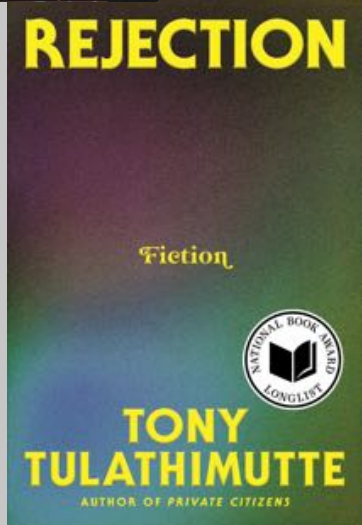
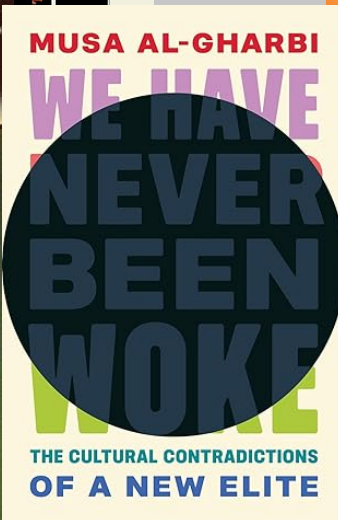
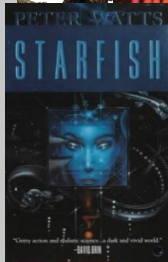
click a cover to read my review

O'REILLY
AI Engineering
Building Applications
with Foundation Models



**Science
Fictions**

Stuart
Ritchie



cat pic



50% sweetheart, 50% jerk, 100% cute,
200% overdue for a grooming.

cat invoice

hyperthyroidism meds	\$776
ultrasound	\$669
chest x-ray	\$561
blood tests	\$481
flea meds	\$355
exams/etc	\$350
prescription food	\$327
urine tests	\$301
antibiotics	\$181
rabies shot	\$50
nail trim	\$40
litter genie refills	\$36
	<hr/>
	\$4127

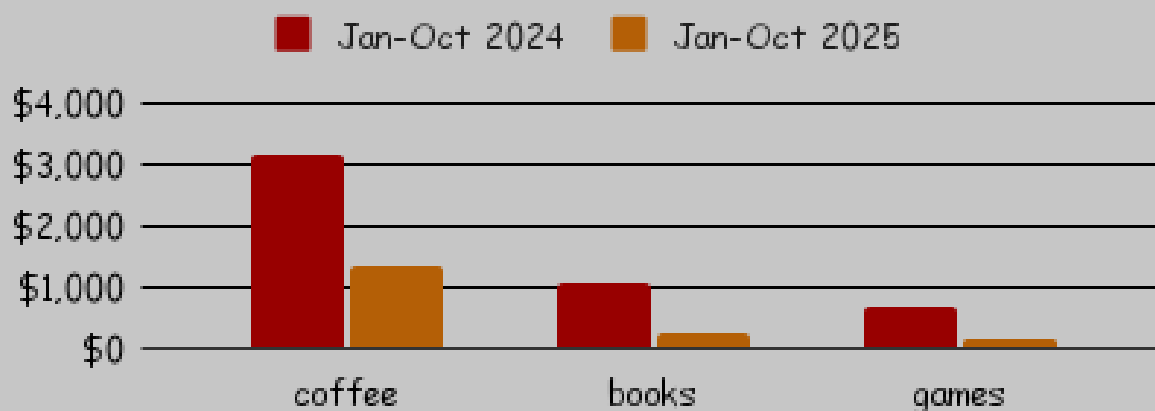
Caring for my adorable, occasionally terrifying companion isn't free. He's worth every dollar and more, though I can't tell whether some of the tests/treatments he's gotten in the past couple years were beneficial or just tilting at windmills. I'm currently in wait-and-see mode about whether to start him on a steroid to stop/reverse weight loss. I'm nervous about it because past experience suggests I literally *cannot* make him take oral meds.

philosophizing

- [contra Huemer on free will](#)
- [on Pascal's Wager](#)
- [on overemphasizing beliefs](#)
- [review: Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*](#)
- [review: Nagel's *Moral Feelings...*](#)
- [review: Kagan's *How to Count Animals*](#)
- [review: Parfit's *On What Matters* vol 2](#)
- [notes: *Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*](#)

waste, revisited

Last year [I lightly scolded myself](#) for how much I spent at coffee shops and on books and video games. I did better this year:



This is partly because I panicked for a couple months and tried to cut out all nonessential spending. Later I had a salary again and the stock market had shot back up, and my commitment to frugality waned. But part of the savings came from using the library more and just being more careful not to buy games I'm barely going to play, which should be easy habits to keep. Working in-office 3 days per week also naturally reduces the time and money I spend at coffee shops.

boston in january

My [string of minor illnesses from 2024](#) persisted into January, and my attempt to participate for a second time in the MIT Mystery Hunt devolved into me hiding in the hotel and consuming vast quantities of kleenex. But I do go stir-crazy quickly, so I did a little touring when I couldn't sit still. That mostly meant wandering around aimlessly, along with a visit to the [Museum of Fine Arts](#).



piano songs

one I wrote

one I improvised

one I learned

["hedonic expansion" on youtube](#)

Initially I was hoping to write more songs this year, but it just didn't end up being a priority.

I'm glad I completed this one, though.

(And I didn't resort to ["improvis\[ing\] an ending"](#) like I did last year.)

piano songs

one I wrote

one I improvised

one I learned

["futon headspace" on youtube](#)

I spent less time playing piano in general this year, and in that time I prioritized practicing a repertoire of memorized songs (I can usually do about 8 now, which is up from last year). But I *occasionally* did some improvising.

piano songs

one I wrote

one I improvised

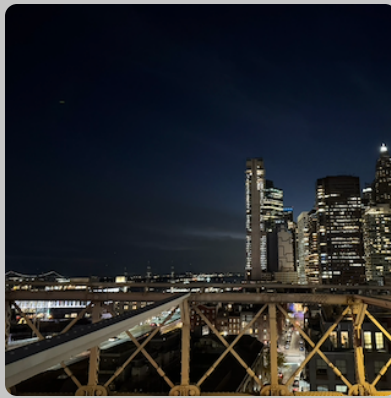
one I learned

[Moonlight Sonata, 3rd movement on youtube](#)

It ended up taking me **2-3 years** to fully learn the 3rd movement of Moonlight Sonata. I can't claim I learned to play it *well*, but I was ready to move on. The most fun part is page 11, which I made a [better recording](#) of in isolation.

nyc in november

This was only my second time visiting, and I stuck to Manhattan again, though I enjoyed taking the Staten Island Ferry over and back as well as walking across the Brooklyn Bridge and back. We saw the musical [Beau](#), which was fun, and [Robert Icke's Oedipus](#), which I loved. ... I went to the Frick; my favorite painting was [Boucher's The Four Seasons: Winter](#).



re: goals set last year

✓ went back to work

and the job hunt was demoralizing but I really like where I landed; my coworkers are great and I'm using [tech I love](#)

✓ gave 15% to charity

of my salary for the 7 months I worked; next year's goal is 16%. this year it all went to [GiveDirectly](#)

! got through that probability book

that I [started last year](#), but I was really rushing toward the end and there's a lot I didn't internalize

! focused a bit more on philosophy

—still much less than I'd like, but I have been getting better at rationing my reading time according to my priorities

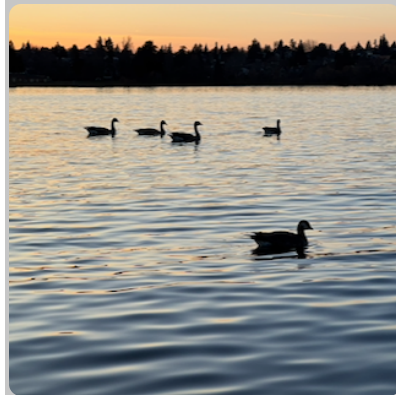
✗ didn't get through other math books

but I did a small bit of linear algebra and decision theory; I've reverted to the slow-but-steady-progress approach

✗ traveled less, not more


—not sure I even left the Seattle area from February to October, which is not ideal but also doesn't particularly bother me

seattle



gratitude



Good friends and family make the good times good and the bad times bearable.  Thanks to all of you who made space for me in your lives this year—in long afternoon chats, or over fancy drinks, or on the phone as I wandered around the city, or over video calls plagued by scheduling problems, or through perpetual texting; at book clubs, at bad movie nights, at birthday parties, at a cathartically destructive going-away party, at two puzzle hunts, in an escape room, on a drunken urban hike ending in pizza, at holiday dinners where I did none of the hard work, at cinema pop-ups, at concerts, at theatre, in your guest room, etc etc.

plans for 2026

Accumulate WEALTH and KNOWLEDGE!

...that's about it. There are years where you make Big Changes and there are years where you just keep pluggin' away at stuff; I currently intend 2026 to be one of the latter.

Thanks for reading! As always, I welcome emails at: jacob@brokensandals.net