

THE KEEPER AND THE ZOO

by

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ABSTRACT

I am a collector of text, both beautifully constructed and nonsensical sentences, and images that promise to *mean* something for me. I don't *know* what they mean, only that I feel compelled to be with them awhile, so I KEEP, ARTICULATE AND ARRANGE them until I understand. Meaning, ultimately, is a matter of adjacent data.

The Keeper and the Zoo is composed of interdependent ideologies and voices, pieced together with quotation, meditation, narrative, memory, and poems that question the general prohibition against perceptual experience. It is the support paper for my MFA graduate exhibition of the same name.

I read once that if you put some molecules in a box, once in a while they'll bump up against each other and you can study the collisions. If you put more molecules in the box, more collisions. But if you put a billion molecules in a box, they become sound waves. *There was nothing in the behavior of the few that suggested what the many could do.* The body is that box. While watching for collisions, I use zoos, circuses, animal husbandry and experimentation, and the fashion/beauty complex to think about the domestication of the human psyche and language as an immersion environment..

THE WORK IS A RECORD AND AN EMBODIMENT OF A PROCESS OF KNOWING. AS WRITER DAVID SHIELDS SAYS: ***IT'S ABOUT THE MAKING OF KNOWLEDGE, WHICH IS A MUCH LARGER AND MORE UNSTABLE THING THAN THE MARSHALING OF FACTS.*** *The animal in my work is the wild mind; pure awareness.*

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To Google and Pinterest, thank you for the joy of the search.

Special thanks to my sons, who taught me that we are not blank pages coming in, and to my sister and mom, in every way from the beginning.

DEDICATION

To my sons: You *are* my revolution.

And to Eloi

INTRODUCTION

ON READING

Letham

The citations that go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable and yet 'already read'.

Barthes composed *A Lover's Discourse* from his reading, conversation and life. He said the references he supplied in the left margins were not authoritative but a simple salute to *what had seduced, convinced or momentarily given the delight of understanding or being understood.*

Letham

Inspiration could be called inhalation.

I learned to speak through books, as the deaf learn to sign. Books were talking about all the things people around me were not. When I read, always two or three books at a time, we are four at a table, talking. You cannot populate your self with this kind of company your whole life and not have raging dialogues running through your body. I cannot even think without their company.

Letham

Readers are like nomads poaching their way across fields they do not own.

I had been gathering their voices for years, quotes with sources long lost to me, stick like flypaper. I began to work *with* them instead of against them. I lay down a string of the things I care about, which drew to it, as if magnetized, disparate essay and verse and quotation. Bits and pieces began coming to this spine in a fabulously organic, tattered way that felt more like my life. I began beading the scissor-stuff.

Woolf

Just gather the pieces that come your way.

Shields

Everything is invented; we merely articulate, arrange.

*

ON WRITING

Popper

Life is a not a clock. It's a cloud.

The notion of a *text as assemblage* is from Deleuze and Guittari, who wrote of rhizome books, assemblages of discourse, and flows.

Stephen Wiley's "Death: an Assemblage" can be read in any order. The fragments refer and respond to each other. There are "parallel lines" and "points of articulation" where the reader's assemblage and his own cross and connect. Linkages without which, he says, "we human beings would not survive." He numbers and titles each fragment and gives it a page:

[1] Poetic Condensation

[14] Suggestion #1

[68] Narrative

[90] Two Thoughts

[108] Conversation with Dan

[688] Epiphany #2

[850] Imagined Relevance #3...

DEATH: AN ASSEMBLAGE is a mosaic of poetry, quotation, personal narrative, definitions, and correspondence, built around a pivotal experience, which explores a larger question.

A text is a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings—none of them original—blend and clash...the writer's only power is to mix writings.

Barthes

Bahktin

When someone speaks and writes...her discourse, like her identity, is a merger of the many voices and languages that constitute her as a subject.

Stewart

I write not as a trusted guide...but as a point of impact, curiosity and encounter.

Letham

If we cut-and-paste ourselves, might we not forgive it of our artwork?

None of this is me or mine.

The method IS the argument.

It is said that to write is to walk on a pavement of citations.

Olsson

And thus it is appropriate to close with a quote from Merlot-Ponty, who quotes Valerie, who quotes someone else, who quotes God knows who: language is everything, since it is the voice of no one, since it is the voice of the things, the waves, and the forests. And what we have to understand is that there is no dialectical reversal from one of these views to the other; we do not have to reassemble them into synthesis; they are two aspects of the reversibility, which is the ultimate truth.

Ciardi

Z IS NOT FOR ZEBRA, BUT FOR ZOOLOGY,
SINCE OUR EFFORT HEREIN HAS BEEN TO ACHIEVE
THE INCLUSIVE VIEW RATHER THAN ANY
PARTICULAR STRIPE, WE ARE FIRM ON THIS POINT.

HABIT HAS ITS OWN ANIMALS AND WILL CLING
TO THEM, BUT PERCEPTION CONCERNS ALL BEASTS.

THEREFORE ZOOLOGY, WHICH IS THE SCIENCE
MOST LIKE A LOOKING GLASS, TEACHING US
RESEMBLANCES, WHEN WE LEARN TO FACE THEM.

Houston

...it took us a lot of time, and a lot of help from others, to become somebody. It took layers and layers of impressions connected into stories. Songs. Fairy-tales. Exclamations. Gestures. Rules. Socialization. Clean. Dirty. Say this. Do not do that. Bing, bang, bong...Even the brain of the most misanthropic monastic, rationalist philosopher is literally crawling with the presence of other people.

ONCE UPON A MATTRESS

Ruiz

The main character who lives in my story is based on someone who really exists—that is true. But what I believe about her is not true—it's a story.

*

MY HILROY (SHE AND I)

Ralston Saul

Freedom: An occupied space that must be reoccupied everyday.

Every month, I buy a 200-page Hilroy graph notebook, and fill it. Twelve notebooks a year, twenty years later, and my heart still races when I enter an office supply store. Sometimes, when the store sells out, or boy or girl, in red, tries to sell me a notebook with blank or lined pages, I panic a little. They don't see the difference. But they don't know about the vertigo, or the effort of laying my thought on a line.

Every morning, I wake in a room full of others' words.

I

stumble

to the bathroom, on some primal command to splash, brush, dress, and get out! I noodle and doodle and read in a coffeehouse, while I wait for my body to get there.

Then, there, in the middle of the cage, a shimmering topography of muzzle, hoof, and horn, steps out of the dark and she swallows me. The bars fall away and we run. No paper, pen, or thought of me can follow her.

Deep enough is everywhere.

There are days I haul my empty cup across these bars and nothing comes; days I cannot find the cup for all the tinsel in my room. Days I long for her to sing these bones to life. On those days, I enter my Hilroy, alone, read the ground for bruising, crying, breaks. I track the foolscap-blue Cartesian

coordinates for pushdown, eat-through and lay. I shadow her
signature rub, my hand tracing slow her muddy footfall.

Without her line of sign, I'm lost.

She hunts me too--but animals don't try and cover their tracks.
It is 'I' who do the backing up, the brushing out, begin again, as
if I didn't know the Other. Always a step away from my
epiphany, crouched there deep inside the foliage of my thick
being, breathing.

What do I search for in my re-search?

TRY CLOSING YOUR EYES WHEN YOU GET OVERWHELMED.

The psychiatrist leans back in his black leather chair, a poem of
mangy neurons buckled boots, and psychoprose.

I close my eyes, but still he falls in.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF WEATHER, LANGUAGE, MOODS—he gestures to
the window and the view beyond. YOU HAVE A LOT OF WINDOWS OPEN.
He stands and walks to the whiteboard, laced with stringy black
hypotheses. THIS IS CLASSIC OF THE OVERSTIMULATED MIND WITH AN
INABILITY TO FILTER, he continues, as he wipes the board clean. THERE
IS A PART OF THE BRAIN THAT ALLOWS US TO SORT THE RELEVANT FROM
THE IRRELEVANT, TO TAKE STUFF, WELL, OUT OF THE TOSS. He turns back
to face me.

YOU DON'T HAVE THAT, he says.

DICKS

All writing systems began as pictures.

When she was four years old, she walked up to the blackboard, drew herself, and walked away from her slack-jawed mother, who still has the photo of her first child's first drawing. A big round head on a small square trunk on a tiny triangle skirt, top sheared off to fit the square. Three wobbly shapes, stacked and balanced on two leg lines, angled left and right for feet. Sausage arms and fingers. Loopy hair. A quarter-moon mouth, necklaced with teeth. Eyebrows like small fires, over eyes looking left. This is her mother's memory. She has only the story.

The first lines she remembers connecting are letters. Someone showing her over and over, three lines make an A. Suddenly seeing A, knowing A, feeling its song in her face. Letters themselves beginning to speak; to link and train and tether her wobbly.

Look! Dick is naming the yard! He is pointing at wagons and sisters and dogs, everything meaning. Jane's paper face, nodding. They Look and See. They Work and Play; They Come and Go. The world begins again—a new garden, a new green. There are two kinds of stuff! Two kinds of everything! Boys, girls, dogs. One day she is walking and sees herself walking.

The I arises.

Mrs. Keebaugh is spanking bad Michael again, at the back of the room. Perched on the counter, the grade-one teacher holds the fat boy to her stockinged knee, old arm coming down on him. Faith is peeing her pants. Blushing, hands folded tight on the desk, a small yellow pool growing under her shoes.

On the wall, behind the spanking teacher, high above the muffin tins of poster paint--a Rand McNally map and sign: AROUND THE WORLD IN 100 BOOKS. Twenty coloured plastic planes

start on a line from the North to South pole. Each book they read moves their plane along a latitude, tight-rope walking over pastel puzzles of named countries, numbered seas.

She flies point, pulling the v out to sea, as the great Canadian Flag Debate begins. She tail slides into Africa, as Nelson Mandela is sentenced to Life. She is barrel-rolling over China, carnation pink, when it detonates its first atomic bomb, and Faith reaches the Atlantic, Michael still on the line.

She feels the same lift on that meridian, and in those little books, as in her father's plane, prairie-dogging patchwork fields. That same going out of herself and falling back in as on a swing. Touch and go. Touch and go.

It is 1964 and Ranger VII is taking pictures of the moon. The US Surgeon General is admitting smoking causes cancer. The Beatles are coming to America. And a girl is eating books in the back of a classroom, spinning the globe and watching the swirl of colour, country, continent.

When she is bored, she writes backwards.

HE WHO NAMES, TAMES

Olsson

An index finger points, pins things down. You. You. You. You. You.
You. You.

A mouth opens.

Out it comes:

“One”

“Two”

“Three”

“Four”

“Five”

“Six”

You fill in, silently...

“Seven”

But then, naming is the easy part.

KINGDOM,

PHYLUS

CLASS

ORDER

FAMILY

GENUS

SPECIES

But then, naming is the easy part.

Malamud

All species of ibexes are goats, we are told.

*Do we know that the Brown Pelican, Pelecanus Occidentalis, is a
bird of the order of Pelecaniformes and the family Pelecanidae—
or did somebody just make that up?*

Historia Animalium was compiled by Aristotle and considered to be the earliest classification of the animal kingdom. It divided the animal world according to how it looked and behaved.

Pliny the Elder, later claimed to have completed Aristotle's research with *Naturalis Historia*. But now an animal is more than what we can observe about it. An animal is the sum of all the things SAID about it. In Pliny's work, elephants fight dragons, lynxes have breasts, and horses have wings.

*

W. S. Graham

*What is the language using us for?
I don't know. Have the words ever
made anything of you, near a kind
of truth you thought you were? Me
neither.*

Language is a straight line and there is no escape from that single dimension. Thought is not like that. Thought is thick and deep and wild.

Olssen

Putting aside the metaphysical question of whether there is such a thing as a complete thought, it is doubtful whether a sentence can hold one. (?)

*

Malamud

Sometimes he stopped and read a little white card describing the bird's astounding Latin name and its place of origin: Uganda, Brazil, New Zealand—and soon these places ceased to mean anything, life's variety proved too immense, anything might come from anywhere .

*The knowing animals are aware that we are
not really at home in
our interpreted world.*

Spiders oil their legs to keep from getting caught in their own webs.

Shepard	<i>The fox magically blends the old antagonists, dog and cat...confusing our grammar with its biology...</i> <i>...when I write "I" and follow up with self-descriptions, feelings of fraud grip me.</i>
Gleick	<i>It's all one problem.</i> <i>...I don't know what it's called yet; nobody knows.</i>

THE LIED JUNGLE

Part of me is safe and part of me is lies.

Unknown

THE LIED JUNGLE is an immersion environment, designed and fabricated by The Larson Company, then assembled onsite. Immersion landscapes create the illusion of being in the same space as the animals for the viewer, as well as the illusion of the animals being in their own habitats. Immersion environments hide things in the rocks and trees: charged wires and thorny plants, Vaseline on rocks and beams, putty in the finger holes, speakers, misters, feeders...the animals still captive but their captivity, well-hidden. *They aren't caged exactly. Just not free to go.*

The Lied Jungle is America's largest indoor rainforest. In it, things pretend to be each other, polyester leaves in one layer, Ficus in the next.

*

Pavlov's colleagues tried to discover with how much precision a dog could tell a circle from an ellipse. They gave the dog food with the circle but not with the ellipse. Each time they found that the dog could tell the shapes apart, new tests began, with a rounder ellipse. After three weeks the dog suddenly got worse at making the distinction. He squealed and wriggled about in his stand, and tore the mechanical apparatuses and tubes from his body with his teeth...

*

Plato, lamenting the Sophists, warned that something could be difficult in recognizing a sophist, he said, is part of his success.

*

Coen/Stewart

We easily distinguish truth from fiction, but linguistically they're the same.

Olssen

Dick points, Jane looks. They don't exist without each other. In the very attempt to know reality, there already is present the aim

	<p><i>of communication...A lie is the opposite of communication...it is to withhold another's share and portion of reality, to prevent her participation. The very moment someone, in full awareness, employs words that explicitly disregard reality he no longer considers the other an equal but an object.</i></p> <p><i>The ratio of plastic pink flamingos to actual pink flamingos in the US is 700 to 1.</i></p>
McKibbon	<p><i>Summer is going extinct, to be replaced by something that will be called Summer.</i></p> <p>The very word 'naturalistic' says it all.</p>
Unknown	<p><i>...in a culture where reality and image have become synonyms, captivity merges easily with consumerism and in the ensuing metamorphosis loses many of its harsh trappings. The frailties and stress associated with zoo life then disappear along with our sympathy, and the animals are transformed into their own images. We see it in theme parks and in theme park/shopping mall hybrids; gambling casinos with dolphin shows and white tigers, shopping malls with petting zoos and rainforest exhibits, nightclubs decorated with aquariums.</i></p>

MORE DICKS

Dick grows into Salinger, Vonnegut, and Baudrillard...still they seduce with a tongue in the ear, their words getting into her, a fusion, confusion of selves. She sees with their eyes, feels with their hearts, becomes a thousand people and yet stays herself. They know her. She is known.

Discovering her own thought in their words knocks the breath from her body. Who hasn't found herself nodding like Jane, to Deleuze. Look! is the most romantic thing any man could ever say to her.

Gendlin

Sometimes a word, a sentence, a story, is so resonant, so right, she remembers what she is really made of and where her true home is.

*

THE TEST OF THE P

Serres

I want to talk about what the textbooks don't say. (Serres)

Twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds and still she wakes
up black and blue.

Kant

Taylor

Freud

Watson –

Einstein –

Neitzsche

Marx

Decartes

Darwin

Kepler

Bacon

Copernicus –

Milton –

Galileo

Plato –

Aristotle –

Mathew

Mark

Luke

John

Noah

Abraham

Adam

God

She's extremely sensitive is not usually a compliment.

HONEY PAW

The Bear comes to me in dreams. She is neglected, starving, sometimes buried up to her neck in a flower garden or sleeping in a basement, high in a tree or a cloud. I don't want to wake her. I am frightened. I feel her but try not to see her.

In many cultures, the bear was looked upon with such reverence that members were not allowed to speak the word for 'bear'. Ways were thought up that would bypass the need to refer to it at all, even indirectly.

Unknown

Angry One

Black Beast

Black Place

Dark Thing

Dweller in the Wilds

Four-legged Man

Fur Man

Golden Feet

Golden Friend

Honey Paw

Illustrious Pride

Sticky-Mouth

Winter Sleeper

Pride of the Woodlands

Owner of the Earth

I have a feeling I cannot prove.

I want a word that will not come.

FIERCE ABSTRACTIONS

Ruiz

The secondary characters are based on people who really exist, but everything I believe about them is my own.

*

BOGEYDOGS

ARCHETYPES-INHERITED OUTLINES-SANTA-JESUS-SATAN-RED SHOES-RHETORIC-EXPERIMENTS-EVANGELISTS-POMOBABBLE-SPEAKING IN TONGUES-CONDITIONING-BULLIES-ZIZEK'S BIG OTHER

In an effort to get the easygoing young chimpanzee to use the sign for 'no' more often, researcher Roger Fouts looked out the window of Washoe's trailer one evening and signed to Washoe that he saw a big black dog with long teeth that ate baby chimpanzees. He asked her if she wanted to go out, and got a most emphatic 'no'. On other occasions, when she was playing outside and did not want to go in, Roger would sign that he saw the big black dog coming--and Washoe would run inside.

*

I was initiated into art by paint-by-number kits and bible stories. Curled up in my grandmother's arms, the force of her faith, like coals between the covers. Filled *not* with the power of god but the power of story, as it entered my tiny open body, built a temple there, and furnished it with arks and twos by twos and pink chenille.

The only time I saw my grandmother cry, she was talking about King, the horse that she rode to school as a girl, the horse who fell in a gopher hole and was shot by her father when she was ten. The only time I saw her smile was opening a new Craftsman Paint-by-Number.

Horse with Foal.

Horse by Water.

Horse on Black Velvet.

The Pentecostals of my youth were waiting for the Rapture, when it was still called Armageddon. They saw the body as a kind of tumour or tie-down on the soul that would be cut away by the saviour, freeing it to float up to heaven. For me, the rapture was right there on the prairie, between the ironed sheets of field and sky, in the swell and fall of gravel roads, and dust, fine as icing sugar, sifting through my clothes to pattern doilies on my skin.

Not Jesus Camp. Revival meetings where congregants, ugly drunk on suffering, talked in tongues and yapped like dogs; where travelling pastors held us rapt with the dangers of everything. Laying on hands with their thunderous commands they cast out Russians and Catholics and Science: In the Name of God, You get Outta Here! Their words like sharp sticks, rouse the guilty sinners to move as one to the stage, and abandon themselves.

Where the bible was the most important book ever written, Adam and Eve were *not* symbolic, and everything except obedience led straight to Hell.

Belief is a force. Pulls on a child. Red Rover, Red Rover. Calling her over.

My grandmother wanted me to be a missionary, be filled with the Holy Spirit, open my mouth and let it speak through me, say shuka luka luka, alla chiddy chiddy, ohka hora shoda ku. To accept my worthlessness, be baptized in a horse trough, born again, rise up in algae, testify. Always drilling my surface allegiance. Had I been saved? Let Jesus in? Taken Christ as my saviour? It sounded less like me taking him than him taking me. My grandmother had given her heart to Jesus and it left her tough as the two-headed carrots in her little clay garden.

Besides, how would I know the voice in my ear was God and not Satan? The devil, they told me, went after the young.

No, what I wanted to be was a spy, with x-ray glasses and super-tiny cameras ordered from the back of my brothers' comic books. I wanted reading and riddles and finding things out. She had her ball of eyes that was God; mine was books. I had my own happyclappers; ministers to give my tangled ball of selfing, shape. Crossdressing bible stories, fairytales, and comic books. Born again and again and again.

The only lesson I took from Jesus and the nails was to keep my mouth shut; to not admit to any voice heard whatsoever.

I wasn't yapping for anyone. I just wished god would stop leering and let me alone. I saw nothing good in him, except he made the world--and I so love the world. But he scared me on purpose, like my crazy, suspended cousin who was always sticking dead dragonflies in my face, or burying newborn kittens in the granary and then watching his crinolined cousin cry and dig and cough. He just stood at the door, laughing, like god.

No, what I loved was stories and little plastic thimble pots of silky pungent paint, the accidental blend of colour when I crossed the lines, the pattern, alive, growing under her hand, out of the soft blue map of shape and number. I was filled with something there. A hoot and holler of her own. But I held my secret, safe from her tired old eyes busy studying the picture on the box.

For my grandmother it was black and white. The ark was made of wood, and Moses lived 800 years.

Orthodoxy. Unconsciousness. Velvet horse paintings.

*

BIG DADS

A certain man spent each morning sitting on his roof tearing newspaper into little pieces and throwing them into the wind. One day, a neighbour came over and asked him what he was doing. I'm keeping the Indians away, he replied. That's crazy! There are no Indians around here! the neighbour said. See? said the man, as he began tearing up the classifieds. It works! The man's theory about how to keep Indians away cannot be disproved as long as he keeps using it successfully. (?)

He lives in a cab that circles the farm like a second yellow moon. Her inheritance from a man, once estimated at sixty million, is a whole swimming pool full of crazy, which she intends to spend in its entirety so her children get none of it. They called it Dementia in the end. Before that he was eccentric, before that quite a guy, and before that, just a really bad boy. His mother said he was the devil.

He specialized in exits, followed by exorbitant gifts, as if a longed-for Chatty Kathy could stand in for his absence, or that driving a couple new Cadillacs into the farm yard would be reason enough to forget where he'd been.

He says the Credit Union is in his body and if he can just get it out of there, he'll get everything back. Sometimes he says he's going to kill his family. They bargain with him even as he calls them names and the boots fly.

HELP ME. I'M SICK

He cries all day

WHERE'S MOM?

SHE'S UPSTAIRS, SICK

IS THAT WHY SHE'S HERE?

NO, YOU HURT HER.

I WOULDN'T DO THAT.

YOU DID.

He's crying again. Take the pills, stop hitting Mom, and we won't put you in a home.

The steroids give me superhuman strength.

Bags packed, he sits by the door of the senior's home, pretending to use a cellphone. At the desk, he tells them he's going to his daughter's, across town, then makes a run for the airport, boards a plane and shows up at his son's door, two provinces over. Everyone is trying to kill him, he tells him.

His world is full of crooks, punks, and hoodlums that break his car windows, hack into his computer and leave his taps running. He's filed an appeal, made application again, has them right where he wants them.

He doesn't like Christmas, or birthdays or fussing.

He makes them sorry for his vulnerability.

He's angry because he can't get the internet on television, and failed his driver's test. He tells his sister that his wife and daughter are doing this to him through the hospitalization act. He just found out on TV that they took every single thing of his.

What's his problem? was a rhetorical question they never asked each other.

*

He bullied her, proving what words can do. She still fears men in suits who say it's just business. Her voice falters if husbands, fathers, sons, so much as look the other way when she's talking. She's sure there are plenty of good men out there but doesn't trust herself to know the good ones from the bad ones, dressed well The shapeshifting devil from the unchanging god.

Anger is hazardous to your health, like smoke, both first and second hand. Red twizzler necks, clenched fists, hissing teeth. Never underestimate the power of a look to frighten. She'd swallowed his eye and it stuck in her throat.

She withdraws into her room and her books.

*

Syntax, she thinks, is not something to play with. She fears the easy shuffle of words, fears words that *seem* to say things...SOUNDS like sense, her mother would say. But it didn't. His sentences now spilled upon the floor. Barry and Jordan become Gary and Norman; hospitals are courtrooms; doctors are lawyers. WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS WHY THERE'S SO MUCH SALT IN MY BODY, HE SAYS.

People were his biggest disappointment, he'd once told her. Now, disappointment is his biggest people.

*

Osho

It is said that when gypsies went into town they drew circles around their children. Sit here. You can't leave. It's a magic circle. And the child can't leave. Even when she grows and becomes an old woman, if her father draws a circle, she cannot get out of it.

*

Jesus was HOT. His dad was a wanker, who sat up in Heaven, thumping his cup all day for a refill. Passing eternity designing puzzle boxes and punishment grills, and moving placards around the table for the fathers of the cosmos and other talking heads.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST DOCTOR

When god is male, the male is god.

Slater

In 1944, psychologist Daniel Frank realized that he could get his subjects to perform the oddest acts if he wore the white coat when he made the request: "Please stand on your head." "Please walk backward with one eye closed." "Please touch your tongue to the window.

Lemov

Dr. D. Hobart Mowrer found the circle of hope and fear in a laboratory. He discovered that the things pigs and sheep and people were afraid of harmed them less than their anticipation. The pain of the shock was nothing compared with the pain of expecting it. He showed how animals 'rewire' themselves under conditions of escalating stress. In humans, he found the whole cycle could be induced with symbols...He became vice-president of J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency on Madison Avenue. (Lemov)

No one wakes up expecting to drown that day. Television Ad

A man dressed in a bright colour starves and thrashes an elephant for a week. Then another man, dressed in a different colour arrives, pretends to drive away the first man, and strokes and caresses the elephant. He brings it food and water. After fifteen days of this back-and-forth, the 'good' man gently attaches the elephant to another, fully tamed elephant and takes the two of them off to bathe. Within twenty days the wild animal is ready to be taught and the taming process can be completed.

It's okay to eat meatloaf. Ad in New Age Magazine

Lemov

Just about anything could be conditioned to be anything else...The key to brainwashing, the researchers found, was not just causing pain but being able to provide relief-- followed by the reassertion of tremendous pressure.

Eat butter and die. Magazine Ad

But, all experiments failed beyond a certain point...They discovered there must be some degree of agreement, collusion, consent. The delicate point, they agreed, was the one at which

one stopped thinking an old line of thought and began thinking the preferred line of thought.

B. F. Skinner, a neo-behaviourist, discovered that by intermittently rewarding rats with food, they would continue to press the lever like some sort of saw-toothed junkie, regardless of the outcome.

Hedges

Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, created the public relations profession in the 20's. He eroticized the car...and persuaded women to take up smoking as a sign of independence. Cigarettes, he called 'freedom torches'.

Beckett

If I go on long enough calling that my life, I'll end up believing it. It's the principle of advertising.

Slater

In 1961, psychology professor, Stanley Milgram, wanted to test how likely ordinary people would be to inflict agonizing pain on another when ordered to do so. He set up a fake 'shock machine' and the conditions. He discovered not that people will hurt or kill one another, but that they will do so in the absence of aggression...his subjects were quiet good folks with gardens and kids.

The move from laboratory to society happened fast.

Doctors advise patients after a Botox shot not to go shoe shopping or get their hair washed or lie down for four hours, so that the toxin doesn't seep down and inadvertently paralyze the wrong muscles.

BOUNDARY DISPUTES

Webb

The more authoritarian the culture, the more bullshit.

Postmodernism claims 'language' as our home, with everything about us contained within the house. Language is the new edge of the world. Columbus sails again. Wizards in suits, intellectual charlatans, talking in tongues, carnival barkers shout: *There are only bodies and languages!*

The postmodernist believes we have been brainwashed into accepting the idea of universal or objective anything but that its just manipulation dressing up as rational argument...the devil in a new face. Meaning, he says is a game in your head. He rejects the big stories and the tellers, albeit one, the granddaddy of grand narratives:

Man over nature.

HOW CAN I VALUE ANYTHING AT ALL IS I AM CONSTANTLY EXTRICATING MYSELF FROM IT?

*

The expert derives his strongest authority from the language belonging to his 'field'. He changes things linguistically to make them more palatable: progressive and backward replace good and bad.

IT JUST DRIFTS FROM LANGUAGING TO LEGITIMIZING SO EASILY.

shuka luka luka, alla chiddy chiddy, ohka hora shoda ku

Legends about griffins living at the edges of wood...can be used to define the boundaries of a territory by discouraging people from venturing further.

*

Postman

....TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ROOTS IS NOT MERELY TO KNOW WHERE YOUR GRANDFATHER CAME FROM AND WHAT HE HAD TO ENDURE. IT IS ALSO TO KNOW WHERE YOUR IDEAS COME FROM AND WHY YOU HAPPEN TO BELIEVE

THEM. IT IS TO KNOW WHERE YOUR WORLD, NOT JUST YOUR FAMILY,
COMES FROM.

What is true and what is not is not as important as what we
decide to believe.

JOURNAL WEEK 7

At times, the whole Western Canon seems like a game. Ideas are constructed, deconstructed right before my tired eyes. It reminds me of my young sons, when off playing in their room, how they could entertain themselves, alone, spend hours, storming the walls they had built. Hero in one hand, villain in the other, a single body, throwing its voice, and forcing the swizzle stick click-click of war.

JOURNAL WEEK 8

I find myself doing 'anything' today, rather than face the theorists. I eat, tidy up, write letters, and sculpt. Concept-metaphors? Periodising concepts? He tells me: *In many respects, the vision of a cultural studies defined neither by fixed juxtapositions, of pre-existing difference, nor by agreement on a generalized set of theories and objects, can be seen as a re-articulation on a greater geographic scale of the anti-disciplinary and conceptual looseness that has characterized cultural studies all along.* I hate that sentence so much I'm not even citing it. Sue me. It sits heavy as lead in my gut. My limbs go numb.

AFTER LIFE

The Greek word machine, root of machinations and machine, means 'to trick'.

Lanier

The idea of the Rapture says that God will give you an afterlife. If you believe the Rapture is close, problems here on earth might not be your priority.

The idea of The Singularity says that a collective consciousness will emerge from all the web users and you become immortal by getting uploaded into a computer. If you believe the Singularity is near, problems of humanity might not be your priority...

*

Palahniuk

Ideas kill you once you get them in your mind. The Earth is round precludes all other concepts about the Earth.

We are fundamentally, almost inherently, unable to see the largest thing in our lives -- our environment. This ocean of ideas, assumptions, expectations, constraints, drivers, beliefs, blinders, and influences that shape our lives and minds is hidden from us precisely because we are in it and of it.

Lock-in is a process whereby digital designs get frozen into place in maturing computer programs... The process of significantly changing software in a situation in which a lot of other software is dependent on it is the hardest thing to do. So it almost never happens. Lock-in turns thoughts into facts, removes ideas that do not fit.

*

Daly

The word 'sin' is derived from the Indo-European root 'es-', meaning 'to be.' When I discovered this etymology, I intuitively understood that for a [person] trapped in patriarchy, which is the religion of the entire planet, 'to be' in the fullest sense is 'to sin.'

THE HANDLER

Some words, like veal, help us forget what we are actually talking about.

All species of livestock will move forward if the handler stands behind the point of balance. The point of balance is at the animal's shoulder. Livestock will naturally follow the leader...to move animals easily, pressure has to be applied to both the collective flight zone and individual animals within the moving herd.

McLuhan

Ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained individual minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind. To get inside in order to manipulate, exploit, control is the object now. And to generate heat not light is the intention.

All animals must be completely insensible before procedures such as skinning, head removal or dehorning. Animals showing any sign of return to sensibility should be immediately re-stunned. Three percent or fewer of cattle should vocalize and 5 percent of pigs. Do not measure vocalizations for sheep as they are not meaningful.

*

To encourage cattle to come into the corrals and to move easily through the handling facilities, they should be walked through the chutes (races) and fed treats after they pass through the headgate...When the heifers become mother cows, they will help lead the younger cows through the system. A small nylon flag or a small plastic bag, on the end of a slender flexible stick works really well for moving cattle and sorting them.

Some words, like veal, help us forget what we are actually talking about.

RED SHOES

It rises in you, lying on the carpet in your grade seven body, listening to Harry Nilsson...when he jumps that octave in CAN'T LIVE, and a wild joy bangs at your chest to get out. Or walking around the corner at the Creek, the slant of the sun cues an orchestra of yellow, red and orange, and the world bursts into song. The colours like prayer wheels in your head as you walk. Super saturated. You can't hold it. It can only pass through, alive and connected to you in a way you can't explain.

Abrams

There are no words for this knowledge, since words are drawn from our common experience and conventional discourse hides this dimension.

Serres

But you know in these moments, that THE WAR BETWEEN GOD AND THE DEVIL NEVER TOOK PLACE.

I want my wild joy back.

When I was seventeen, I went to Israel, disguised as a Christian. An organization came to my high school offering pilgrimages to Christian students. I saw an opportunity to see the world, with my grandmother rubbing elbows with Jesus and all.

For eight hundred dollars return, all-inclusive, the Kids for Heaven flew to London, Rome, bussed down to Athens. I saw the Coliseum loom in the dark, through a bus window and lost my breath. We boarded the SS Uganda and sailed into Santorino, sat there like a little toy boat in a bathtub, marveling at the steps and whitewash, and people who make their home on the rim of a volcano. In Sicily we wrapped our hair in scarves and the boys ate lamb. The girls lost weight. We sailed through a hurricane into Haifa, stomachs tossed into every available receptacle and over the railing. We journeyed up to Bethlehem for Christmas Day, toured Lazareth's cave, the stable where the child was born (now a gilded star on a mosaic floor, so tacky) and Calvary. Everywhere we went, we went twice. The Arab and the Jewish version.

It was the first time I saw a soldier with a gun.

I can still see the olive trees, the colour of the stone and sky, the Jesus dolls in the market, the glossy tourist pamphlets of where He lived, walked, died. There was little agreement of any of it. I remember standing in a place as layered with story as the rock. And the profound disillusionment, something bigger than my family, perhaps something like what my father felt.

And then London and Jesus Christ Superstar. A disco ball, a theatre full of moving stars. This was a Jesus I could love, a Jesus would sing like that...Ted Neely made it all make sense. That paint-by-number feeling in my body...I knew he felt it too. And he couldn't tell anyone either. So he sang.

FIERCE ABSTRACTIONS II

St. Jerome,

The very words from which she will get into the way of forming sentences should not be taken as haphazard but be definitely chosen and arranged on purpose. For example, let her have the names of the prophets and the apostles, and the whole list of patriarchs from Adam downward. St. Jerome, "Letter on a Girl's Education" 403 AD.

*

RULES FOR WEARING FLORALS

Gilbert

If you don't want a house built, hide the nails and wood.

According to the experts, a boy's personality was fixed. A girl's was malleable...like god and the devil.

The trajectory begins.

Pincurls, patent shoes, blue velvet dresses with little white muffs. Tea sets, a dollhouse, at eight, her own baby. Twin brothers are born. She gets the big one; her sister gets the little one, the one with the hole in his heart.

Messages gather into the body

Behave.

Be quiet.

Be pretty.

Be small.

Be helpful.

Be helpless.

Be nice.

Be happy.

Wait.

Greer	<p>A suitcase of Barbies and outfits and shoes. Silent, staring, puckered lips, tiny hands and tip-toed feet, big breasts with no nipples. In 1992, Barbie speaks: Math class is tough, she says. Let's go shopping. Can a girl ever have enough shoes? One Ken. One car. One horse.</p> <p><i>Her essential quality is her castratedness.</i></p>
Greer	<p>Fairy Tale girls with mountains of hair and acres of dress, bejewelled, trapped in towers and castled with Beasts; orphaned, or traded to devils, and witches; fitted for glass, coffins and shoes; locked in rooms of straw and closets with other dead girls. Spellbound. Waiting</p> <p>Magazine girls, devoted to finding boys, keeping boys, pleasing boys. Flayed and wrapped in animal skins, shoes nailed on, every step hurting. Scantily clad, on their knees, or the floor. Transfixed. Spellbound.</p> <p><i>She may wear leather but not ride a motorbike..</i></p>
Woolf	<p>Girls on TV, Lucy screwing up. Des wagging her finger. Lara Petrie, plotting, crying. Dick Van Dyke giving her <i>anything</i> to stop. Darren saying NO, SAMANTHA! Samantha using her power but hiding it. Meredith begging McDreamy: <i>Pick me. Love me.</i></p> <p>Girls on commercials, smiling and scrubbing things. Solving problems like dirt and grime. Mr. Clean and the Glad Man, white as the kitchens they stand in.</p> <p><i>Please help me, calls Dina, I can't open the milk can.</i></p>
Greer	<p>Nourished on romance and sacrifice. Laced up in Pink Think. Her gift grown about with weeds and bound with briars...Hush, hush, go the mothers, wiping the oil from the beaches and birds.</p> <p><i>She must be happy; the entire structure would topple if she were not.</i></p> <p>*</p> <p><i>Women were helpless. Men had power. That's how she learned it. A million secret tongues lick her into shape.</i></p>

*Only the fair deserve the brave.
Small numbers are good. Zero is best.*

What we're born into, grow up with, we assume is the way.

And that's why you laugh when you hear PRINCESS DAVID.

Jefferess

Johnson

The girl of five does not make any use of lateral space. She does not stretch her arm sideward, she does not twist her trunk; she does not move her legs, which remain side by side. All she does in preparation for throwing is to lift her right arm forward to the horizontal and to bend the forearm backward in a pronate position...The ball is released without force, speed, or accurate aim...Not only is there a typical style of throwing like a girl, but there is a more or less typical style of running like a girl, climbing like a girl, swinging like a girl, hitting like a girl. They have in common first that the whole body is not put into fluid and directed motion, but rather in swinging and hitting...the motion is concentrated in one body part; and second that the woman's motion tends not to reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of her intention.

In Home Economics, after the film, the teacher explains:
sometimes the boy who SEEMS not to like you, likes you A LOT.
He may treat you badly, but care very much. Sometimes, if he's
REALLY mean, it REALLY means, he REALLY cares.

In grade 5 she likes Tim but he likes Joanne. For all of high school she was crazy for Rob who was crazy for Karen. She married her first boyfriend. After her divorce she crushed on Mark, who was flattered. Then fell in love with Greg, who loved Alice, Jane, Sarah, etc. John was her great love, the Jon of her letters...until he wrote to her of Helen.

The love I feel for you and the love I feel for her are different... they tell her over and over and over. It always begins: I love the way you make me think... and ends, You make me think. I have to think when I'm with you.

Entologists entice male butterflies with painted cardboard replicas larger and more enticing than the female of their species. They mount it again and again, while nearby the female butterfly opens and closes her wings in vain.

*

It takes years for Jack to tell Kate he loves her and she's supposed to believe that its worth it, that she can save him, help him find out how he really feels.

Psychology says that if the daughter doesn't have a good relationship with the father, she's fucked, but this is likely more propaganda from the people who brought her Eve and Pandora and Hell. Men wanted an attitude of frailty and she wanted men, but if Home Free was a lamppost on Riel Crescent where Jackie cried and the boys gathered to her like dogs on a foxhunt, she wasn't having it.

Some moths have evolved the ability to detect bat ultrasound and can take overriding actions or emit high frequency sounds to confuse the bat's echolocation system.

RAISING HIS DANDER

Nayyirah

*There have been so many times
I have seen a man wanting to weep*

Waheed.

*but
instead
beat his heart until it was unconscious.*

According to the experts, Play fighting encouraged masculinity in a young boy.

*

They are sharing grilled cheese. She is studying his little caved-in chest. He seems to be fighting something inside of him. Then he shivers.

Are you alright Sam?

We found a dead bird, he says, fighting tears.

Only it wasn't dead... His lip is quivering..

Someone shot it with a BB gun—he stops to take a breath—then another guy—he draws another breath—threw a football at it...and broke its wing—he breaks down in the only place that it is safe for grade 7 boys to cry.

No *Robocop* or *Universal Soldier* has prepared her 12-year-old boy for the eyes of that suffering bird, or the pulpy mass of its broken body. She wants desperately to protect him, to erase this image from his eyes, but at the same time she wants him to remember it, to use it. The world will come for him soon. She wants him to hold on tight to that thread, the stringy line between himself and that bird, the one that all the boys in high school next year will be trying to snap.

*

He is carving his initials into the picnic table with a fork, and waiting for a ride from his mother. She is distracting her 13-year-old son with talk about last night's *X-Files*, while trying to catch the last light of day with her camera.

Why are the 'aliens' always portrayed insect-like, ugly, violent, or all of the above? Never mind that physics denies it, and insects that size would break their legs just trying to stand on them... She clicks the shutter. But why do we think we are more intelligent than a species that could come from space, or for that matter than the creatures here on earth?

The boy is used to his mother thinking out loud and continues to carve.

BIRDS REMEMBER WHERE THEY PUT THEIR SEEDS, BEES DANCE MAPS TO THE HIVE, ELEPHANTS GRIEVE...Click.

He stops, raises his head, looks out from under a mop of blond bang.

Mom, he says, matter-of-fact, *WE kill THEM, so who's smarter?*

She is faced away from him and lets her mouth drop.

I think you're confusing intelligence with force. If there is intelligent life out there, anywhere, I don't think they'd even make a pit stop. She clicks again.

He goes back to carving the table.

Max, remember when I was painting the bedroom closet, the one that was wallpapered with the old newspaper clippings? Remember the picture I took of that article before I painted over it, A-BOMB SCORCHES JAPS JET BLACK? She turns to face him and repeats it: *A-Bomb Scorches Japs Jet Black?*

Holy crap, Max, do you think the Americans are smarter than the Japanese?

But she can see he does.

*

*

The screen door slams.

You wanna hear something fascinating?

Hunter joins her on the blanket.

"Sodium is so reactive with water it will burn a hole in your throat.

He reaches into the green plastic basket beside her and splits an early apricot.

If you flush it down the toilet, it'll explode."

He pulls out the seed and pitches it hard. She hears it strike a tree.

Chlorine is a poisonous gas," he says, and pops both halves of the tiny yellow-orange fruit into his mouth. He reaches for another and splits it

It destroys the cells in your lungs, starts stripping electrons off the atoms that make up your body,"

He pauses for visual effect...

Together they make salt.

He launches a second pit deep into the orchard, and flops down in her shadow. He starts tapping her forehead like knocking on a door. She opens her eyes and turns her head to look at him.

What holds them together? she asks.

Bonds." He sits up again.

Bonds? She rolls onto her side, shades her eyes and looks up at him.

Ionic, covalent... He wipes juice from his chin and onto his jeans. In salt, sodium gives up an electron and chlorine takes it. That's ionic. In covalent bonds (example?) atoms share their outer electrons...sort of volley it back and forth. His hands are pushing and pulling his point through space.

Seems like magic." She smiles.

He frowns.

She asks him about the black eye again.

He ignores her. "Did you get me that book?

No, they don't use the word censorship anymore. It's just *unavailable*.

Shit.

How was the party?

It sucked. I don't know why she keeps asking us. She hates us. She only invites us cause we're Mike's friends. Gawd. He cups his freshly shorn head in his big, soft hands, and rubs it back and forth.

I don't know what they see in each other either," he says as he probes the crate for another ripe fruit. (green of eyes and

basket)
He treats her like shit.
Maybe he's different when they're alone. Her eyes look through him.
She's a freak.
He splits a fruit.
Always crying.
He wings the stone.
A major psychotic.
She sits up cross-legged to face him.
You think crying is psychotic?" she asks, reaching into the basket between them.
Mom, I've heard things...
What have you heard?" she asks, her senses seized awake by the bittersweet fruit flesh on her tongue.. He sits on his heels, in the blister of July, talking and eating and gesturing. She lays down beside him and lets his stories rain over her.

HUSBANDRY

Greer

Hysteria was first called the 'mother' and thought to be the wandering womb that rose into the throat of a girl and choked her. It was also called the daughter sickness, and it was assumed a good husband could fix it.

Unless a woman understands her role, she creates havoc among those she loves.

*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T LIKE CHICKEN? HOW COULD YOU NOT LIKE CHICKEN?

Her father-in-law speaks in his usual forceful manner, as he passes the plate to the right, gesturing to the table guests to make sure it gets to her.

DADDY, YOU KNOW SHE'S A VEGETARIAN, her mother-in-law says in her usual exasperated tone. She is 73, with fifteen living children, a fierce Catholicism, and a pacemaker. She's lost six babies and the lower lobe of her right lung. Sometimes, she says, she gets a little tired.

HAVE SOME CHICKEN, he says to his daughter-in-law, as if he hasn't heard his wife. YOU'LL LIKE IT.

After the meal, the men move to the living room to watch the game and volley clichés, and the women move to the kitchen to clean and complain. A Keyser game begins. Children scatter.

After everyone is gone, she puts the boys to bed and he goes to the pub up the hill with the men. They don't know when they'll be back or don't want to say. She is in bed with a book, listening to the sounds of her children breathing, and feeling the need to change something. Maybe her hair.

Mom?

Her youngest is standing in the bedroom doorway, rubbing his eyes.

She throws back the comforter and he climbs into the pocket warmed by her body.

Where'd Dad go?

He's out, he'll be back soon. The small boy turns away and

backs up into her body to spoon. The waterbed bulges. There is a vacuous space between her and her husband that she cannot bridge. He doesn't want her drawing him into conversation. "I love you" covers everything. Anything else equates to NOT loving him. If she REALLY loved him, she'd make him a pie.

Mom?

Ya?

It's too light in here.

She reaches over to turn out the light.

Mom?

Go to sleep Sam.

Dad's car got damejd.

She doesn't answer.

Mom?

Sam, go to sleep.

Dad's car got damajd. Henry Kneeknobber did it. He damejd dad's car. He's dumb.

Shhh. She tucks the blankets in around him, and thanks the darkness for concealing her smile.

She wants another baby, but he refuses the child, the conversation, and the vasectomy. He wants her to do it. *If she loved him...* But with a wife to organize his home and a secretary to organize his work, she DOESN'T understand, and he will not explain himself.

Mom? It's very dark in here. I don't know why. I can't believe it.

Sam rolls back to face her. His blue eyes look black. He nuzzles the hollow of her neck and she wraps her arms around him.

Uh oh, what was that? Maybe a beeper I guess. He squirms out of her embrace and sits up, looking down at her. "I like Regina, Mom." He has never been to Regina. He flops down beside her. She watches his eyes trace the contours of everything.

Uh oh. A horn, Mom. Maybe a train. It could be a train." She cups his head in her hand and smells his hair.

Nothing had marked her more than the fallen fruit of her own body. She could not remember life without them. Nothing had awed her like watching them, head pressed up against the crib

bars, a single finger held in their tiny clutched fist. The numinous feeling in her chest as she watches her toddler fall asleep, mid-sentence, face, fist and spoon, into his own mashed potatoes. What she feels with a baby at her breast is so far beyond words, she doesn't even reach. Locked in his love, his eyes and mouth, her milk dribbling from his toothless grin, into the crevice of his not-yet neck.

Mom?

She is quiet. Pretending to sleep.

Uh oh. My nose is running.

Silence.

I have a tummy ache.

Shhh

Mom? He cups her cheek in his little hand. Can I have some juice?

She opens her eyes and smiles. Will you go to sleep then? She rises on a wave, pushes out of bed, and pads into the kitchen. It wasn't for the weak of heart. Motherhood. No where in the magazines does it show the grunt work required to pull it all off.

When she returns, Sam is standing at the window, peering into the night through a space he's made between the window blind slats.

Sam, lay down. Sam.

He spreads his arms, and falls face down into the billowy bedcovers, riding the gentle baffled waves. He sits, drinks the juice in noisy gulps, lets out an 'ahhh' and wipes his mouth. She sets the glass on the bed-side table and crawls in beside him. The covers are twisted and knotted with his energy. He is starting to wind down like one of his battery toys. Spasms of energy followed by longer and longer periods of stillness until he sleeps in her arms.

In the spring, she gives in and ties her ribbons, and in the drugged sleep of surgery, she dreams of a young dead girl standing in the threshold of her bedroom door. She is backlit glowing from the light in the hall. She screams and tries to wake the man beside her in the dream, but his skin is rubber, elastic, it stretches wild and Gumby-like where she pulls,. She is so terrified, she wakes and finds herself pinned under his arm and a leg he's thrown over her. She waits in the dark room for an answer. Nothing comes. Her ears fill with tears. Trying harder isn't working.

*

What begins like any other summer day, ends with the Sherriff posting signs of receivership on their livelihood, and chaining the doors shut. It's her father's business and he tells them it's not happening. It's someone's else's mistake. He'll have it all back by Monday. She doesn't understand and he doesn't explain. She can walk away now or start over, but she cannot bear the thought of mothering father and husband and child, who will all need her now.

Divorce will still advantage him. If she leaves she can only bring up her children in pauperdom.

Greer

SHE CAN ONLY FIGHT THE GUILT OF FAILURE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE SET-UP, AND EXAMINE THE SET-UP.

She hopes one day they'll forgive her, spoiling everything.

But the word love isn't love.

*

WAIT. HOW COULD A GOD WHO KNEW EVERYTHING NOT KNOW EVE WOULD PICK THE APPLE? AND THEN, IF HE KNEW, WHY WOULD HE PRETEND THAT HE DIDN'T?

It's confusing to live in a woman's body. Misogynous jokes, COURSE I LUV YA, I FUCKS YA DON' I? Hilarious. Coaches screaming at your sons: YER PLAYIN LIKE A GIRL!!! The word 'girl' hurled at the wall like a Chinese daughter. A man from Ethiopia telling me how rich I am because I have three sons, as if I'd narrowly escaped some poverty of daughter. Men, fists balled with girl words, taunt each other; PUSSY, FAIRY, LADY, BITCH. On TV: THE PUBLIC WILL FORGIVE YOU FOR BEING A MURDERER, BUT NOT FOR BEING A FAG.

Woman, the curse, the witch, the whore, the trouble-maker, responsible for creating desire in man, responsible for NOT creating desire in man. Responsible for keeping the marriage together, responsible for tearing the family apart...

Being a woman is very convincing but it's not the whole story.

*

I'm convinced that Eve, when she picked that apple, was just turning to Adam to say, "Look, it's a trick," but by the time she opened her mouth to speak, the garden was upside down with implications, the media had compounded the story, and she found herself, naked, outside the garden. And the story runs over and over, every night, looping, millions of Eves outside millions of gates. Poor, selfish, asking-for-it Eve, *whose sons belong to the father, her gift to the husband. Her only job: DON'T MAKE A GIRL OF HIM.*

*

A BUNDLE OF HIS

The anatomical heart is held in place by muscular attachment of veins and arteries. The heartbeat is regulated by a unique nervous system that either accelerates, or depresses the sending and receiving of messages by impulses, tiny electrical shock waves that travel along a tender bundle of neuromuscular fibers called the bundle of his. Yes, really.

On her way home from the Alzheimer Support Group, she decides to look in on him. She takes one look at him and thinks the better of it. Turning to go, she feels something hit the back of her head with a force that spurts stars and blood. She runs down the street to her daughter's house, where she lives out of a suitcase.

They send a counselor to his door. He won't let them in.

A judge. An order. Four policemen escort him to the hospital for 'evaluation'.

The judge warns the women: DON'T take him home. If he passes the evaluation, by some miracle, DON'T take him home. Tell them you're in danger and REFUSE to pick him up.

He fails the test. The women sleep hard.

The hospital calls the daughter.

Pick him up now. We don't have a bed.

NO, it's not safe.

We've found a place for him, but he can't go until tomorrow.

NO, we're not picking him up.

Then we'll put him in the hall and charge you \$500 for a security guard, and another \$200 tomorrow for the ambulance ride.

She leaves him there anyway.

The women take a few of his things over. A woman is yelling. WHO THE HELL SENT HIM HERE? WE DON'T TAKE PEOPLE LIKE THIS HERE! HEADS ARE GOING TO ROLL. WE'RE NOT KEEPING HIM! She is in her twenties with long blonde hair.

The mother and daughter, heads down, turn to go.
SLAM THE DOOR BEHIND YOU, she shouts, I'M GOING TO
HOLLER BUT I NEED A CIGARETTE FIRST!
She calls later, tells them she 'shipped him back'.
The daughter makes a few calls of her own, and the smoking
lady is fired.

The hospital calls.
Pick him up.
NO.
We've found another place, but not for a few days. We'll come
and get him.
NO. We'll never get him out again.
It has taken the women years to find this NO and all their
strength to hold on to it.

He calls home.
ARE YOU GONNA GET ME OUTTA HERE? I'VE BEEN IN THIS
JAIL CELL FOR 14 YEARS! THEY'RE GOING TO KILL ME.
NO, she says, you have to stay. You're sick and you need help.
He hangs up and calls again.
ARE YOU GONNA GET ME OUTTA HERE BEFORE THEY KILL
ME?
NO, I'm not. I put you there.

The hospital calls.
Pick him up.
NO.
Then we'll put him in a cab and send him where he wants to go.
What about the violence? the daughter asks the nurse.
There's nothing on his file about violence.
How is that possible!? It was on there last night—
I don't have that file, I only have today's file.
He was admitted because of the violence. I am afraid for my
mother, and for myself.
Well, there hasn't been any violence here.

Violence is not always fist and bone.

He is in the back seat.

That woman was CRAZY! He means the psychiatrist. 'She doesn't even know what a foreclosure is. She's never foreclosed a mortgage IN HER LIFE!'

You're not staying. We're moving you out. This week. A care home or an apartment?

I wanna house.

In her mind she goes over the back seat and kills him. But her body is locked, knuckles white, to the wheel. She has rental properties.

Fine, she says, exasperated. 'I think 6th Street is coming up.' I wouldn't live in that piece o crap! I want a NICE house, like your MOTHER'S!.

The brothers say, if the father had missed, if the remote had hit the wall instead...none of this would be happening. Hidden assumptions surface and split the family into boys' and girls' camps.

The next day, he's not going.

YES YOU ARE! yells the daughter.

NO I'm NOT! Your mother's coming BACK here to look after me!

NO she's isn't!

We have a marriage contract and she can't break it!

Yes, she can.

He hangs up.

She turns to her mother. 'Well, at least I got a chance to tell my father I hated him before he died.'

They laugh till their sides hurt because there is nothing left to do.

THE HANDLESS MAIDEN

No one tells the part about how angry the maiden is with her father for indulging the devil, or selling her off. Never mind cutting off her arms at the elbows and letting her wander the dark woods alone. No one talks about what she might have done with those arms, what she might have felt or fought. And no one, absolutely no one tells the part about how hard she reaches for her baby, or how long she waits there on the riverbank, thinking what to do.

DE-SCISSIONS.

Allende *Listen Paula, I am going to tell you a story, so that when you wake up, you will not feel lost.*

Colette *There is no virtue in felicity.*

Nice formerly meant ignorant.

She's been going to the library for near half a century and still moves quickly through women's studies. She can't admit her own feminism. It pains her and she cannot stop to ask why. When she reads "The Female Eunuch", she cries for two weeks. Things stir and linger, colour her days. She tells herself she can't afford to lose that kind of time.

Her revolution is a quiet one. She doesn't watch television, has stopped reading magazines that suggest the battle has been won with pencil skirts and power suits, her eyes pasted to the floor at the grocery till.

She rebels, some days, by not brushing her hair, by wearing steel-toed boots or not doing the dishes. She rebels by not wearing makeup or skirts, by not being the woman she's supposed to be. She rebels by living alone, by raising new men. She has learned to dull her anger because there are punitive measures in place, everywhere.

She rebels by sitting in coffee houses, fighting her gypsy chalk circles.

A man at the next table to the woman beside him: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE OF US WHO CONSIDER WOMEN'S LIB TO BE WOMEN'S LIP?

Fighting them quietly...

*

Williams *When Indah, an orangutan, escaped from her enclosure at the San Diego Zoo in June 1993 and clambered up onto the viewing deck, she neither headed for the hills nor attacked people. She chose to go*

through a garbage can, put a bag on her head, taste what she found, and dump an ashtray, surrounded by an interested audience. In other words, she indulged both her curiosity about what happens on the other side of the viewing deck and her need to act on her world in her own way. This seems to indicate that in her enclosure Indah was bored. She was not fulfilled. She had things she wanted to do that she was kept from doing.

When I am outside I know the rules...I have not memorized them; I have not learned them by having them drilled into my brain year after year; nor did I ever write them 100 times on the blackboard when I broke them. I have always known them. The rules for living are in my bones; I feel them. They are simple. I need to eat and drink. My body knows exactly how much. I know how warm I need to stay in winter and how cool in summer...I know what can kill me.

Pressure builds in the tiny townhouse. MTV blares in the background. Max cuts a moose path through the living room. Mom, can you make my lunch? I've no time. (tone)

No.

They argue, he throws up his hands, exasperated, says he's been wasting time talking to her when he could have made his lunch by now! His brother is down, joining the protest. They don't have time for the 'small stuff'. They give her that stupid IF-I-FAIL-MY-MIDTERM-IT'S-BECAUSE-THERE-WAS-NO-MILK-FOR-BREAKFAST LOOK. She can't get into the bathroom so she dresses in the closet off the kitchen.

WHY DON'T WE JUST GET A COW. Hunter says through the slats, as if she's failing to hold up her end of things.

Suddenly Max's voice, softer.

Mom, can you pick me up at 5:20? Please? The usual place?

She is too angry to answer, braced over the sink now, looking down at a glob of strawberry jam someone's thrown off his knife. Hunter is standing with the fridge open, staring into it. He does this about 500 times a day. Opens the fridge, stares into it, and closes it again.

Next time you talk to Max, he says to his mother, "you can tell him if he doesn't pay me for gas by Wednesday, he's not coming with me anymore. His ride ends Wednesday."

Why don't you tell him?"

Cause I'm not talking to him.

How will he know then?

You'll tell him.

No, I won't.

Well, when I leave on Wednesday morning and he wonders why, you can tell him you were supposed to tell him.

That's ridiculous."

I keep trying to study and something comes up and I can't get to it. Max calls from the living room. He spent last evening talking on the phone with his girlfriend in Victoria. Now, he's cramming for exams, irritated and disappointed in himself. Could you please not watch TV? he says to his younger brother.

And then to his mother...Could you please not hum?"

They've grown into men, changing everything. They claim so much space, spread their possessions over every available horizontal surface. She gathers herself into smaller and smaller spaces. Always playing charades: You're sad, no, no, you're angry, frustrated? You want me to.. two words,? rhymes with?...somehow she moves very easily and without notice into the role of helpmate around men. There were so many perks with those tiny blossoming beings, smiles, hugs, and backward sentences that made her laugh from her cracked belly.

Sam's on the answering machine. He left his resume at her place. Can she run it over and drive him to the gym? Hunter wants her to go to the store. There's no food in the house. He's slamming doors and pot lids, cooking up last year's rice in the back of the cupboard, hoping for food poisoning, then she'll be sorry. Max is mad too. There's no milk, but he doesn't want to go to the store. He wants her to.

I'll eat at Dad's. But I have to take the mayo. Hafta combine the food at both houses to make a sandwich." He's annoyed as hell. The boys begin to fight over the end of the orange juice.

How am I supposed to gain weight? Max says to Hunter
Sam calls. Can you pick me up? I don't wanna be here.

Are you and Dad fighting? Really Sam, you don't wanna be here either, cause Hunter and Max are going at it.

Don't listen to him, his father says, taking the phone. He's playing games. Sam, let me talk to your mother alone."

Sam calls back.

Do what he wants and call me when you're finished. I'll pick you up.

When he calls, it's late. She pulls a wool sweater over her pajamas and heads out the door. He is waiting on the driveway, wearing sunglasses. "I'm moving in with you, he says, And I'm never going back." Same old story. Same old fight. Take your feelings and just go to your mother's. They sit in a parking lot and talk it out.

On their return Hunter is boiling water. *What!? I don't believe it.*
Where's the pasta?

Night falls. The snow outside the bedroom window comes down in shovelfuls. She is lying on a mattress on the floor, upstairs in Hunter's room, staring up at his poster of Gillian Anderson's belly.

The living room is full of twenty-something boys watching the Miss USA pageant. Laughter and sounds of chip bags and opening cans drift up from below:

I'd rather come back as a frog than a girl, a boy says

I'd come back as a girl if I could have all my athletic ability. It's Max.
"Then I would just take the girls to school.

I'd come back as a woman and sleep my way to the top. It's Hunter.
AND I'd be a lesbian.

They laugh long and loud together.

What about...A girl's voice and a name she can't make out.

Oh, ya, one gets through here and there, ten years and you have 10 women in baseball, 10 more in golf. Max is painting a bleak picture. There's more than that in business, in medicine. Another girl. She lists a few.

There is silence. She can almost imagine the boys casting glances at each other...

I'd rather be a frog! Someone says

The house explodes with laughter.

Shhhhh, Shhhh, everybody, shutup! yells Hunter. Gawd, she's hot.

The room falls silent. The only voice, the pageant host.

YOU HAVE HOUSEPLANTS WITH NAMES AND YOU SING TO THEM, he says.

TELL US THEIR NAMES AND SING SOMETHING FOR US YOU SING TO THEM.

CONTINUOUS SOFT BLOWS

Domestication is both a cultural and biological process.

Soring a horse's front hoof and forelegs can be accomplished a number of ways. Heavy chains are used during training to produce an exaggerated high stepping gait. Nails are driven into the tender sole of a horse's hoof, or the hoof wall is cut to the quick. Chemical irritants such as diesel fuel, kerosene, or mustard oil are rubbed on the low forelegs in pursuit of blue ribbons or a smoother ride. The result of a soring process makes each step painful and forces him into unnatural high-stepping gait, that horse show judges and audiences applaud.

The Ilizarov procedure was developed 20 years ago by a Russian doctor to lengthen the legs of dwarves and re-form shattered bones. In China it has been popularized as a form of cosmetic surgery for people who simply want to be taller. To lengthen the legs, the shin bones are severed and a steel frame drilled into the bones in order to stretch them apart. Following surgery, over the course of several months, these inches of new leg bone can be grown. Risks are high. Limbs can become deformed, weakened, or grow to different lengths.

I've had three toes shortened-- I like to wear Jimmy Choo's, three-inch heels with a pointed toe.

FASHION'S MOST ROMANTIC STORY FOR SEASONS HAS BEEN THE RISE OF THE CORSET. WOMEN ARE BEGGING TO WEAR THEM, ALTHOUGH THE WORK THAT GOES INTO THE BONING MAKES THEM VERY EXPENSIVE

KID GLOVES AND CROC BAGS ARE PROPS, OF COURSE. LADY IS A STATE OF MIND.

Kolbenschlag

THE DISINTEGRATION OF FEMININE IDENTITY SHOULD RATHER BE VIEWED AS A MORAL IMPERATIVE.

What the Beast has offered you is yours...

FUNKTIONLUST

Frank

Business culture...has 'become' our imagination, it has 'become' our power to envision, and describe, and theorize, and resist.

*

BENNOMENHEIT

WORK-PLAY-POWER-POWERLESSNESS-ACADEMESE-THE ICK
FACTR-SOFT VIOLENCE-CRAFT-SUPERSTIMULI-CARNIFARE-
OMNICHOW-BROWSE

Dali

The first man to compare the cheeks of a young woman to a rose was obviously a poet; the first to repeat it was possibly an idiot.

*

The purpose of browse is to forget you're a bird.

As I wander the aisles of the new Michael's in Vancouver, the world no longer makes sense to me. It's a train wreck, and I can't look away. A warehouse, floor to ceiling with synthetic flowers and baskets, crossed by aisles of ribbon in so many colours that colour loses its meaning. Insert the Butt Brush. Mini packages and mini-mini packs, shrink-wrapped for our convenience. People shopping and blinking, shopping and blinking.

I see Debord's spectacle, Baudrillard's ecstasy, Bahktin's carnival. Fools crowned, kings mocked. Differences flattened.

I see the Empire, falling.

I see birds, too stressed to sing.

I ask the boy with a nametag if he knows where the chalk markers are.

Um, did you check aisle 8?

No, I know the store, and I've never actually seen them here,

but they are on your website.

Um, we have chalk. Did you check there?

I don't think they would be with the chalk. They're wet

MARKERS. Is there anywhere you can look it up?

Um, no.

Really?

Well, normally, I could use the price gun to scan them and tell you how many we have, but the guns are on loan for inventory today.

Wouldn't you have to find them first, to scan them?

Um, ya.

Aren't you getting too big when you don't know what's in your store?

I guess.

Over the loudspeaker: "Michael's. Where Creativity Happens...Learn the theories, principles and concepts behind scrapbooking..."

"Martha Stewart something new every five minutes."

A man rushes up. He's in a hurry.

Do you have fondant?! My wife said you did!

Um. Um, says the boy.

I tell him aisle 23.

For a moment I hate that boy, who has no idea of the fire in things. I want to cast it out and leave him cinder and ash.

Lewis

Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate on to the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let everyone see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food?
C. S. Lewis.

Livingston

Dolphins, confined in tiny space, deprived of most companionship, denied the use of many of their capacities, are trained to burst into the air in a shower of spray, to dance across the surface of the water and to leap in apparent joy. The joy may even be real, but it does not reflect the overall reality of the captive animal's life..

Keepers give vitamin pills tucked behind the gill of a fish to a dolphin for breakfast. The dolphin is very hungry then and the keepers can be sure that it will swallow the pill.

THE ICK FACTOR

Santayana

American's love junk. It's not the junk bothers me, it's the love.

Having seen zebras in the Congo rubbing themselves against termite mounds, Hediger had the idea of installing a concrete mound in their zoo enclosure. They had hardly seen the thing before they flung themselves on it, destroying it in the process. When it was rebuilt, they strained with such force to get to it that it took several men to hold them back...

They think it's hilarious that I can't or won't get over it, the Inuksuk we are selling in the University bookstore. The day manager insists we display it on our information desk so it's always in my vision and I cannot stop obsessing. It offends me. Three pseudo-stone shapes for legs and head, and what looks like an cookie sandwiched between them, covered with a sprayed plastic sand and glue mixture. Then, painted Oreo brown and vanilla. Behind the little figure, a place to put your own photo. On the bottom, badly-cut kitchen laminate, and little green felties so it won't scratch the desk..

We name him Icky Inuksuk, and my coworkers drop by to get me going on about him.. It's become a big part of our shared days. A real conversation piece.

When I leave the bookstore, my 9-5 cohort make me a giant life-size card of the Mona Lisa with a photocopy of my head instead of hers. And Icky in a box.

I keep it in my vision now to remind me ugly things are not benign.

For John Ruskin, humans should make 'good and beautiful things' because those things will re-create us as good and beautiful in their turn. To make cheap and ugly and destructive things will kill us, as indeed we are being killed, through poverty, through war, through the cheapening of our public and private lives, and through the destruction of the natural world.

ANATOMY OF A RECEIPT

An interview. 500 applicants have applied for 40 minimum wage positions. She is in a circle of 10 people, 7 interviewees and 3 interviewers. All of them have one or two degrees. More and more companies are seeking candidates with a *wide* variety of experience. They'll need it--to do the job three people used to do.

What is customer service to you? they begin.

When did you first decide you wanted to work for us?

To keep them on their toes, each question begins with a different person, and continues around the circle until all have answered. To be last is as hard as to be first. If first the question takes them by surprise. If last, all the good answers are gone.

The young man beside her says he didn't really think about it, he just needs a job. He is out of the running and they have all just moved a little closer to the job.

Why should we hire you?

Give us a little background...

When was the last time you were in a bookstore?

Tell us about a company you think excels and why...

Take us through step by step how you would sell a book.

She is conscious of wanting to dumb down a bit so as not to make the boy beside her look so bad. His answers are terrible.

A worker comes to you; finished their work, they are bored, what do you do?

What is your favourite book and why? They start with her. She has the job. She can feel it.

After a second interview, she is offered a part-time position, given 2 blue t-shirts, a black vest, and a nametag. The words are better than the wage. She is not a worker or employee, she is a CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE REPRESENTATIVE, or CSR for short. An enthusiastic AMBASSADOR who embraces the company philosophy and *enjoys responsibility*. She's required to be

stupid smart. Attend morning meetings, get excited about numbers and pie charts and goals. Praise Jesus. Sing Halleluiah. The display of anything else, boredom, or apathy, is construed as mutiny or at least trouble. If she is not excited about yesterday's numbers, what will motivate her to beat them today? Sometimes she is caught improvising on her script.

On her coffee break, Starbucks is training a new crew. Give me some of the ways that Starbucks contributes to the community? The trainer says
They look at each other.
Ok, I'll give you a hint...She tells them the answer.
Name three non-coffee beverages that Starbucks sells...
They look at the floor
What about our teas? She says, Teas don't have coffee in them do they?
They nod.
When and where did the first Starbucks open?
And so on.

Back on shift, the MODs give her goals and if she makes those goals, they increase the goals. Her reward for doing a good job is more work. She spends half her day putting out new books, and the other half, returning old books. In the book world, old is three weeks. If it hasn't sold in three weeks, Hasta la vista.

It gets harder and harder to work within a system that asks her to care about stupid things, empty celebrations, reasons to buy stuff; *to be a company cheerleader and support customers who see nothing ridiculous about the idea of loyalty cards, instead of lower prices in the first place.*

*

You're creative! the day manager says with his usual exasperating enthusiasm. He gives her an opportunity to create an aisle display of Frisbees and other plastic summer stuff. 'Make something fun', he tells her.
You *love* the alphabet! he says the next day, and she lands the good fortune of alphabetizing textbook orders.

Her life is one long entry position.

At the till, she finds herself starting a conversation with a computer science student about AI instead of reminding him that if he likes them on Facebook, she can give him a free hand towel.

*

Notley

The first time she was fired, she was seventeen. She overheard a husband and wife quarreling. The problem wasn't what she heard but *that* she heard. They were married, and the company had strict rules against employees marrying each other. Her pink slip said NOT SUITABLE.

The next time she was caught in a love triangle, which, when it settled into two, called for a restructuring. Her pink slip said NOT SUITABLE.

The third time, she took employee concerns of a wildly abusive manager to HR, and was locked out by the end of the day. She was paid well to go away, and asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Her pink slip said NOT SUITABLE.

All of the companies she's worked for have had open-door policies. It's a venus fly-trap. For trouble.

If you look too deeply you will be asked to leave.

Scan, enter, tender, total, swipe, enter, two receipts...

Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?

Scan, enter, tender, total, swipe, enter, two receipts...

Rebellion is having her latte, *her* way.

*

Charles, a small octopus, was the subject of an experiment to see whether invertebrates could learn conditioned tasks as vertebrates do. With two others, Albert and Bertram, each housed in a small tank.

Charles was to be trained to pull a switch so that a light went on, and then swim over to the light to be rewarded with a minute piece of fish. Albert and Bertram learned to perform this task and Charles seemed at first to be doing the same. But then he rebelled. He began anchoring himself to the side of the tank and yanking on the lever so fiercely that he eventually broke it. Instead of waiting under the light to receive his smidgen of fish, he reached out of the water, grabbed the light, and dragged it into the tank. Finally, he took to floating to the top of the tank, with his eyes above the surface, accurately squirting water at the experimenters. The variables responsible for the maintenance and strengthening of the lamp-pulling and squirting behaviour in this animal were not apparent, the experimenter noted.

Most animals are not held captive by people who are asking what it would take to make them happy.

Woolf

Of the two—the vote and the money—the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important...Indeed, I thought, slipping the silver into my purse, it is remarkable, remembering the bitterness of those days, what a change of temper a fixed income will bring about. No force in the world can take from me my five hundred pounds. Food, house and clothing are mine for ever. Therefore not merely do effort and labour cease, but also hatred and bitterness. I need not hate any man; he cannot hurt me. I need not flatter any man; he

Hillman

We moralize work and forget that the hands want to do build things and the mind wants to apply itself.

PAVLOV'S BELL GIRL

Don't be so judgmental, a voice says. She is waiting for the young customer service representative to fill out and complete the online contract for her new iPhone. Each time the Bell girl tries to proceed to the next page, an error message pops up. It tells her what the error is, but she can't be bothered to read it. She keeps hitting keys randomly, saying things like, 'Oh, it's just being fussy," and snapping her gum.

Error.

Snap.

Error.

Snap.

Error.

Let it go. Relax. The voice again. Just *talk* to her. She laughs and begins a conversation of error messages, hidden costs, and getting 'persons' on the phone. The salesgirl is nodding her head but her eyes never leave the screen.

She tells the Bell girl about her new eBook reader; how eBooks cost almost as much as paper books, even though the paper, printers, salesmen, editors, overhead are eliminated.

No materials, no employees, yet prices don't come down. It's like...*pure* profit, she says, shaking her head. Do you ever *think* about that?

Ya, the Bell girl says, and turns to face her customer for the first time. I think...

I wish *I'da thoughta that*.

Her eyes snap back to the screen.

Ideas make money. They make people rich.

Saving the rain forests is a good idea because they contain board feet and cancer cures. There are lots of good ideas in the rain forest.

'Profit margin' is a good idea. And an oxymoron.

*

YARD TIME

Education is good because it equals mo' money. Laura Penny

September

I enter the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies program with a focus in Creative Writing and Sculpture. I want the time and space to follow things. There is no studio space available. So I work from home the first year..

March

I move my home studio to campus for a grad exhibition, and home again, in the back of a truck and the space of a week.

April

I move into the empty 4th-year studios in the Fine Arts building for the summer.

September

I move from the Fine Arts building into the portable in fall. I push small loads over on an old dolly, losing tools and materials to exuberant new students who think my unmoored stuff is a free for all. There is no wall space or water. Two walls are built. I am too busy with coursework and teaching to use it much.

April

I move up to the portable and plunge into my project, full-time--almost two years from when I began. There is momentum; things are finding each other, taking shape. I am full of energy. I feel joy again.

July

I am moving again--to a house on the edge of the campus. It's being renovated, is still *a construction zone*, so I will not have access to my new space until September. More accurately, I am moving into *storage*. I move my studio home again.

SEPTEMBER

I'm looking for the motivation to begin again. The plant guys have emptied the portable into my room. Shelves, cabinets,

boxes crammed in, piled up. Some of it isn't mine. Some of it wasn't tagged to come. There is no ventilation, and it's a long way from the facilities.

I HAVE SUCH A LONGING TO BE OF ONE PIECE, IN ONE PLACE. TO BE WITH IDEAS, TO FOLLOW SOMETHING

I BORROWED MONEY TO BUY TIME IN THE YARD, BUT THE WALLS ARE CLOSING IN AGAIN.

Malamud

We remove the cages...because the animals are so close to elimination, to non-existence, that cages are superfluous...and embarrassing reminders of what we have done to the animals.

The wild is killing itself and it knows it.

*

A new project has been announced in which scientists...are hoping to create the first accurate computer simulation of a honey bee brain—and then upload it into an autonomous flying robot. This is obviously a huge win for science—but it could also save the world. Researchers hope a robotic insect could supplement or replace the thinking population of honey bees that pollinate essential plant life.

STARVING THE DONKEY

McDonough &
Braungart

An olive-oil vendor returns from the marketplace and complains to a friend, "I can't make money selling olive oil! By the time I feed the donkey that carries my oil to market, most of my profit is gone." His friend suggests he feed the donkey a little less. Six weeks later they meet again at the marketplace. The oil seller is in poor shape, with neither money nor donkey. When his friend asks what happened, the vendor replies. "Well, I did as you said. I fed the donkey a little less, and I began to do really well. So I fed him even less, and I did even better. But just at the point where I was becoming really successful, he died!"

We're trying really hard to make things better. But most people would still be really disturbed if they saw where their iPhone comes from. Steve Jobs, as Apple announces a \$13 billion profits on \$46 billion sales in its last quarter.

Or the suicide nets surround Chinese factories.

*

*

They're out of Mini Wheats and it's maddening.
I've been asking you since yesterday!" He yanks the bread out of the freezer and thumps the door shut. He tears open the bag and begins to pry at the frozen mass with his hands.
I hate it when bread does that.
He tries to separate the slices with a knife.
Damn knife.
He pops them into the toaster. Pops them up. Down. Up. Down.
17 and mad as hell. Things are always or never, bad or good, all or nothing. He's in heaven or hell, hating or loving her. Things move too fast or too slow.. As long as Sam is having fun, he's happy, over the moon happy, but the moment reality steps in he crashes into hopelessness and despair, blaming reality for tripping him up.
What does he think he's doing? He better not step out in front of me!
She drops him at school every morning and picks him up in the afternoon, but he insists on driving both ways. As he pulls up to the curb, he goes to jump out.
I'm coming in today. Remember? I have a meeting with Mrs. Knight?
He pulls out again and parks as far away from the front door as the parking lot will allow. He jumps out and walks on ahead of her. It's 8 a.m. and so hot already she could puke. It feels like the whole valley could internally combust. She can taste the dust and smoke.

*

His general mental ability is above average, superior even, in some areas. She sits across from an older woman, square in build, hair pulled back tight in a chignon. Her hands are folded in front of her atop a file folder with her son's name on it.
But he shows a weakness where specific language is required, in abstract designs. He is more comfortable at the concrete level...I thought I was going to issue him a clean bill of health this morning, until I was marking the last in a series of tests...I so *completely* doubted the results that I had them checked by three other teachers. She leans forward. "The only area in which he registered a learning disability was the written essay. She sits back again. It was hard to believe the same boy I had interviewed had written this essay. Her posture softens and she chuckles. "He's a *wonderful* storyteller," she muses, then gathers her spilling thoughts and continues in point form. Yes, yes, he is, his mother thinks, she would rather listen to him

tell a movie than watch it herself.

He shows extreme difficulty in sequencing and developing his points, in the use of both specific and varied vocabulary, *and* in the use of variety in sentence structure. The Evaluator suggests he have opportunities to *discuss* a topic before writing, in order to clarify his ideas and expand his vocabulary. She recommends a set of criteria that *outline* what he needs to do, what constitutes an A, B, or C grading. The mother wonders how her son will get this kind of help in high school.

He is a student that wants to succeed," the evaluator concludes, "but he has a need to know the *exact* requirements to achieve that success. He has not as yet developed the skills of self-evaluation, so that he can judge for himself when he is 'on track' or when he has 'missed the point'

YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT! I DON'T CARE that you skipped school. I CARE what you TELL yourself about it. I CARE that you respect yourself and me enough to stop making up stuff for no reason!

I don't NEED your respect!" He is slamming cupboard doors in a blind search for anything to take him away from his mother's lecture, "*and I'm NOT an honest person.*

What? How can you SAY that?

Because honesty doesn't GET you anywhere. He pulls out the crackers and a soup can.

Well that *depends* on where you want to *go*! She joins him in slamming cupboard doors now, pretending to look for supper herself.

She *knows* it's not enough to tell him not to lie. She needs to find the value for him in telling the truth. But *ARE* there any concrete rewards? None she can think of. You certainly can't make any money at it. Telling the truth. The rewards *are* abstract. It's not where he lives.

They eat supper in front of the TV. She spends the evening with Microsoft Office, and he, with Frazier, Friends, Seinfeld and Who wants to be a Millionaire.

Why are you putting off going to bed when you look so tired?" She says, when she sees him struggling to stay awake.

Because it's too short. It'll be morning when I wake up.

Why didn't you go two hours ago then?

Because I'd be up by now...or that's what it'd seem like.

He punches a cushion and stuffs it up under his neck.

A brown child, with bulging eyes and belly clings to a rock on the television screen. There are flies on her face. A concerned white man tells them they can save her for pennies a day.

Give her *your* shoes!" the boy on the couch shouts at him. He gestures to his mother and points back at the screen. Look at him! She's barefoot and he's wearing shoes. Nice ones. Probably Nikes. She probably made 'em.

*

Forget it. Just, *be quiet!* Arguments can be quiet, you know! How many times does she have to choose between conflict and peace? They won't 'do' anything. They wait her out, or do things badly so she won't ask them again. Or point accusing fingers at each other, in a showdown across the living room.

She begins loading the dishwasher. Hunter feels guilty, but not guilty enough to help, so he slips out quietly and goes back to the dorm. Sam drops onto the couch, remote aimed and ready. Jerry Springer is welcoming recovering baby stealers.

The only people who are better informed after that are the baby stealers, she says to him as she wipes the coffee table in front of him. He lifts his runnered feet and cranes his neck to look around her.

*

Everyone lies! They are arguing about school again. He doesn't want to go. He has an exam coming up on a novel he hasn't read, and doesn't intend to. Dad and I *lie* our asses off. Just cause *YOU* can't! He calls her a goody two shoes and heads for the kitchen.

YES, *everybody lies*. She says, following him. And sometimes the stories we tell are *better* than what really happened, but its important to know the difference. What is the difference? she wonders. How will she reach him in a world where everything is pretending to be something else? Rice pretending to be pasta, plaster pretending to be marble, empty bags pretending to be full... She has been bringing the abstract down to the concrete for him all his life, making something into something else until he understands. Why is she failing at the thing that matters most to her?

They lie *all day long*. She points over the pass thru to the TV in the living room. They're not even very *good* at it. They just repeat things mindlessly without any regard for how things really *are!*

Muhm! You make me so mad sometimes!" He opens the fridge and

grabs the mayo from the door, and the sandwich meat from the drawer.

Why?!

Cause I *don't want* to talk. I *don't want* to do anything. You tell me all these things but I don't believe you. He reaches into the freezer for the bread.

How to touch this thing, to bring it down for him to get hold of? Her heart is racing.

Pretending is a game we all play. And we're surrounded by bullshit—but, lying Sam, is something else, and there are costs; not to be believed when you *do* tell the truth, for one.

That calm voice is so annoying. He slaps a top on a sandwich he's making.

--*What* calm voice?

The one that makes me sound like an asshole. He plates his sandwich and heads back to the television.

*

In the days that follow she is acutely aware of the lies that surround them. She stands in the grocery store overwhelmed by deception. Products move around, and change packaging every week. Grocery cards that feign convenience and force her to purchase a company card or pay a higher price for the same item.

The advertising lie that says one soap is better than the other.

The lawyer lie that says one thing says something else.

The white lie that says nice to see you instead of god, this is boring.

Lies of convenience: How are you? I'm fine.

Lies of development: Orchard Park, Harvest Golf Course, Pearwood Estates.

Her father calls. He's waiting to hear from the Land Titles Office. By Monday he'll have it all sorted out. Exhausted she drops into a chair. It's been ten years of Mondays. Lies of omission, misdirection...

A reno truck has been parked outside her window for days. The slogan on the box: When Wood was Wood.

Every morning. In the afternoon, she learns how to process a Visa by phone and ship the purchase. Check. She's had phone training, Point of Sale Training, Special Orders and Returns training. She knows what f4, f9, x51, x21, 42, CA, CH, MC, VS, AX, R, T, TT, II, disc, and undisc, all mean. She knows how to log in, log out, lock up and open,

do an x-read, search an out-of-print book, check the status or vendor. She knows that credit and debit slips go in basket 1, register tapes in basket 2, and miscellaneous in basket 3. She knows her store #, register #, and employee #. All in all, a lot of shit she'll never use again.

*

It is Christmas break and the two older brothers are coaching Sam on his reading log, Sam has lied outrageously on it. Max is telling him to lie *just enough* so as *not* to arouse suspicion. Hunter is telling him not to even hand it in. That's what he did when he was in high school--he *knew* they were asking him to lie.

They pass the evening watching sitcoms together, plated potatoes and meatloaf on their laps. *Husbands lie to cover things they forget, wives lie to cover things they bought, children lie about doing their homework, and friends lie about dating their friends' friends. Their motives are harmless, their reasons funny, and it all works out in the end.*

She goes on trying to convince Sam the truth is it's own reward, while all around them the world lies its ass off.

There is a bear myth that cubs are born formless and licked into shape by their mother. *It's easy to imagine. But it isn't true and never was.*

RUMPLESTILSKIN.

He gives her three days and a riddle to keep her child.
When she solves it, he screams and tears himself in two.
She goes back to spinning with her hands, rocking the cradle
with her foot. And humming.
She really just wanted to be let alone and to stop playing
games.

*

ZOOCHOSIS

Shepard

Avalanches of psychological, clinical, and analytic therapy have shown that being out of touch with the body is the basic schizoid position.

Depression operates as a biological conservation-withdrawal mechanism that can be found not only in plants and single-celled organisms but also in more highly evolved animals, including primates and humans. This mechanism serves to protect the individual by means of withdrawal and inactivity when stimuli become excessive and cannot be actively avoided

ZOOCHOSIS

TAMENESS-OVERADAPTATION-HOOF DEFORMATION-WEEPING-ILLNESS-VERNAL WOOD-MOON GRAMMAR-BELLS & SALIVA

Zoochosis is rampant in captive animals around the globe.

Captivity drives many animals insane, causing them to bar-bite, pace, and over groom. In their natural habitats wild animals do not mutilate themselves, attack their young, get sick or fat...zoo animals exhibit all these behaviours.

Baudrillard

Darkness, red light, gadgets, tranquilizers, nothing works. A zoo psychiatry becomes necessary.

*Vaseline on rocks and beams,
Putty in the finger holes...*

Livingston

Where we have domesticated any animal and interfered with its natural habits, illness has followed. The dog is said to have the most diseases second to men; the horse comes next...

Humans, too, behave differently when held captive compared to when they're free.

The wild, apparently walled out, is walled in and erupts violently in people's minds

*

YOU DON'T APPEAR TO BE ANXIOUS, HE SAYS WITH BLAND ASSURANCE.

I AM.

YOU HIDE IT WELL.

I KNOW.

HE SNAPS A NEW HEAD ON HIS OPHTHALMOSCOPE.

LOOK UP. DOWN. AGAIN. GLOBE, ORBIT, CORNEA, RETINA. HE SEES THE EYE BUT NOT WHAT IT SEES.

HE ROLLS TO HER RIGHT, PULLS ON HER LOBE AND LOOKS IN, ROLLS LEFT AND PULLS AGAIN. AURICLE, PINNA, MEATUS, DRUM.

IF HE SEES THE MOB IN HER HEAD HE SAYS NOTHING.

AHHH. HE PUSHES DOWN ON THE TONGUE DISPENSER AND PEERS INTO HER THROAT.

AHHH, SHE MIMICS.

HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT?

SHE NODS.

HE FROWNS.

HOW MUCH?

SHE SHRUGS.

HE RAISES AN EYEBROW.

SLEEPING?

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD.

HE WARMS THE STETHOSCOPE WITH HIS BREATH AND LAYS IT ON HER BACK.

BREATHE IN. HOLD IT. OUT. AGAIN.

HE PASSES IT TO HIS OTHER HAND AND LAYS IT ON HER CHEST.

MARRIED?

DIVORCED.

SWISH. THUD. HEART. BLOOD.

CHILDREN?

SHE NODS.

YOU AND THE FATHER GET ALONG? A PHONE BLEETS. A CODE. THE SQUEAK OF SNEAKERS RUNNING.

HE ROLLS IN FRONT AGAIN TO LOOK DIRECTLY IN HER EYES, INSTEAD OF THROUGH THEM.

WOULD YOU HURT YOURSELF?

THE PASS OR FAIL.

NO, SHE SAYS, ALMOST CONVINCED.

HE STEPS BACK AND SWEEPS HER HEAD TO TOE. 'YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF GIRL THAT WOULD HURT HERSELF,' HE CONCLUDES, AND SCRIBBLING A PRESCRIPTION, OFFERS HIS

COUNSEL.

YOU NEED TO GET SOME STABILITY INTO YOUR LIFE, HE SAYS TO THE PENCIL SKATING ACROSS THE PAD. MORE STRUCTURE...HE SAYS, FOR THE KIDS. HE LOOKS UP WITH A FIXED SMILE.

SHE IS DUMB WITH SURPRISE.

YOU DON'T WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO END UP LIKE YOU, DO YOU?

HAVING SCOPED THE SEVEN HOLES IN HER HEAD, HE FINDS ONLY ANATOMY. HE MISSES COMPLETELY THE UNRAVELING OF DRESS, WOODEN GESTURE, WORDS, JUST AS SHE MISSES HIS BLUE EYES, AND LOTIONED FINGERS, AND RECEIVES ONLY HIS INDIFFERENCE AS A BLOW TO HER BODY. A SOFT, DUSTY THUD.

GOOD GIRL, HE SAYS, AS HE PATS HER TINY CLOSED FISTS, AND THEN HE IS GONE, BEHIND THE CURTAIN. SHE SITS A LONG TIME, HER ANGER BESIDE HER, HIS WORDS BLOWING THROUGH ALL THE HOLES HE HAS MISSED.

THE TALKING CURE

The writing is on the wall but it can be difficult to read.

You are talking it out. Sifting your past for what doesn't belong. She is holding the skein. You excel at good behaviour, even as a mental patient.

True or not, it doesn't matter, she says.

Together you search for shared edges, patterns, holes.

Something scared you that we're just not able to locate yet, she says, thoughtfully scanning her own mind for connections.

Drums boom from the deep, fill your ecstatic with dark songs. It takes time, attention, affirmation. You never learned to speak the language of your inner world.

Together you rewrite, revise.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED IN YOUR MIND, she says, HOW COULD YOU BE THE EXCEPTION?

A person, inside, begins to doubt your suffering.

HOW DO FEELINGS GET SO BIG, you ask.

THEY'RE NOT ALL OURS, she says.

*

IN 1983, DAVID WRIGHT OF TORONTO FELL OFF A LADDER CLUTCHING A POWER DRILL. AS HE HIT THE FLOOR IT BORED INTO HIS FOREHEAD. HE HAD THE PRESENCE OF MIND TO KNOW HE MUST NOT MOVE IT LEST IT RUPTURE A VITAL BRAIN COMPONENT. HE MADE HIS WAY GINGERLY ACROSS THE APARTMENT TO A MIRROR, CALMLY USING HIS HORRIFIC REFLECTION TO GUIDE HIM, SWITCHED THE DRILL INTO REVERSE AND WITHDREW IT. HE WALKED UPSTAIRS AND ASKED HIS WIFE TO CALL AN AMBULANCE. THERAPY'S LIKE THAT.

A VERNAL WOOD

Deleuze
&
Guattari

*Would you like to be a wolf?
How Stupid, you can't be one wolf, you're always eight or nine, six or seven.*

Shepard

They come bearing their diagnoses. One feels like she's choking, another's back is breaking. A third sleeps with a hammer. They are encouraged *'to talk out their sense of inadequacy as though it were not an interpersonal or ideological matter'*

She thought the 'Group' would be some kind of losers anonymous. But she finds herself surrounded by intelligent, loving, thoughtful women of all ages who talk to their knees, tell stories and cry. The stories, different *AND* the same.

They are sad because their anger is forbidden. Sadness is a way of playing dead. Many soldiers saved their lives in war by playing dead.

Depression puts the raging self in solitary confinement.

*

Masson &
McCarthy

In Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe the elephants are culled annually. During this culling elephant family groups are herded by aircraft towards hunters who shoot all except the young calves, who are rounded up for sale. The elephant calves run around, scream, and search for their mothers. One year a wildlife guide at a private sanctuary ninety miles away from the park noticed the eighty elephants vanished from their usual haunts on the day culling started at Hwange. He found them several days later bunched at the end of the sanctuary as far from the park as they were able to get...elephants communicate over long distances with subsonic calls...the sanctuary elephants must have known that something very bad was happening to Hwange elephants, but they can hardly have known what it was. The object of their fear was inchoate, but the fear was real.

Shepard

Anxieties elicit a certain satisfaction in repetitive and exhausting routines reminiscent of the swaying of the autistic child or the rhythmic to-and-fro of the captive bear or elephant in the zoo.

Greer

Could it be that this is not pathology? That they are just tired or frightened or sad?

How do feelings get so big?
They're not all ours.

*

Women weep in traffic, at the theatre, in the bathroom stall, because they feel powerless, and because they are exhausted and overworked and lonely. Women weep because their own needs are unsatisfied, continually swept into the background as they tend to the needs of others. They weep because the men in their lives so often seem incapable of speaking the language of intimacy, and because their children grow up and become distant, and because they are expected to acquiesce to this distance, and because they live lives of chronically lowered expectations and chronic adjustment to the world of men, the power and strength of a woman's emotions considered pathological, or hysterical or sloppy, her interest in connection considered trivial...her love, in a word, unrequited.

*

Martin Seligman strapped dogs into harnesses and gave them inescapable shocks at unpredictable intervals. The shocked animal, frightened at first, when it comes to believe that it is helpless, sinks into depression. Then, he tried to cure them. He placed them one by one in a divided chamber, where, when a tone sounded the dog only needed to jump into the other side of the chamber to avoid being shocked. But two thirds of the dogs made no attempt to escape. He removed the divider, got in the chamber, called them, offered them food. He dragged them back and forth on leashes. Some were dragged back and forth two hundred times before they discovered that this time they could escape.

*

How can we know ourselves, by ourselves?
Consider what it is we're not considering?

Sickness is a means by which an organism frees itself of foreign matter; so one must help it be sick.

LISTENING IS DISSIDENT WORK.

*

When you are sad, learn something, Merlin said.

She spends her days in the library, waiting to get well. She learns that:

Ostriches don't bury their head in the sand.

Goats will eat anything.

Bulls don't get angry when they see red. It's the motion. They will get angry if you wave anything in front of them.

Snakes don't bite with their tongue, they smell with it.

A turtle can no more walk out of its shell than you can walk out of your ribs.

Elephants are not afraid of mice.

Porcupines don't shoot their quills.

A large area of the Panaewa Rainforest Zoo in Hawaii has been made into a jungle exhibit for tigers and gibbons, with computerized 'games' to stimulate natural behavior in exchange for food.

At NIMB the rats are decapitated in the lab rather than in the animal room. The animal room was full of hundreds of rats in cages and whenever a rat was killed in the presence of other rats, the other rats knew. They freaked out and this fear was contaminating every experiment in the room.

and...

It's not the rejection...the original trauma which is the source of anxiety, it is rather rejection that is lied about.

THE SLEEPING KINGDOM

Some people say that Princess Diana's death was the saddest day of their lives.

*

As the glaciers fall into the sea, the feminine sleeps.
A plague spread through her ears.

Enclosed in others' thoughts, dreams, concepts, desires.
Tangled lines of netting, lace, hoop, and corset.
Hairless bundles of pathologies.

*

Rumi

Since [they] were cut from the reed bed, [they] have made this crying sound.

*

There are many ways to victimize people. One way is to convince them they are victims.

Another way is to place them in a well of psychological well of despair, or to shock them, randomly.

*

Whyte

[They] are told, of course, that [they] already have all the justice, freedom, and creativity they have any right to expect in our Western, neoliberal, free-market democracies. [They] are told this with the sort of intensity that reveals the fear of the consequences if this claim were ever shown to be false. The truth is that this claim is the Big Lie. It's like life in an alcoholic family, where all the family members are daily obliged to reaffirm that everything is whole and right and normal. But inside the children are saying, "Oh, I feel this big pain that I can't explain. I can't say what it is, and yet I can't say what I need to say. So frightening is the prospect of saying what can't be said that I'm afraid even to 'think what can't be said. And so I'm afraid even to think at all.

Whyte

Gilbert

*

In July 2004, The City Council of Monza, Italy, took the unusual step of banning goldfish bowls. They reasoned that goldfish should be kept in a rectangular aquarium and not in round bowls because a fish kept in a bowl has a distorted view of reality and suffers because of this" No mention was made of the bland diet, the noisy pump, or the silly plastic castles.

*

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Tony Kushner

I have a bad case of mood poisoning. It must be something I hate.

I don't understand, he says, standing in the doorway.

I know you don't. She keeps her back to him. I'm depressed.

You're NOT depressed. The more attention you give it, the more real it becomes.

Sounds like denial.

It's NOT denial. He is agitated.

If your car starts making noises, Dad, what do you do? Ignore it? It doesn't go away. It gets worse and costs more in the end.

I'd buy a new car!

Her body is still but her mind is screaming GET THE FUCK OUTTA HERE!

Listen, you had a heart attack, she says.

There's NOTHING WRONG WITH MY heart!

Well, if you're right, then everyone else is wrong. But if there's any doubt, you'd be a fool not to change something.

That's a completely different thing, he says, yours is a state of mind.

They're not separate for me. And I'm not talking about my mind. I'm talking about my brain. You can't see what's going on in there any more than I can see into your heart.

But you're looking at it from INSIDE the illusion, he says with his silly new age blah blah. You're giving it all the meaning it has for you.

His semantics exhaust her. Everything worded as though it is logic. If she had the strength or the courage to follow it she could show him where it all unravels. But she's too tired. To realize he lives in a world of illusions does not appear to have freed him at all.

Yes, I am, she says, her voice falling to a whisper. I'm looking at it from the only place I can. From where I am, and where you are, is someplace else.

He gets flustered, and she can see he's getting angry. He

mumbles something about going out for a burger. Ever since his heart attack he likes to tell them he's going for a burger.

Hopelessness can be depressing. And hope. Believing someone or something will change.

RAPUNZEL

You think you know what you think but you don't have a fuckin clue.

DYTOMANIA – the irrational compulsion to run away from one's master

TRICHOLTILLOMANIA – a compulsion to pull out one's hair

*

MORBID HOOF FORMATION...

PILOERECTION

BRAZILLIAN WAX

*

Wittgenstein

If I were sometimes to see quite new surroundings from my window instead of the long familiar ones, if things, humans and animals were to behave as they never did before, then I should say something like "I have gone mad," but that would merely be an expression of giving up the attempt to know my way about.

ARJUNA GOES INTO A TAILSPIN

Going into a tailspin used to mean curtains. No matter how hard you pull back on the stick the nose of the plane wouldn't come up. People who tried to wrestle the plane out of a dive, crashed and burned. Today, every flyer learns to move the stick in the direction of the spin, go in to the turn.

*

When the warrior, Arjuna, realizes whom he must fight, when he deeply feels what he only knew in his mind, that he is called to do battle with his own kinsmen, he draws his chariot to a halt. His blood is chilled. He cannot move. Overcome by grief and despair, he laments to the charioteer, Krishna, Lord of the Universe...What kind of a God is it who urges not love and peace but war and conflict? Arjuna cries for those he is about to fight and kill—all these men with whom he grew up and from whom he learned about life, all those whom he cared for and who cared for him.*

It's not a metaphor. There is a face within [you], a source of attention and consciousness, a literal fact. A material fact.

Henry Louis
Gates, Fr.

You have to imagine how the fellow in the looney bin who thinks he's Jesus feels on meeting an inmate who agrees with him because "He" thinks he's Pontius Pilate. They may be enemies, but they're also co-conspirators.

RIDDLED

Riddle: n: brain-teaser; v: to permeate; to perforate; to bore; to puzzle

A HOLE IN THE HEART

Gilbert

If the past is a wall with some holes, the future is a hole without walls.

There is far more nothing in a body than something

There isn't a single bit of us, not so much as a stray molecule, that was part of us 9 years ago. So where did we go?

Holes are congenital in my family. My brother fell into a hole in his heart. My father fell into a hole in his head. My mother falls into nightmares if she sleeps on her back. Despite all her efforts to sleep on her side or her stomach, she will roll onto her back, and fall into bad dreams. I am riddled with them, sensitive teeth, porous hair, a brain like a sieve.

*

She got the message in typing class, go home, feed the kids, Mom's gone to the hospital. Gone to the hospital, the doctor, every day words lose their meaning. She is 14. She skipped next class, and walked home slowly. Her body got there first, a house so full of empty no words could follow her in through the door. Gone is something the body knows.

Four strong men carried her broken mother up the front steps, stumbling under her grief. Two words like jagged glass cut the fleshy silence open.

He's gone.

Her sister is crying. Her mother is crying. The men are crying. She sits, in the black velvet chair, still as stone. She can't move. When she gets up she is floating. She goes back to school as if nothing's happened.

She returns to a house full of flowers and relatives grabbing her, sobbing all over her. For days they arrive and with each new arrival, one suppressed sob and the room cracks again. Her mother has been in her bedroom four days, when she comes down. She pats her shoulder, says we've cried enough now, tries to smile.

The little black dress she felt so pretty and guilty in.

She slept in his bed in the twins' room, under the red cord bedspread, his first night 'away', lay awake, listening...a little gun and holster on the bedpost, a leather vest.

The funeral. The family behind a curtain. The long walk up to the small casket. People say the dead look like they're sleeping, but they don't. They look like wax tubes full of coloured syrup from the penny store, the syrup sucked out.

She'd teased him that morning and he'd called her a retard. He was six in a month.

After the funeral she pretends she's sleeping on the couch. Her father plays with her hair and cries.

*

And then it's over and everyone's gone, but the house is still screaming and she hates going home to sad songs on the hifi. They sit at dinner in a fog. The father is falling apart, and the mother is tending his sorrow.

She wishes someone had saved her from her young imagination, told her people die. It's ok. You can handle it. You can be scared, and you can still love. She was too soft for it. Too open, too porous.

She believed for a long time his death was one of her father's lies or tricks. He lied all the time. It was business, he said. For months, she thinks he'll walk in the door, swinging those hips and calling her a retard.

She grows sullen and clumsy, and when no one's home, she lays on the carpet and dreams of David Cassidy, madly in love with her.

Her grandmother always said that for rich men to get into heaven was harder than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. Her father got rich and lost her brother. She decided god didn't play fair, started to secretly hate God, and Bobby Goldsorrow crooning Watching Scotty Grow on the hifi.

A HOLE IN THE HEAD

Any object, the earth, a heart, a person would make a black hole if squeezed hard enough so it could not resist its own gravity.

He thinks the doctors killed his son. He thinks he's a national security risk, and that CSIS conspired to take away his millions, and is trying to kill him.

One day he is gone, just forgets to be mad. He starts talking gibberish. At first it's hard to tell. Sentences, still structured as if to make sense, words in a row, grammar, nouns and verbs, but--

That's exactly what they did to us, he says, watching a mass shooting on the news. 'They went to that University and got a court order...'

And then he's back. He quits the pills again. Within two days he can't move or think.

I wanna go to the doctor!

You want to go to the clinic?

No, not THAT clinic, I HATE them, I wanna get the STRONGEST dose I can get. You know, the stuff from the Credit Union...I'll go to Harold's doctor. I just have to explain. It's illegal, what they're doing. That other doctor, she made arrangements with the hospital to do this to me.

It's the weekend, she reminds him, the doctor won't be in the office.

Well, OK, I'm gonna take these pills then, but I'm gonna take EIGHT.

Eight? You're not going to take eight.

I WANT 8!

You can't have 8. Do you want me to make you some lunch?

NO!

Would you like a sandwich?

NO!

She goes through the menu.

No, no, no, NO!

She makes him mashed potatoes, chicken, creamed corn, and sets it in front of him. Then makes herself some fruit and toast. This is good, she says.

THIS is horrid! he hisses through his teeth, eats it anyway. After lunch, he accuses her of trying to kill him, threatens to sue her, and then storms out to shovel the driveway. He stands propped, in a fury, on the shovel in front of the picture window, where she can see him.

And then he's gone. Stuck like a talking doll on a few shuffled phrases.

You don't know what they did to us.

Do you know what they did to us?

I wonder what he thinks about what they did to us?

He can't recognize his own papers or dial his own phone.

And then he's back. For their Anniversary. He's throwing a ball at the dog. She asks him to stop, says later she should have known better. He comes at her and she runs.

I don't EVER want another anniversary with you! You GET OUTTA HERE and DON'T COME BACK! Get out. I don't want you around here. I don't want you doing ANYTHING for me!

He chases her twice around the kitchen. She runs for the lower landing and calls to the boarder in the basement.

He sits down hard, arms crossed, seething and sulking, like a spanked child.

She starts sneaking Adivan into his potatoes.

The Dr. says he has never known anyone to live as long as this with his condition.

Well now you do, she says.

*

His sister, at 20, fell out of the sky with her plane, into a bog. Eighteen months later, a courier delivered the stewardess' wallet to their door, musty, smelling of bog and body, the pictures of them still inside.

At least she knew Jesus, his mother said.

Fifty years later, the psychiatrist asks him about his sister's death, and he cries out loud for 20 minutes. The psychiatrist hands him a hospital towel. After a long time, he suddenly stops, looks up at him, through swollen red eyes and asks: What was the question again?

*

If only he had known Jesus, his mother said again, when he lost his son. He flew across the table at her and he would have killed her had they let him.

*

In the fairy tale a giant, who wants to live forever, puts his heart in a series of nested containers, and buries them in a deep hole far from home. No matter what his enemies do they can't kill the giant because nothing comes near his heart. When the hero digs up the boxes and destroys the giant's heart, it feels like a mercy killing.

*

The things that are missing matter.

HERE'S TO NOT SETTING OUR HAIR ON FIRE

Rushkoff

If everywhere you look someone is attempting to program you, you will quickly learn not to look anywhere for too long.

I have ADHD.

It's like having the library of congress in your head but with no card catalog.

or trying to build a house of cards in a dust storm.

I have a glitchy working memory. I'm easily distracted, and my mind races. I'm always tangled in a ball of thought. And, I'm not organized in the 'usual' way. I can't remember where I put my keys, but I'll quote something I read 20 years ago., out of the 'blue'. Or find just the paper I need in my unlabeled files; go right to the book I want even though my bookshelves are not arranged in any particular way.

What ADHD looks like:

leaving your apartment 2-3 times every morning, going back for lunch, money, glasses

forgetting appointments even when you write them down

buying ketchup for the third time because you forgot about the last time, and then wondering how you'll ever use that much ketchup

racing to your insurance office, unlicensed, looking over your shoulder for cops all the way, only to find out it's due the next month.

Paying your phone bill twice, but only finding out when your next bill arrives with no charge.

Losing stuff all over your computer, because as fast as you name it and save it, you forget what you called it and where you put it.

writing important things on the back of a page to transfer before throwing away, then throwing it before the transfer walking in a kind of high viscosity world

having the things you look at compound and expand as you look at them

taking one quick look at a book title, "Out of Our Heads" on
your bookshelf and having Olivia Newton John's 'Hopelessly
Devoted' run in your head the rest of the day...ya, it made that
connection, and fast...

I'm always humming the tail end of musak from the last store I
was in going round and round until you hear the next.

finding messages to yourself where you haven't left enough
clues and now you have no idea what they mean.

doubting yourself

doubting reality

being too distracted by sunsets to drive

doing your research, taking good notes, starting with headings
to keep essays focused. But before you can say 'chaos' having a
swirling mess of intertwined ideas in your head and on the
page. Every time.

taking most of your working time to separate the ideas
having thoughts that entangle so much that by the end of it you
are talking about 2 things at the same time in the same essay...
trouble holding and manipulating information in your memory
getting it down, all before you forget what you wanted to say.

*

He said when I felt overwhelmed to close my eyes. But what
about the other holes?

*How quick and tremendous the sunrise would kill me
If I could not now and always send sunrise out of me.*

Whitman

PLACE HOLDERS

Once data is overwritten in the computer, the information beneath it is lost, not so with the human being. Memory layers data in the same mental document. Information stored and retrieved is subjective, susceptible to mood, opinion, upbringing. The connection is alive.

*

I have a single memory of being eight-years-old. But I was eight for 365 days that year. Where are the other 364? If I think back as far as I can there is...

Nothing...then splinters.

Summer. A brown cedar split with white trim. Burnt grass underfoot. Dusty white daisies with yellow-green centers. Loud trumpeting orange lilies. Oscillating sprinklers. Hosing bumblebees with the wing span of airplanes. Running, breathless.

The spanking teacher with the hearing aid.

The teacher with the a two-piece bathing suit she wore on a field trip to the pool, upsetting the parents.

Suppers. Gold flecked pink arborite. Chrome legs. A retractable lamp perpetually swinging over the center. Chocolate chip bars. Swiss Steak. Yellow wax on tile floors. The moment mom tells him. He cradles his Elvis black hair in his hands, then pushes away from the table, and leaves.

I'm gonna tell the twins you hated them! my sister calls after him. She is always six, in a crop top, shorts and a pixie cut.

Floral drapes, plush carpet. Matching babies. A weather-beaten playhouse with a dirt floor. Sleepovers, eerie scraping of corn leaves on its walls. A plum tree? Invented? Imagined? A garden, with black berries and lemon corn, cucumber islands.

Sunflowers with furry stalks thick as my arms, towering over, locked in the sun's moving gaze. Pasty seeds. Empty pockets.

Boys and Hallowe'en and eggs, freezing as they hit the picture window. A boy, captured, shivering on a ladder, scraping. A blonde piano. On a bench full of songs, legs crossed, nested in crinoline, watching him.

His little band of brothers stealing their swing-set piece by piece.

Black construction paper nights with pin hole stars. A living white. Pins and needles after skating, hard white feet thawing too fast over registers. Crusty, frosted mittens, breathe freezing on lashes and scarves. Crashing toboggans. Climbing the hill, slippery, licked clean by the wind. The sound of a hockey puck hitting the rink boards, travelling miles and the years.

Neighbours in bungalows aimed at each other. Face offs on streets named Bell and Drinkle. Shared fences, hedges, schools, confectioneries, sloughs. An ocean of prairie at our back door. A fortress of Elm.

Drunk uncles, and centerfolds. Wild cousins farting and swearing. Aunts, full-skirted, high-heeled, aproned. Avon calling.

School and spelling bees. Learning poems by heart. Book reports, blackboards and bic pens. Mr. Shih and Eric not filling the foolscap. The yardstick as strap.

Full Gospel Camp. Tabernacles, mess halls. Healings.

A hole.

Smoking, drinking. The lake.

Graveyards and football games. An accident. A boyfriend.

A farm, brick rancher, flat and low as the prairie. A swimming pool, a dug out, a dog named Pooch. Caragana. Streaked, dragged storm skies, draining themselves into waiting hollows. Crafty animals and insects: Badger fox, magpie, mosquito.

Cattle grates. Blue dirt.

Weddings and funerals, babies and homes.
20 years of Mondays.

Houston

Some of it happened to me. Some of it happened to someone else. Some of it probably never happened.

*

In order to preserve our selves, we need to leave out almost everything.

In the final stage of Alzheimer's disease, we can still talk but we can no longer interpret. We are still alive, but the story of our lives is over.

*

Hark Lashley spent 30 years of his life searching for the location of memory. He taught rats to find their way through a maze then systematically chopped up parts of their brains. Their cerebral cortexes all but destroyed, the rats still found their way, their memory of the maze remaining until they had too little brain to do anything with...

WHO DREAMS ME?

In a dream...

I am standing outside a house, at a door, with a key in my open palm. I use the key and go inside. It is empty, except for a dark foggy shape, with its back to me, at the base of the staircase leading up. As soon as I step inside, I can't remember why I'm there. I try hard, give up, leave the house. I wander other dreams but keep finding myself back at the same door, with the same key, letting myself in, forgetting why as I enter.

*

I am making something with my hands, but I can't get it right. I go to look at something I have made before, but it has changed, kept growing, making itself. I look through a glass wall into sapphire blue ocean of gel, where giant crystal forms grow down from the surface of the, high above me. I press my face to the glass, straining to see. Then the sea is full of tiny silver objects, suspended, tumbling, slowly. The only things I recognize, a tiny silver tea strainer and an ornate mirror that somersault across my vision left to right, like a man on a moonwalk. There is a rhythm. A metallic blue fish with two yellow marks on its sides swims toward me, eyes open, staring. It seems to be saying something with the o of its mouth. Then swims *through* the glass as though it weren't there. And I think—*it's not unusual to see a fish swimming through the air in a dream*. Suddenly I panic, slap it down, feel its cool dry skin on my hand as it falls to the floor gasping for air. I decide to leave and clean it up later.

And then I am back at the door, key in hand again...

*

A black wolf with green eyes is in a cage outside my house. People are walking around it very Seurat Sunday in the Park. The wolf howls and other wolves howl back from in the trees around the house. The Sunday people grow nervous as wolf

song grows louder. She (the wolf) paces in the cage. They try to ignore her.

*

I'm serving coffee in a cabin cafe. Someone shouts, "I saw a dark shadow. Bombs are coming." And I think, what a silly thing to say. We step out on the porch and see a Dali's hypercube flying toward us. It drops something. The crust of the land is torn up as it hits. I take cover behind the house but feel the hot earth whistle past my nose. I decide it would be safer underground.

*

I am sitting on a park bench with a suitcase by a lamppost. Someone comes to get me. He looks like anyone else, but I know he's a wizard. He or she is encouraging me to do something. I feel a jolt, electricity go through my body and then I'm a small animal. No, that's not it he says. I try again, transforming into a different animal. In the dream I actually feel like I'm being electrocuted. We do this over and over until I am spent, just lying there saying, I can't, I can't do it. You can, he says.

*

I'm in a Walmart parking lot, and there an upside-down car, crushed in the centre. Someone's called for help. The woman under the car is talking, she doesn't sound afraid. Someone pulls me aside and tells me there's a dead child in there with her. I start to cry. She tells me that they told her 'it will hurt' when they take the car off. But says nothing will hurt after this. I wake up and can't sleep.

*

I am playing an organ at the front of a theatre. There is a movie on, a parade in the movie, lots of pageantry. Some religious pageantry is happening. The people on the screen keep coming up close and looking as if they can see me. They can't see us but we see them. I start to giggle and they stop as if they heard a

noise, another one approached the screen and looks into it, shakes his head and moves back. A fat lady in a housecoat sings hymns. The camera pans and focuses on Jesus as a little boy in a baseball team photo. I can't see the sponsor on the uniform. The music builds. Now the front of the church is on the screen, I am on screen, looking at myself. I feel like I could walk through it, but instead I exit behind myself, remember it's only an image.

*

A party. People keep bringing their babies to me. A strange *Ally McBeal* baby walks up, says "mortal combat". Then I am walking along the edge of a very deep pool. Sheer cliffs made of rusted metal, following someone. Suddenly I arch sideways in a dive. It's a long way down. The silence fills me. It has a sound. I am under a long time. When I surface the pool is full of swimmers and swimming lanes.

*

Another party, and someone has ruined my good down comforter. My father calls the people responsible and hands me the phone. My husband is on the line. I invite him for supper. After supper, he sneaks some stuffing into my room. I am sculpting feet of clay when I hear an old familiar voice in the yard. I don't know if I can forgive him his terrible absences. I remove a brown towel from my head and let my hair fall down. I'm going to wash it and remember I just did. He walks into he bedroom and he's talking to me, but his lips don't move. I move past him, hoping he will follow.

*

I am at an ATM machine when the screen begins to move in front of like a video game. Amazing speeds and graphics that astound me. Someone is watching me play. I grab the sides and tell myself it's not me moving. It is the screen. Still, I hold on tight.

*

I am watching a movie about a girl who makes dolls. Carves faces out of wood. Then the doll maker turns to wood and her head turns into a horse's. She nuzzles her creations.

*

The bear is there again... sleeping in the middle of a courtyard, at the top of a tree, in the clouds. I shush the children. Don't wake the bear I warn them, but children, they are not afraid. Sometimes she comes and sits on my chest. Or hugs me. And I cannot move. Once she tried to get out in fevered eggs on my shins. She woke in my mouth once, rooted her plantitude, stood and pushed my tongue up, almost into my brain. She reappeared years later, attacking my joints. I felt her hot mouth lock on my knees and elbows, wrists and ankles. Finally, she returned to chew on my arm for a year.

*

He is sitting on the bed. I am standing, my back to him. Ever since he died, he says, I've had these elephant tusks in my chest.

I think it's a metaphor but turn to see them there, through his chest, out his back, ivory, thick as arms.

Me too, I say.

Suddenly he clutches his chest and falls to the floor at my feet, puffs up like a blowfish, covered with spikes. He grabs my ankle, holds tight, his fingers hardening into a fisticuff as he dies. I cannot escape. He has died with the key. I scream, as if there is ever anyone else there, in your dreams, who can save you

IMAGINATION IS ENTIRELY REAL

Noe

The imagination is not a separate mental faculty but is rather the way the senses themselves have of throwing themselves beyond what is immediately given, in order to make tentative contact with the other sides of things...

Imagination is the means by which we create bridges and connections; it is how the self responds to a gap or an absence.

The death of the imagination is the death of the real because the imagination composes the real.

We get stuck, and we bind ourselves to the wheel of repetition because we refuse to reimagine our situation. We think we are thinking outside the box, only because we can't see how big the box really is.

*

He is 6 and wants to make a craft. He gathers sheets of paper and some scissors, carefully labours over cutting out squares, one from each page, getting smaller and smaller. He glues them together from the largest to the smallest. When he is finished he mothers, surprised, asks him, Austin! Where did you get that idea?

He says, I dunno, it just came outta my body.

I AM A LIAR

is the truth about consciousness

Norretranders

A million times more bits enter our heads than consciousness perceives. You need lots of seconds, lots and lots of 'moments' in order to read the image you captured in that wink of an eye. Consciousness cannot read the entire image while you are looking at it. Consciousness works slowly. It takes time to identify the various objects we have observed in a single glimpse. Consciousness cannot perceive all that we see at once.

IT TAKES MUCH LONGER TO EXPLAIN TO YOURSELF WHAT YOU THOUGHT THAN TO THINK IT

We do not live in real time at all; we experience the world with a delay. Consciousness lags a half second behind.

We are shaped around an emptiness we do not know.

*

Noe

Once in a while, I get shocked into upper wakefulness. I turn a corner, see the ocean, and my heart tips over with happiness—it feels so free! Then I have the idea that, as well as beholding, can also be beheld from yonder and am not a discrete object but incorporated with the rest, with universal sapphire, purplish blue. For what is this sea, this atmosphere, doing within the eight-inch diameter of your skull? (I say nothing of the sun and the galaxy which are also there.) At the center of the beholder there must be space for the whole, and this nothing—space is not an empty nothing but a nothing reserved for everything. Saul Bellow, Humboldt's Gift

*

*In a field.
I am the absence
of field.
This is
always the case.
Wherever I am
I am what is missing.*

*When I walk
I part the air*

Strand

*and always
the air moves in
to fill the spaces
where my body's been.
We all have reasons for moving.
I move to keep things whole.*

*

BLUEBEARD

His beard's not that blue...

When she sees how captured she is and how much psychic life
is at stake, she calls to her sisters who call to the brothers
who run the father through, with their swords.

They stand together, linked arm in arm and say NO
The law of love will work!

And no one ever again enters another Dollarama.

STRINGS

E. M. Foster

*Live in fragments no longer
Only connect.*

ANIMAL SHADOWS I

...nine out of ten people are incapable of picking out a photograph of their own hands from a small series of such pictures. That organ with which I perform my labour, eat my food, caress my love ones, yet remains a stranger to me.

*

Serres

The eighteenth-century empiricist philosopher, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, imagined a statue, possessed of a soul and all the internal organization of a man...but has never encountered any form of sensory stimulus. Condillac then imagines the introduction of input from each of the senses in turn...The first is smell, which he thinks would be enough on its own to permit the development of memory and desire. This is followed by taste, hearing and sight, the order of the senses reflecting the growing complexity and abstractness of the statue's ideas. Up to this point, he reasons the statue may be able to distinguish between its sensations in more and more elaborate ways, but will have no awareness of itself as the subject of its own sensations...it is only with the coming of the sense of touch that the statue will be able to grasp that there is an exterior world from which these sensations emanate and therefore that it is an "I", distinct from this exterior world, and receiving those sensations.

*

Why can't I see my self with my eyes? I cannot see what others see. The mirrors and cameras flip me. Why don't I know my toe, or the slope of my forehead? Why such a struggle to see, understand my own form? She must be then, what I let her be. Karen Armstrong said the texts didn't open themselves to her some days.

On the days I'm not there I'm so close, I feel the warmth, I melt, my hand afire, meld of fingers and clay, she rises. And then I am in my

Henri

own way, there's a distances, an awkwardness. A wandering, wondering, do I know anything?

*

All things change according to the state we are in. Things touched while in that state are transformed into a likeness of that state. What you see is not what is over there but what you are capable of seeing.

Above all there was the sensation of moving physically over the contours of fullness and concavities, through hollows and over peaks—feeling, touching, seeing, through mind and hand and eye. This sensation has never left me. I, the sculptor, 'am' the landscape. I am the form and the hollow; the thrust and the contour.

*

A thousand intersecting planes and moving contours move as I do. My awareness must travel yet hold itself still. My eyes believe what I look at. I try to shape something round of flat photos. Efforting, always, until that moment, I locate what the body knows. She fills the gap in my understanding. I find what I seek with my fingers, and the eyes goes "Aha..."

My eye is derailed by what it sees and thinks. What else am I looking at and not seeing?

I feel my way into the thing, fitting, ordering her or putting myself in her order as rolling contours find each other.

Psychics take the others' hands...a compelling correspondence?

*

The truth of a structure can never be proved with within. You have to stand outside the system and say it is consistent. It hangs together. But no one can get out there.

I am solving for other
brass or aluminum?

how big, how heavy?

too small to weld...

waterjet plates, finding screws, lock nuts to match

armatures, maps

history, theory

making molds, casting material
hard or soft bodies?
bones, muscles, , joints,
connections, mutations
the weight and strength of self-support?
the body not soft enough, not enough flex,
the leg too thin, hip too tight
I start again, with foam, batting, thread
I paint rubber with a popsicle stick
the feet, skin, nylon, rubber, soma foams
the ground, steel? powdered coated, painted, oilcloth?
the words, vinyl, sharpie, oilstick crayon, silkscreen?

*

Barthes
*I want to look in the face' what is dividing me, cutting me off
To understand--is that not to divide
the image, to undo the I, proud organ of misapprehension
I have no hope, but all the same...
Drifting, I continue...*

Naess
*Climbing is a meaningless as life itself, said Peter Wessel Zapffe, and
kept on climbing.*

*

To test their theory, Scientists took babies and cut them off from any form of human contact. They made sure that the babies were fed and kept warm. They wanted everything that a baby needed to be taken care of *without* any human contact. The results surprised them. One by one, the babies died.

*

Serres
Our skin resembles that of jaguars, panthers and zebras, even though we do not have fur. The pattern of the senses is displayed there, studded with subdued centres and spotted with marks; the skin is a variety of our mingled sense...it shivers, expresses, breathes, listens, loves, and lets itself be loved, receives, refuses, retreats, its hair stands on end...it is covered with fissures, rashes, and the wounds of the soul. The alphabet of pathology is engraved on parchment

*Touch itself is compound...Touch is topological
the last remaining means of guiding yourself.*

*

I never really saw the moon until I was showing it to Jane.

ANIMAL SHADOWS II:

Serres

Every thought we have involves everyone we have ever known.

Words do not feel the same in the mind or the mouth.

Try it. Hold 'stone' and 'rock' in there...

bleed, black, blood, blue.

Language is a living, malleable material

*

I am building a thought, but am inside that thought, a piece of that thought and cannot see the piece that I am

I am trying to pull Caliba-ya, space in through my three-dimensions, out onto two, with only language, my one. What hope is there, to grasp, touch, get hold of this thing?

My thought, my felt sense, do not wander onto a plane in my mind, alone, calling out in a voice that I recognize. They come in herds with so much dust I can't make see the shapes, only feel the crush.

**

Where do you stop and where does the rest of the world begin?

Noe

You are asked to sit at a table. Your right hand is on your lap and is concealed from your view by the table. Across the table rests a rubber hand, the sort of thing you might find in a shop selling scary toys for Halloween. You watch as a person gently taps and strokes the rubber hand with a delicate paintbrush. Tap tap, stoke stroke, tap stroke stroke stoke stroke stroke tap. In perfect synchrony, an experimenter is tapping your *actual* hand out of view under the table. Now something remarkable happens. You have the very distinct feeling that you are being touched on the rubber hand the the feeling of being touched that is, in fact, occurring on your own, connected right hand under the table is taking place on the rubber hand across the table!...you feel the touching of the rubber hand that the eyes see. If you are asked to point with your left hand, which is

also under the table, to the place where you feel yourself being touched, you will point(roughly) in the direction of the rubber hand.

This is a striking and prevalent phenomenon; the power of what we see to influence our nonvisual sensory experience. Visual capture.

The rubber hand phenomenon shows that I can have sensation in an object that is not, in fact, attached to me.

*

Livingston

The songbird's existence has miraculously become hugely greater than himself, incorporating as it does plants, animals, soil, water, microorganisms into his total being. The bird himself has become a community of existences and at the instance when he sings the momentary event of that song is numinous. The numen arises from a mutuality of the complementariness of the bird and his co-participants. There can be no numen without this relationship, which is selfless, creative, energetic Mere ego cannot have this quality or achieve this result, because mere ego cannot transcend the individual organism.

*

Truitt

Buckminster Fuller had a wonderful idea: Roughly, he said that the purpose of people on the earth is to counteract the tide of Entropy described in the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics: Physical things are falling apart at a terrific rate; people on the other hand, put things together. People build bridges and cities and roads. They write music and novels and constitutions; they have ideas—(like Christmas and Gravity). That is why people are here; the universe, as it were, needs somebody or something to keep it from falling apart. According to this theory, even the unfinished novel in the attic is doing its part in reordering the Universe.

Batshit crazy, but lovely to think about.

*

ANIMAL SHADOWS III:

Serres	<i>Touch ensure that what is closed has an opening.</i>
Lynch	<i>The rhythm of a heartbeat of a patient in a coronary care can be altered when the patient is touched by another human being. This occurs in patients in deep coma as well as in those who are fully conscious.</i>
	<i>Puppet-reared condors more frequently show unacceptable behaviour than parent-reared birds. Puppet-reared birds in mixed flocks corrupt the acceptable behaviour among parent-reared birds.</i>
Shepard	<i>Avalanches of psychological, clinical and analytic therapy have shown that being out of touch with the body is the basic schizoid position.</i>
	<i>No one in their right minds would launch these things.</i>
Zizek	<i>What if man is violent because he speaks?</i> Isis Lord of the Flies Peter Pan and the Lost Boys *
Siebert	<i>Are we Driving the Elephants Crazy?</i> <i>All across Africa, India, and Southeast Asia elephants have been striking out, destroying villages and crops, and attacking and killing human beings...in recent years, they have killed nearly 1,000 people in India. Elephants when left to their own devices are profoundly social creatures with a strong sense of family...It's not just the increasing number of incidents that's causing alarm, but also the perversity of the behaviour. Since the early 1990's...young male elephants in Southern Africa have been assaulting and killing rhinoceroses...the number of older matriarchs and female caregivers has drastically fallen, as has the number of older males, who play a significant role in keeping younger males in line...Studies have shown that the perpetrators of the assaults on rhinos in South Africa have been adolescent males that had witness their families being shot in culling; in many cases, they were</i>

then tied to the victim's bodies until they were taken for relocation.....the number of older matriarchs and female caregivers has drastically fallen, as has the number of older males, who play a significant role in keeping younger males in line...today's elephant population is suffering from a species-wide trauma and the collapse of elephant culture as a result of decades of poaching, habitat loss, forced relocations, and culling.

*

Domesticated hens are prone to cannibalism, attacking their housemates by pecking away at an injured bird's feathers, devouring its flesh and eventually killing the attacked bird. The most common solution is beak- trimming and the most curious solution is red-tinted sunglasses. They attack only when they see another chicken bleeding. By putting red-tinted lenses over the chicken's eyes, the birds cannot easily tell the difference between blood and other things in their surroundings, and in the absence of blood remain docile.

*

Foer

Being down in the blood pit makes you aggressive, you want to get even.

*BLEED RAIL
STICKERS
KNOCKERS
BACK SPLITTERS*

*

Prescott

The reciprocal relationship of pleasure and violence is highly significant because certain sensory experiences during the formative periods of development will create a neuropsychological predisposition for either violence-seeking or pleasure-seeking...abnormal social and emotional behaviours resulting from... a lack of tender, loving care, are caused by a unique type of sensory deprivation, somatosensory deprivation...the sensations of touch and body movement...the deprivation of body touch, contact and movement are the basic causes of a number of emotional disturbances.

Estes

The shadow life occurs when writers, painters, dancers, mothers, seekers, mystics, students, or journeywomen stop writing, painting,

dancing, mothering, looking, peering, learning, practicing...When the maker stops for whatever reason, the energy that naturally flows to her is diverted underground, where it surfaces whenever and wherever it can.

*

...the heart, stuffed full of its own coagulated sulfur, now become a beast in a lair, readying its attack, psychologically we subdue our rage with concepts; aggression, hostility, power complex, terrorism, ambition, the problem of violence.

*

One by one the babies died.

*

Shepard

It's only natural to reshape nature as the child itself has been deformed.

Saunders

THE UPSHOT OF ALL THIS IS NOT A PASSIVE MORAL RELATIVISM THAT MAKES THE BEARER INCAPABLE OF ACTION IN THE WORLD. IF YOU REPEATEDLY COME TO MY HOUSE AND DRIVE YOUR TRUCK OVER MY CHICKENS, I HAD BETTER GET YOU ARRESTED OR HAVE YOUR TRUCK TAKEN AWAY OR SOMEHOW IRONCLAD OR ELEVATE MY CHICKENS. BUT I'D CONTEND THAT MY ABILITY TO PROTECT MY CHICKENS ACTUALLY IMPROVES AS I REALIZE THAT YOUR DESIRE TO FLATTEN MY CHICKENS IS ORGANIC AND COMES OUT OF SOMEWHERE AND IS NOT UNMOTIVATED OR EVEN OBJECTIVELY EVIL—IT IS AS UNDENIABLE TO WHO YOU ARE, AT THAT INSTANT AS IS YOUR HAIR COLOR. WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THAT IT CANNOT BE CHANGED. IT CAN BE CHANGED. IT MUST BE CHANGED.

Zizek

If the subject is already divided within itself, the perception is an effect of that estrangement and the relation to objects in the world of culture is also constructed in its terms.

ATTENTION

THE PROBLEMS IN LIFE ARE TO A GREAT DEGREE THE PROBLEMS OF ATTENTION. CHARLES JOHNSON

TO ATTEND IS TO STRETCH TOWARD

Think of a colour... watch how this colour determines what you see..

Hey!
Wait!
Stop!
Boom!

You are here. and here and here You are
anywhere your attention takes you...

There was a chimpanzee in California with a talent for playing tic tac toe. Its trainers were delighted with this evidence of learning, but they were more impressed by something else. They found they could tell from the animal's brain whether any particular move would be right or wrong. It depended on the chimpanzee's state of attention. When the trained animal was properly attentive, he made the right move...[this] state of mind always foreshadowed a correct answer.

*hard to explain what
was so deep about it
animal almost,
each thing done
totally*

*

Barthes

I keep falling outside myself, without dizziness, into precision.

Woolf

What you pay attention to begins to organize itself. A shower of atoms shapes itself into Tuesday.

Shields

ATTENTION EQUALS LIFE OR IS ITS ONLY EVIDENCE.

Soviet
Cosmonaut,
Aleksi Lenov

It was a great silence, unlike any I have encountered on Earth, so vast and deep that I began to hear my own body.

GEOGRAPHIES WITHIN GEOGRAPHIES

Lessing	<p><i>And the boat, I swear, it was designed to make you forget the sea was anywhere near.</i></p> <p>*</p> <p><i>We live in two realms, as always, but have mistaken one for the other</i></p>
Ornstein & Swencionis	<p>MOST PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY SEE THEMSELVES AS TWO PEOPLE; AS MINDS AND AS BODIES. WE BELIEVE THAT THE EXTRACORPOREAL MIND INFLUENCES THE MACHINE BODY, AND THAT WE CAN REPLACE HUMAN HEARTS WITH MECHANICAL HEARTS AND NOT AFFECT THIS DELICATE SYSTEM.</p>
Estes	<p><i>In fairy tales, the body has two sets of eyes, ears, tongues, two kinds of strength.</i></p> <p><i>Our tongues enact a massive split between our minds and our bodies, effectively severing our verbal, speaking selves from our corporeal, animal experience.</i></p> <p><i>When Aristotle unfurls premises and conclusions--he neither requires nor implies any personal experience of horses, garments, colours. He has departed that realm.</i></p> <p>*</p> <p>Because I was a daydreamer, people always told me I wasn't in my body, but it was my body that was daydreaming.</p> <p>Because I was a thinker, people always said I should be in my body more, but it was my body that was thinking.</p>

BE-LONGING AND THE LONGING TO BE

FAR FROM BEING A HOMOGENOUS THING, THE BODY IS A COMPLEX HARMONY OF DIFFERENT REGIONS, EACH OPERATING ACCORDING TO INDIGENOUS PRINCIPLES AND INCORPORATING DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD INTO ITS SPACE....

Casev/Mazis

Body and place are congruent counterparts.

Sheldrake

If there's a connection between, say a pigeon and its loft, and you leave that out of the equation, the model--however complex--won't work.

*

She watches channel 212 on TV, with her coffee in the morning, a loop of high definition images of places around the world. The kind of images it takes a brilliant photographer, years of experience, expensive equipment and programs to produce. The colours are super-saturated and hyper-real. She is absolutely mesmerized by it. Yesterday when I get home, she sighs.

It's a beautiful world, she says. My mother is a ball of love.

I bite my tongue but then, can't help myself...

Not everywhere, I say

She stiffens a little.

How many people are there in the world now? She asks me

I tell her seven billion, maybe twelve by next week

There are seven billion people in seven billion worlds, she says softly...*and mine's beautiful.*

And there is nothing else to say. She is right. of course. And who am I to scribble with black crayon all over her picture? For all I know she could be what's holding the world together.

UNWHERE

Norretranders The binding problem...is a very real problem...whether there is a real world out there or not...

Merleau-Ponty *In that sense the visible landscape under my eyes is not exterior to...other moments of time and the past but has them really 'BEHIND ITSELF' IN SIMULTANEITY, INSIDE ITSELF, AND NOT IT AND THEY SIDE BY SIDE 'in' time. (In a note found on his desk after his death)*

Abrams *That which has been and that which is to come are not elsewhere--they are not autonomous dimensions, independent of the encompassing present in which we swell. They are, rather, the very depths of this living place--THE HIDDEN DEPTH OF ITS DISTANCES AND THE CONCEALED DEPTH ON WHICH WE STAND.*

DeKerckhove *To see more is not to see further away, beyond the confines of our walls and our present horizons. IT IS TO DEVELOP A NEW PRECISION AND FLEXIBILITY IN OUR EYES; IT IS TO SEE BEHIND OUR BACKS, AS WELL AS IN FRONT OF OUR EYES; it is to perceive the world not exclusively in a frontal relationship, but in the total surround; it is to multiply the facets of our eyes and the objects of our simultaneous gaze as if all the cameras of the world were the realization of a new Argus.*

Einstein reveals that we do not live in a universe with discrete, physical objects separated by dead space. The Universe is 'ONE INDIVISIBLE, DYNAMIC WHOLE' in which energy and matter are so deeply entangled it is impossible to consider them as independent elements.

*... unlike the height of a mountain range, and the width or span of a valley, the depth of a terrain--the relation between the near and far aspects of that land--**depends entirely upon where you are standing within that terrain. As you move, bodily, within that landscape, the depth of the scape alters around you.***

*

Home is here, in the rooms and closets, woods and abysses that you were told not to enter.

They travelled far. But standing still.

Olssen

To sin is to trespass. To trespass is to cross a boundary. To cross a boundary is to break a definition. To break a definition is to create. To create is to be different. To be different is to sin. To sin is to live in self-reference. So Janus, help me become a sinner. Let me understand how you break definitions. Teach me how to erase what others see as irresolvable paradoxes. Teach me the equation of that third lens inside your head whereby you transform contradictory images into coherent wholes.

*

SIM SIM SALA BIM

Snyder

Language is a body-mind system that co-evolved with our needs and nerves.

Inuit woman
interviewed
by
ethnologist
Knud
Tasmussen
early in the
20th c.

*In the very earliest time
when both people and animals lived on earth,
A person could become an animal if he wanted to
And an animal could become a human being.
Sometimes they were people
And sometimes animals
And there was no difference.
All spoke the same language.
That was the time when words were like magic.
The human mind had mysterious powers.
A word spoken by chance
Might have strange consequences.
It would suddenly come alive
And what people wanted to happen could happen—
All you had to do was say it.
Nobody could explain this:
That's the way it was.*

*

The central tenant in the history of magic is that mind exists in matter and language affects matter. The magus attempts to enter his or her own mind into the flux of minded elements and signs; to align the elements and the right words and the paths of the stars, with any variation affecting the rest...Before the Enlightenment, Magic and Rhetoric were progressive forces; words and things were volitional.

ABRA CADABRA!

Bohm

*Choose well the words you use and the powers they invoke.
Thought is a material event in the body.
We must act according to our ideas.*

Althusser

AJJI MAJJI LA TARAJJI

*Will saying make it so?
Yes.
Absolutely.*

*

Zizek

There is something violent in the very symbolization of a thing...When we name gold 'gold', we violently extract a metal from its natural texture, investing into it our dreams of wealth, power, spiritual purity, and so on, which have nothing whatsoever to do with the immediate reality of gold.

... words can be changed by those skilled in their use...

YOUR ESTIMATED WAIT TIME IS OVER 5 MINUTES.

YOU ARE BEING VIDEOTAPED FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.

...changed linguistically to make them more palatable...

CASUALITIES

TROOPS

PRESTO CHANGO

Corgias,

The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies...some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion. 415 BC

NOT SO MUCH HELD AS EMBRACED.

Noe

Our linguistic worlds...run along trails made through repeated walking. Trails are made by the very act of walking...Once the trail has come to be, it is difficult to avoid using it.

BIPPITY BOPPITY BOO

Cornelius Agripps

Words therefore are the fittest medium betwixt the speaker and the hearer, carrying with them...so great a power that oftentimes they change not only the hearers, but also other bodies, and things that have no life.

THE WONDER DRUG THAT WORKS WONDERS

WHERE TASTE IS EVERYTHING.

MAKING YOUR MOUTH A CLEANER PLACE!

WOULDN'T YOU RATHER HAVE A BUICK?

You might want to read these again. They sound great but say nothing.

The word 'free' still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'this dog is free from ice' or 'this field is free from

weeds', political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts...

DURING THE 70S KELLOGG'S CHANGED THE NAME SUGAR POPS TO CORN POPS. THE INGREDIENTS STAYED THE SAME.

In the event that any of us employ powerful words to change a situation, or are ourselves changed by what we read or hear, we participate in a *MAGICAL TRANSACTIVE TRANSFORMATION...*

MECCA LECCA HI, MECCA HINEY HO

The trouble with words is you never know whose mouth they've been in.

*

Stand picket line against horrible language! Don't let it in!

IZZY WIZZY, LET'S GET BUSY

Sometimes you only need a few good sentences you can save yourself...

I WILL NOT.

I SIMPLY WILL NOT.

*

In Medieval times, a village boy was thrown in the river to remember things worth remembering. He became the village memory. Emotion and memory are entangled. Emotion moves merchandise. He stole the book of spells with ducking stools and iron ladies, scolds. The memory buried deep in Her of fire and water. Now he does the magic, cooks the facts makes his mutants.

The end of the world is always portrayed as some evil takeover of aliens but I imagine some guy named Darryl walks out of the lab with the end of the world on the bottom of his shoe. And guy at the gate, who is supposed to scan him, is on Facebook and waves him through.

Maybe then, we start again, with Eve, and we don't break *anything*.
Not a single rib.

THE PROVING GROUND

Antonin
Artaud on
Anais Nin

*Your senses trembled and I realized that the mind and body are
formidably linked in you.*

*

Seeing our knowledge out there...we forget where it lives. Forget the
other knowing that rises within to meet what is happening. We
breathe, cough, jump, eat, sleep, love.

We're taught to turn away from this knowing because it feels like *not
knowing*. It's a vulnerable place...

But how great the difference between knowing what health is and
being healthy.

The body is wiser than all our concepts, it totals them and more.
The Japanese talk of asking the abdomen.
The Russians call it bioinformation.

*

Jeffrey Eugenides

*Maybe the best proof that the English language is patriarchal is that it
oversimplifies feeling.*

Naess

One reason for the...low standing emotions still accorded in Society
at large is that we ascribe to them little or no value as knowledge.

*We theoreticians do not shout, beat ourselves on the breast, give signs
of longing, or fall on our knees.*

*ZOO PROSE, LIKE SCIENTIFIC PROSE, SEEKS TO MINIMIZE
INTERPRETATION BY ELIMINATING SIMILES, METAPHORS, AND OTHER
TEXTUAL DEVICES AND FOCUSING INSTEAD ON FACTS. THE REASONING
HAS BEEN THAT THE FACTUAL APPROACH, BY INSISTING ON A GREATER
DEGREE OF ACCURACY, HAS SUPERIOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITIES.
SIGNIFICANTLY, THIS HYPOTHESIS HAS NEVER BEEN TESTED.*

Jung

*There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into
movement without emotion.*

Darwin

*My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general
laws out of a large collection of facts...the loss of these tastes is a loss of
happiness and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more*

	<i>probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.</i>
Greer	<p>COULD IT BE THAT WOMEN SURVIVED THE PROCESS WHICH DEBILITATED HIM AS HE LOST HIS POWER TO PERCEIVE IN MENIDS? THAT HIS OWNERSHIP OF HER IS AN ATTEMPT TO FUSE HIS THOUGHT AND FEELING AGAIN?</p> <p>*</p>
Whitman	<i>.You must not be too precise about birds, and tress and flowers.</i>
Baudrillard	<p><i>No analysis of the vibrations of light will ever explain the sensory imagining of colours. No digital optics will ever explain red in its literalness, in its absolute difference from blue or green, any more than any logic will ever explain the relation of the sign to the thing, of red to the term 'red', which is just as indefinable as red.</i></p> <p>*</p>
Hegel	KNOWING IS GIVING ONESELF OVER TO A PHENOMENON RATHER THAN THINKING ABOUT IT FROM ABOVE.
Mazis	<p><i>Thinking has a face.</i></p> <p>*</p> <p>Knowing does not speak to us in words it shows us the <i>HARMONIC DIRECTION</i>. It points. It beckons. It says Look! Without any effort, there is something that tells us which line of action conforms to our essential nature and which does not...Like the ape and his Tic Tac Toe</p> <p>*</p> <p>Insights occur against one's theories. They are the most glorious kind of being wrong...</p> <p><i>I tremble as I have mankind at large for my enemies, said William Harvey as he began a lecture to London's Royal College of Physicians in 1616. Moments later he would demonstrate how blood moves from the heart in a closed loop through the body, and discredit medical wisdom that had endured for some fifteen hundred years</i></p>

Mao Tse Tung

If you want knowledge you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of the pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself.

If 100 people jumped into a pool of piranhas and were eaten, why would I?

Because you don't KNOW you'll be eaten.

*

After the revelation, she sits in a new place though she hasn't moved. She suddenly and without reason loves the silly Formica beneath her the spiral notebook, the molded plastic chair that cups her bum, the cardboard cup and its silly yellow messages, the orange neon light on the wall, a new place, immutable, an eternal quality, a remembering, this is reality and isn't it strange I didn't see it before...

Lipton

My eureka moment resembled the dynamics of super-saturated solutions in chemistry...which look like plain water, but are fully saturated with a dissolved substance...so saturated that just one more drop of the solute causes a drastic reaction in which all of the dissolved materials instantly coalesce into a giant crystal.

It isn't knowledge that will lead us to ourselves, sisters.

*

Woolf

It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly. Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness...once his experience is over, must lie back and let his mind celebrate its nuptials in darkness.

*

COMPOSING

*Each lion or wolf believed it heard a note
separate from itself
coming from the lyre*

C D E had a boat. Round and round the pond he'd float

Green

*String theory declares the 'stuff' of all matter and all forces if the
'same' The strings are identical. Their resonant vibrational patterns
are different. Just as the different vibrational patterns of a violin string
give rise to different musical notes, the different vibrational patterns of
a fundamental string give rise to different masses and force
charges...The forms and shapes that can be created by sound are
infinite and can be varied by simply changing the pitch, harmonics of
the tone and the material that is vibrating, the results can be beauty or
chaos*

if you stroke a violin string and there is another in the room, it will
sing out same as the first

The Epicureans thought 'simulacra' were fragile membranes emitted
everywhere, received by everyone, and responsible for signs and
meaning

The Greeks went to the marketplace to receive messages

Yeats observed that when our minds are working on a challenging
line of inquiry, we attract the interest of other and deeper
intelligences.

Minds resonate with each other, and in doing this, transfer ideas and
messages back and forth. Can we *pluck* the strings as well as wait for
them to vibrate

*

Zwicky

*A metaphor can appear to be a gesture of healing—it pulls a stitch
through the rift that our capacity for language opens between us and
the world. A metaphor is an explicit refusal of the idea that the
distinctness of things is their most fundamental ontological
characteristic... a metaphor heals nothing—there is nothing to be
healed.*

Miller	<i>The world is not to be put in order. The world is order incarnate. It is for us to put ourselves in unison with this order.</i>
The Only Three Things	<i>A village has been without rain for weeks. They send for a rainmaker. When the old man arrives, he shuts himself up in the house provided for him, performing no ceremonies until the rains come. When asked how he brought the rain, he explains that when he arrived he noted a state of disharmony in himself, so he retired to compose himself. When he restored his own equilibrium, the rain came according to its natural pattern.</i>
Mazis	<i>The body is suspended in what it sings</i> *
Serres	<i>Music lives beneath meaning vibrates in the secret recesses of our conversations we must compose music at every moment to survive.</i>
Truitt	<i>Most myths tell how we broke the harmony...Eve, Pandora, Prometheus, Persephone...</i>
Woolf	<i>...the mother listens to her baby, tunes her neural receivers to his, is able to psychologically hold her child, to prevent his feeling distress, catch his frustrations...</i> <i>We are the words the music the thing itself...</i>
	<i>To listen is to vibrate. To create is to sing. Aslan sings one note and a world is born.</i> *
Gasse	<i>Before language makes sense it makes noise.</i> <i>Prose has a pace, is dotted with stops and pauses, frequent rests; inflections rise and fall...certain tones are prolonged; there are patterns of stress and harmonious measure; alliteration will trouble the tongue, consonance ease it s sounds out...vowels will open and consonants close like blooming plants; there will be phrases--little motifs to return to...parallel lines will meet in their common subject; clots of concepts dissolve and recombine...endless variations of the</i>

same theme...like soloist and chorus take their turns until, suddenly ,
all sing at once the same sound...Gasse

The Rhinocerus turned out into the yard from his pen
squeals and brays like a
broken trumpet
Happy gorillas sing
Cats purr
Wolves howl

When infant dolphins trapped
in tuna nets,
their mothers cuddle close and sing
as they both drown

The Sun itself is humming.

**UNI
VERSE
ONE
SONG**

*

Whitman ...it stretched him on the grass and entered
his body. Its throat opened
and began to sing (Whitman)

*I see you
I am seen
Hello. I have no weapons*

Abrams We feel it between us.

She buys a dog. It's such a Better Homes and Gardens thing to do. A Chocolate Lab--because they look so lovely in a field of foxglove. In the end she is feeding and walking and selling the dog, but not before he shreds her antique reading chair and her new garden hose, digs up her bulbs and eats her savings.

Steeped in resentment and rejection, she draws two columns on a page: What I do for you and What you do for me. Under the first heading she writes: Feed you, shelter you, cook for you, wash your clothes, clean 'our' house, lend you money, the car and my typewriter, love you, listen to you, help you make sense of things, drive you, talk to your dad and teachers for you, take out the garbage, stack and empty the dishwasher, buy the groceries...she leaves the other column empty, and leaves the page in the centre of the table. Then heads down the hill to buy yet more groceries. Teenage boys are eating machines. If you buy it, they will eat it.

When she returns, Max has written, 'Nothing, but I love you', and 'gone to basketball, pick me up at 8' Then added 'Please'. Sam, who was to take the dog for a walk, is screaming up and down the country road with a friend on a snowmobile. He's left the dog inside, who has shredded the patio door blinds in an effort to get to him.

Hunter is on the email again.. 'When you die, if you get a choice between going to regular heaven or pie heaven, choose pie heaven. It might be a trick, but if it's not, mmmmm, boy'...and an explanation of Binary: It ends: "See what I mean, knowing how the computer works kind of takes the magic out of it. This was the most simplified explanation I could find for you." Like she is a retard. Followed by: I'm not sending you anything else ever again until you send me a reply of some sort. She makes a tea and sits in her shredded reading chair.

No matter the deep hurts, her salted, fixed places, it is the little things that buoy her, keep her putting one foot in front of the other. Max, running into the house, breathless, telling her hurry, *COME NOW, YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THIS!* pulling her frantically, out into the yard to show her the sunset, knowing she would love it, knowing it would not last. Catching that moment and giving it to her. Standing there with him, looking together, was all of it.

CONCLUSION

Ornstein &
Swencionis

Our bodies are inextricably bound up in the most peculiar of all human functions—communication...one factor unites all of us—dialogue...Virtually all persons elevate their blood pressure when they speak.

Dialogue is epistemological. Only through it do we know ourselves, others, and the world

Meyer

Knowing something is bound to our relationship with it...

Knowledge is the by-product of slow and deliberate dialogue with an idea, with others' knowing, or with one's own experience of the world.

We will never be blown over by the word wind.

Serres

*

Klee

It is not easy to orient yourself in a whole that is made up of parts belonging to different dimensions. And nature is such a whole, just like art, its transformed reflection. It is hard to gain an overall view of such totality; whether it be nature or art, and it is still harder to communicate the view to others...For in language there is no way of seeing many dimensions at once.

SOMETIMES I DREAM OF A WORK OF VAST SCOPE, SPANNING ALL THE WAY ACROSS ELEMENT, OBJECT, CONTENT, AND STYLE. THIS IS SURE TO REMAIN A DREAM, A VAGUE POSSIBILITY, BUT IT IS GOOD TO THINK OF IT NOW AND THEN....THE AIM OF OUR THEORETICAL WORK IS ALWAYS, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, THE ORGANIZATION OF DIFFERENCES INTO UNITY, THE COMBINATION OF ORGANS INTO AN ORGANISM.

Barthes

*Text means Tissue; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth, we are not emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; **lost in this tissue—this texture—the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of his own web.***

Nananovitch

The artist is not just removing apparent surfaces from some external object, he is removing apparent surfaces from the Self, revealing his original nature.

IF I ACT OUT OF A SEPARATION OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT—I, THE SUBJECT, WORKING ON IT, THE OBJECT—THEN MY WORK IS SOMETHING OTHER THAN MYSELF; I WILL WANT TO FINISH IT QUICKLY AND GET ON WITH MY LIFE. BUT IF ART AND LIFE ARE ONE, WE FEEL FREE TO WORK THROUGH EACH SENTENCE, EACH NOTE, EACH COLOR, AS THOUGH WE HAD INFINITE AMOUNTS OF TIME AND ENERGY.

Shields

Your real story may have nothing to do with your actual experience, Vonnegut seemed to be saying.

Shields

The final orbit is oneself, the only serious journey, is deeper into self...you keep excavating yourself...tough fucking task...if a man is worth knowing at all, he is worth knowing well. I'm interested in myself as theme carrier, as host...every man has within himself the entire human condition...deep down, you know you're him

McHugh

*To put some sense together, she takes
time: ten minutes, twenty, half an hour.
The others come and go
Each thinks her thinking incoherent. But if anybody
listens long enough he hears
(among the many dozings)
something terribly intelligible*

The only source I want to cite, I can't.

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ENDNOTE: Some quotes—plucked from books and women's magazines long ago--I no longer have access the sources for. In other cases, someone has passed the quote along to me physically or verbally, and I have nothing but the messenger. In still others, I have tried to confirm the source online or cited "Unknown". The passages below illustrate the problem with looking for sources on the internet.

February 27, 2006 12:57 PM

Does anyone know the source for the following quote by George Santayana: "Americans love junk; it's not the junk that bothers me, it's the love"?

The only cite I can find for it on Google Books is in an anthology of pieces from the Baffler: [cite](#). If that's where you saw it as well, I'm guessing misquote and/or misattribution.

posted by [PinkStainlessTail](#) at [1:40 PM](#) on February 27, 2006

I suspect it's apocryphal. I don't even find it to be oft-quoted, really: most of its appearances on the web are copies of or excerpts from [the same article](#).

I can't find it in a few quotation books I checked, and I find nothing in a cursory search of Santayana's works online.

posted by **mmoncur** at **2:03 PM** on February 27, 2006

That 1997 "Baffler" book is listed as a citation by at least one of the few web sources that weren't quoting the New Atlantis article. It's probably where all of the (misquoted) citations started.

posted by **mmoncur** at **2:05 PM** on February 27, 2006

That's definitely not Santayana, and I find it hard to believe anyone seriously expected people to believe it is.

posted by **languagehat** at **2:35 PM** on February 27, 2006

Certainly does not sound like George Santayana at all.

posted by **madstop1** at **7:40 PM** on February 27, 2006

<http://ask.metafilter.com/33445/Often-quoted-but-never-cited>