

ELDERLY

17





LISTERINE

LISTERINE

ANTISEPTIC

Kills Germs By Millions

On Contact

Bad Breath, Colds

Stomach Sore Throat

Scratches, Itches

elderly xviii

vi khi nao
alan felsenthal
jacqueline waters
mc hyland
jacob kahn
dodie bellamy

VI KHI NAO

THE NIGHT CLEANS HER BLACK TONGUE WITH THE SLEEVES OF MY HEART

The night cleans her black tongue with the
sleeves of my heart, licking the darkness here
and there. My soul. Like a dog. Upon my soul.
The visitation takes place. Sheep pile on the
grass like blond garbage bags. Any moment – to
be toppled over. At any moment. The wind
greeted the afternoon. Shadows cast on the cosmic
walls. Tiny specter of uniformity. Tiny specter of
death. I like to open my eyes and ears to the
swollen afternoon. I would like this and then I
would like the sheep to spill their guts. I want
this to continue on.

SIAMESE SHEEP

Seamlessly, as if the landscape attempted to fall
into itself, homogenizing the skin of landscape
with the skin of wheat, this blanket of
surrendering, one sheep falls into the body of
another sheep, becoming one. So then it's
difficult to distinguish, whose stomach belongs to
whom and if this is a sudden romance of
Siamese sheep, one wooly body sharing two
sheep heads. When landscape marries itself to
itself, the only infant borne out of this nuptial
narcissistic love is a muted cosmic lake,
bestowing no illusion of a ripple.

NEW CURRENCY

The currency of reality is not made from yen or from euros or from any monetary value that we know of. The flat, round earth is crispy, newly made from the printer of the camera's gaze, meant to purchase ontology, pastoral peace, and perhaps a coffin that properly delivers the dead old currency to the new currency. Two sheep huddle, headless to our view, and discuss the percentage of facial expression in the new currency. Meanwhile, on the other side of the coin, no king or prime minister has appeared yet to make its landscape more valuable. The cosmic lake in the shape of the cosmic coin is as silent as bone marrow.

TWO SHEEP IN A SEMI-WHEATBUSH

Two sheep in a semi-wheatbush, blushing
secretly to themselves while a coffin ascends and
descends like a black, wingless sarcophagal bird.
This time of year, nothing is possible. Not the
wind. Not the grain in and outside of time. Not
the delirium of midday mastication.

SLEEP CEASES TO EVOLVE

The closer your gaze falls on the backside of the coffin, the higher the population of your goose bumps. The way shadow plays with itself, touching itself inappropriately in broad daylight, creates the blackest, most deformed, eyeless pig ever manufactured in creation. You have to step back from the light and pulverize a little, in order to survive the chemical imbalance of your gaze, your unexpected hallucination, and the chemical imbalance of the landscape. Sleep ceases to evolve, moving lightly in the breeze, but you wouldn't notice. The high population of goose bumps move in V-shaped patterns from your arms up to your neckline. Your hair stands straight up as if it had been militarized. The materiality of this binocular world hasn't altered your perception of the innocent specter. It could appear anywhere, on the surface of a coffin, exploding into black wings when you least expect. Meanwhile your gaze swims on the surface of the cosmic lake. Your goose bumps can deflate their terror valves. Exhale a little. As if to become unfriendly with Sylvia Plath's friend, carbon monoxide.

PETITE DEPRESSION

You can see the five black vectors, that star,
submerging and camouflaging the bottom of the
cosmic lake. You can see the fragility of its
concealment and you can see the fragility of the
wheat too. Will it swim out of the thin cake of
itself, that cosmic mud, like a tadpole?
Meanwhile orderly chaos reigns and now that
the coffin wins the height contest, the wheat does
not weep. Instead, it stands like a sylph, dancing
like a nude wheat figure in the bright descending
afternoon. Coffin continues to advance. And
while the blades of grass and wheat still face
westward, their zealous verve has deflated a
little. Light enough to feel their small, petite
depression.

YOU WAIT UNTIL EACH BLADE OF GRASS UNDERSTANDS THE OTHER

You wait until each blade of grass understands the other. You wait and you wait and a part of you wants to unwait. But you proceed like any mammal. You emulate the gentle footsteps of the sheep, pausing to bow deeper into the earth. The sky remains gray. Except inside, you feel a little dead. A little repetitious. A little religious. A little of something. In celebration of this phlegmatic moment, five androgynous creatures with dresses and faces camouflaged like the ghastly mouths of Rosencrantz & Guildenstern pinecone your soul with their appearance.

ALONG THE FRINGE

The way wheat is blowing in the breeze one has the sense that the wheat and the breeze are not infants. They do not crawl along the fringe of existence or inside existence as if these were their first footsteps. But they are aware of the stillness between each breath that separates the identity of breeze and wheat. They crawl without crawling along the fringe.

PASTORAL LULLABY

Each blade of grass swims with the delusion that it has been through the comb of the wind and that to be in that swing of momentum, to be that blade of grass, is to have a micro place in the cosmos. No matter how minor the role, it is here to swing its soul back and forth – to rock the earth to sleep with its pastoral lullaby.

TIME TO BRING OUT A COMB, SAYS INFINITY

Little movement. And the wind. And the
window of the star opens up her different realms
of coexisting with humans. Five aliens made
from the texture of wool sit in a pentagonal
circle, arms linked, heads linked, stomachs
linked, while wearing headdresses, all five, the
size of planets. Time to bring out a comb. Time
to bring out a comb, says Infinity.

ALAN FELSENTHAL

ON LEARNING OF THE HOLY STONE UNAKITE, SAID TO CLEAR THE HEART
FROM CRAVING THE DEPARTED, I WANTED TO FILL MY HEART WITH
UNAKITE

Identification by emotional gravity

I am my own gemologist.

In my skull no oil spills;

I wrap my hands around its rock

to shake until my eyes turn in-

to snares for the good image.

The earth splits and I go

to its part to speak to the ex-gods

who hold up the tottering earth

with horns, unmusical horns

with lowly names,

which each resemble stars

though they reside underground.

These counted names, I can't

tell you without obscuring

their glory with clouds of

false breath, tears.

Fathers of beasts

flee tears. A heart

feels ill set in snot.

So to be the beast doomed
seal the envelope of
splendor. The Pharaoh
spoke to me, commanded: gore

your foe. In days of
yore, you smashed people.
Yon, sent them away. Heads wagged
yet they sang the songs the nation sang

sunk with shame into a
single consonant: y.
Somewhere between yah and yeah, they
sounded like cymbals.

Then I put down my bow and
the arrow of my illness.
They fled. Like the sea
there was nothing wrong with them.

THE MIND'S ELOQUENT HOTEL

So I was told I sound like an 80-year old.
Through my pen a curtained sea urchin
of Egypt reproduced the same hour
a tree blossomed on the Mediterranean shore.
In the olive tree a bird I invented stares
at anything not a worm as if the ocean.
My middle ear is melancholy and
some twink told me I'm sex negative
for not caring more about a starlet.
Both seem to be the case. Hiding
within a world order, between the mind
of here and Heaven, my Platonic year
in the shelter of symbols, I can easily forget
my own body, close friends in pain far away,
by imagining a state of timeless rest, the twigs
gathered outside the cave, where
she hasn't been seen for centuries. Inside
the moss is still moist. If the State watches,
a hero will not cry. She goes inside the cave
to become a small rock in the dark room
imperceptible as a bat. A white window,
the senator of night, and she share
a long friendship more intimate than touch.
Did I mean to use 'heroine'?
Without heroism, I hardened my heart
in an elaborate plot: the effect was a stern
old man with a scythe as his uniform
just hanging inside me like a bone.
Poor guy. Is that sexual? Well, neither
was the worm I mentioned earlier
for the scarlet bird. I don't want

what I'm susceptible to, so don't come
for television when you visit. And yet I would
have been different, like god, if I couldn't
just do what all you could understand.

I poked a worm with a twig
the wind made shudder, the wind
I invented to stop me from poking the worm.
A bird from the sea alighted here to rescue
him from my hand, that wrote for this.

TRANSLATION OF A LOST ARIA

None of the friends spoke until he spoke and asked the friends to kill him, lest he kill himself. *Enough*, they said in unison; *this is the United States, you cannot just go around asking to be killed*. He asked again. His voice was so beautiful that each friend considered it more. Though without training, he sang his request. The tone was like a ton of sorrow being lifted by a small tongue. Each listener in danger of weeping, incapable of leaving for the need to hear the end, which sounded like the remedy of its oblivion. *My body is made of sublunar stuff—it is a ruined thing—and to the sky I must return*, he sang. All of the friends had mothers and wondered what they might think of their sons for considering the killing of a boy who sang like a nightingale. You had no choice, a mother said, *the moon you were born beneath had written this in the yard with light the night you were conceived*. The friends touched each other and the heavens shone like mud. *Which of you has the knife?* They all had knives. It should come as no surprise the mud was really blood and through it emerged a star that pulsed with the voice of the boy. Mesmerized, the friends forgot his song, while he ate their knives.

JACQUELINE WATERS

THE END

He told the story heartily
like everyone who ever
heard it
had laughed

No man from his generation he (our
teacher) added
would ever walk into a room
and consider any woman there his
“intellectual equal”

He just wanted to entertain us
but we took that entertainment

more seriously than we took
his having wanted it
a fault of our negative reasoning

At the time I had a job opening entries
for a DeBeers diamond

design contest
I was to reject any design not
sketched with charcoal
any paper mounted on an incorrect thickness
of foam core board Really my job
was to get as many
entries into the trash as I could

They say the bomb of your
central question
 will tick inside the head
of your reader
and someday that tick will widen
 commandeering
what amounts to miles
 of rich, tillable soil
 or grim, bloated swampland

None of us will ever
 feel comfortable saying
 that this is it: the end

An end (let's summarize) is
 a consequent
 with nothing else after it or not
a LOT —
 as the sign in the harbor says
 "NO WAKE" —
your boat should sort of
 trail away
without affecting bathers or other
 small craft

THE INALIENABLE

See that? Note
her behavior

but do not speculate
on her motivations

Hoard your observations

Be attentive in particular
to the sensations

but do not interpret
the existence of feeling

as wherewithal to act

You're now just
a simple figure

better described
as a piece of furniture

You love carefully

You are careful to behave
as if loved

THE T.E.O.

By combing your hair and covering it
with texturizing spray, gathering it
into a clean elastic you cross
the threshold into irresistibility
your looks
need to be crushed
but no one
has the courage, the tallest around here so sweet
the short you find them quite kind
in-betweens as impeccable with their dress as their manners
these are the adherents a god would want
any god

THE END

Unable to sleep I remember the bodies of old lovers. Let's make a policy of this. I was in high school. I was closing ranks. Poetry remains equally impossible. No spot in the room from which you can see the sky while standing. Our paltry business vocabularies. Applying perfume on the street. I think all the time of Rousseau's island of happiness. Turned this sad fate into a moment of perfect pleasure. Adjust your bra strap and stop believing you are dying. Dozing in the library. Once you write them down the words are already out of your control. I go downtown. A pile of damp tissues on my lap. That one spot in your back a container for pain. A night for doing taxes as a couple. So happy to find the ham sandwich. You need a new prescription. I think my husband never used the word. The man on the subway vomits and vomits. How not to retreat into unearned advantage. Never look when someone calls to you. In my head I transformed *sexy thighs* to *sexy fires* to make myself feel better about smiling back. Now remove the tension from your lower jaw. If you want to know how it feels to be here perhaps you should watch the police procedural. When spring gets inside your skin. I wasn't trying to be an important voice of our time. Applying perfume on the subway. Were you fifteen or twenty three or thirty six when your first friend died of natural causes.

THE END

I believe in ages because I've seen time change. Something about the shabbiness of a country not your own. To claim or to be claimed or to be jailed for years without a trial. Not so much Enlightenment's bad dream as its true fulfillment. Every empire comes to an end. The first white blossoms. First daffodils in an allotment outside the train window. You are aware that most of what you do is move your body from one place to another. Smothering coughs at the poetry reading. Reading on the night bus. Approaching the stapled center of the notebook. I hadn't been trying to bear down into relation. Get under the blue sky before clouds cover it up again. Progression of gently qualifying definitive statements and tea in a gold-rimmed cup. Take yourself around the corner to clear your head staring at bas-reliefs. *If you can't drink something warm there's something wrong with it* says a man at the next table. I imagine a day in the not-too-distant future. Indelible chill of almost every bar bathroom. It's easy to get misplaced within a morning. *Stupid boobs* texts Sarah. A scarf as large as a blanket. A slow but drenching rain falls all around the library. Everyone's reception history flags from time to time.

THE END

To register words in writing. A woman tells her son something is *a bit precious* by which she means *not a toy*. I've come to think of this as a Moroccan mirror. Cape envy. Feeling a tug of worldliness I check my hemline in a plate-glass window. Already spring here. All the false daffodils in buttonholes. You put on chapstick and head out into the park. Sunset on the river so unimpressive in the photograph. Can we make this connection every day. I'll stand up as long as there's a place to put my drink. There's poetry and then there's gossip about poetry. *Frosted Foods* reads a sticker peeling from the wall. I thought I heard you hum *we're always touching by underground wires*. Each small thing that might cause your future to pivot. Antlers balanced on the windowsill. Then you're walking along the waterfront with an infant strapped to your chest. All the pots in the window of daffodils or chives. Sometimes you go too far inside for hours or days but sometimes you see and name everything in your vicinity. Seagulls filling up the park. Buy a lemon on the way home. Wake into the bluest sky. I recognize my acquired vocabulary. Titling the review *whose I is this anyway*. There's the threat of rhetorical violence and then there's the threat of real violence. Having to do perhaps with the body in question. She placed my accent in a bar in Soho. Already so far gone into my day. Craning out the window for a glimpse of the famous restaurant. Talk me down before our walk.

THE END

We wished to make an ethical description of our times. This required the simultaneous wearing of two sweaters. Adult women walking by a playground fence. I hadn't kept track of the milestones. Sometimes one must purchase something in order to write while sheltered from the weather. Was it more like a country or more like a neighborhood. You were hungry you were feral. An infant cannot distinguish between various levels of crisis. We wanted to believe we lived in a world made of or made by women. Then I overhear something about *the bourgeois revolution*. I asked if the street was named for the stables it once housed. Two hours to sunset. I wasn't biking on the path. Rain outside falling slow. You had been promised a fireplace and here instead was a life-sized wooden greyhound. Something like paying your dues. A day in the marshes. Oh the daffodils and crocuses in the sudden hail. A message appears telling you how much money you've spent on the internet. The world full of its actual shabby objects. I emptied a small packet of salt semi-evenly over my whole plate. The woman by the window talks animatedly to her friend while a baby latches to her breast. In this way the possession of certain resources separates the poet from the not-poet. My apparent agelessness is my only victory.

THE END

Glass leaves on a tiny tree. Did you remember to turn off the heat. At the counter I refused to offer free editorial services. Lacking the basic tools of your trade. I liked the game of ping-pong always happening upstairs. Is it *street harassment* if it starts with *excuse me*. All the women with their thousand-watt smiles. I wanted to reject every kind of knowing. How the word *land* creates an open space for capital to flow through. Life of ongoing small expenditures or my career in small-press poetry. A blunter instrument crying on the tiles. I did not know it was possible to report frottage on the public bus. Obsession is salvation I think walking by Little Baobab. I understand that departure is a kind of luxury. The river flowing southeast all through this part of the poem. You take your body out and feed it. Having made a life of a series of improvisations. On the bus with three drunk teenagers. Do you remember where you left the slippers. We never talk about craft here. The best way to devalue a book is to fill it with poetry. How to use the things you know but cannot cite. It is always only me in here. I liked the taxidermy store flooded with sourceless light. The Red Cross symbol so charmingly painted on brick. I wanted my body to be a deadlier kind of weapon. Burning and burning and nearly half the passengers asleep.

JACOB KAHN

THE BIRDS (OF MARGERY KEMPE)

She heard rustling above, the bare feet of servants, and a magpie's rasping chatter. He was birdlike, with a sharp pointed nose and complete arches over his eyes. It was not dawn at all—plain light flooded the room without fanfare along with bird chatter and salty wind.

Her excitement was sickening against the gray dawn and the house sparrows' insipid chirps. Swallows whose nests he had disturbed darted around him, shrilling *tsink, tsink, tsink*. His shoulders were wide, his face heavy with problems, and when he came he hooted softly like an owl. We hear the harsh cheet-cheet of a crossbill. House wrens warble like crazy, their songs bubbling out from under the eaves, the air muffled under the shifting beech, elm, and honey locust. The sacrament *shok & flekeryd to & fro*, as Margery wrote—a white dove calling *turrr turrr* and batting its wings as blue sky burst through the roof. Once sex was entered, his eyes shut and his mouth gaped like a baby bird's.

"Be thankful, St. Bridget never saw me fluttering like a dove."

A partridge called in the fields, a high creaking *keeve, keeveit, it, it, it*. The lady was escorted by a cavalier on whose wrist perched a kestrel with a blue-gray head and spotted chestnut mantle. Margery felt residual twinges of pleasure; she heard the whickering trill of a grebe. A desert finch lit at their feet and took its ten or twelve positions in the twinkling of an eye. The humming in her ear grew deep, an owl's oo-heu, and brighter, a bunting's high-pitched jangle.

He watched a trader lead a string of ostriches that were bridled and saddled. A loose flock of blackbird's pecked at the newly sown seeds.

Flowers and birds shone with individual life and identification with their species, an elaborate and finicky charm. A rufous woodcock flew fast and the undulating hills stretched back into unusual depth. Wrens warbled and a small flock of goldfinches pecked along the hedgerows and cried *deedelit* from a patch of thistles. Soft heat raked the treetops, the sharp tang of resin and a woodwarbler's shivering call.

She heard the crusty whistle of a hawk and slowly reunited in the blinking sunlight. L. is showing me a pair of loons he's watched for years. The plop of a rising fish, the *creck creck* of a moorhen. Vs of pelicans slid through the air. The travelers were flushed with expanding harmonies of wind, space, drizzle, clouds, and thick greens; her words were lost in the wind; snipes zigzagged crying *chip-per, chip-per*.

They are boar sausage and stuffed gooseneck. They heard an ouzel's ringing *tew tew tew*; the peasants cupped their ears. Pastures sloped down to a rich valley divided into square farms, fields of rye grass for winter forage, and silvery olive orchards where blue tits sang *tsee-tsee-tsu-tsuhuhuhu*.

Lunch at the market, roast chicken, book box in antique store, wall paintings of fruit trees. Vultures croaked and whistled, wings raised in pious attitudes. A kite sailed in buoyant flight, extended wings and forked tail in sharp silhouette.

At night, a woodlark.

"This piece was excavated from Robert Glück's novel, Margery Kempe, rendered through every sentence that has a bird in it or has anything to do with birds from the book in chronological order"

Even buzzards found their way into these charnel houses.

Mullions' dull shadows on the whitewashed wall, mosquitoes adrift in the corners of the ceiling, chatter of unseen birds and the monotonous scales of someone's flute. With his feet turned out and his knock-knees and his broad hips tipped forwards and his pointed nose in the air, Margery observed with tender hilarity that her lover looked like an ostrich.

Jesus turns it into the tremolo of a dove and then, lighter and shriller, a redbreast's call. Swifts gliding by on stiff wings shrieked, "Wool, Sir."

She heard a wren's vehement warble. She had a parrot: green body, pink wingtips, and blue forehead; he bit his perch. The parrot shrieked and splattered water in its bath and for some reason Dame Margaret clapped her hands.

He made a good living: they ate roasted quail stuffed with pomegranate seeds and marinated in honey; fritters of pike and eel mixed with dates, ginger, apricots, pine nuts, and parsley; an infusion of laurel and fennel; artichokes flattened out and fried; a comfit of squash, sugar, ginger, lemon, and honey; and fried custard, crisp and melting. Thunder-startled pheasant cocks rocketed upwards in a whirl, crowing a harsh kor-kor. Pairs of gray ducks appeared in the flooded meadows, their quacks low and reedy. They ate duck stuffed with ground duck, parmesan, pine nuts, and raisins. It was April; a woodpecker's drumming and yelping cry. A goose raised its head for grain as a farmer swung his scythe—in the dust its yellow beak parted hopefully.

A blackbird with a yellow bill ran in a crouch.

Now there's a racket like an uproar of birds from some mechanism in the rear. Three feet of snow covered Lynn; Margery was so cold she became bewildered; she heard the trilling *shree* of a waxwing. A linnet warbled in a tuft of hazel trees. Sanderlings pattered along the foamy edge. Pale fulmars followed the ship in stiff flight for seven days. They watched a white goose in a maze, its head bobbing just above the box hedge. When the sun appeared for an hour of immensity, canaries trilled vehemently in their little cages on the windowsills.

*The kiss you gave me,
Burning and bold,
Ran off with two birds,
And flew to their tree,
To guard their nest
From the cold.*

Heavy storms flattened the crops and blew petrels inland, where they fluttered on gray wings like bats above the ponds. Larks, throats, blackbirds, linnets, and cuckoos poured out music on every side. The air was soft and chickens settled in the boughs of the apple and quince. A cuckoo echoed far off, then near.

He had a wen inside his cheek as big as a pullet's egg.

She said *hello*, copied his voice like a birdcall: two notes rising, one sinking halfway.
The town slept; she heard the rush of water, a torrent pouring through a sluice, and the foggy cry of
bitterns from the salt marshes. With first light the roosters; with sunrise the dogs. A blackbird
stood with its head to one side listening for worms.

Light pushes through, wan and gray; for an hour bird chatter dominates the city. She drags farts out
of him, his ignorant seagull expression as people look up and sniff and her insides roll with joy.
The sun rose, house wrens sang below the eaves, dogs barked.

HAVE YOU MET MY FRIEND MOSSACK FONSECA

“every image was a farewell
to what it portrayed”
– Robert Glück

Fountains of youth, the blue fraction
of flags, a slight twitch as bored motorists
exchange chilling glances

all schemes are equal
a territory concealed by nothing in particular
a territory connected to nothing in particular

basically I'm all for transferring captives
between islands as long as a few dozen
emerge dewy from afternoons on the job

I know, I know, there's just rampant
gluten everywhere, there's even rampant
gluten at Gitmo, there's even rampant

gluten intolerance, there's even scrubbed
general malfeasance, there's even a scrubbed
bunch of us exchanging high fives

I know because I used to be that person
speaking with the allergist
lying to the senate

always asking like I was asking for a raise

AGENDA: THINGS TO GO OVER AT THE MEETING

The question remains eternal

Am I open-ended or what

Dropping a whole day's load in just under a few seconds

Retaking a part of Mosul in the process

I feel the need to address these luncheons

I feel the need to scribble down my coordinates

You begin to feel the need with thrombosis

Last thing I need's more shed vacuoles iridescent

More nocturnes in my day-job

More dicks in my degree

Last thing I need's more

Things to go over at the meeting

Otherwise my index looks pretty good

As does my cinched catafalque

But getting back to market-value vestibules

Laboring intensely with fixed eye & brow

Hurried through back doors where owls burrow

In fields of lace, sapling, and bantam

In laden fields of oilrig and icecap

Beyond this moon-slick civil impasse

Talking on the phone at some point huffing

What copyrighted broadcast of rare species are we seizing

Or what egg from a little dirt dug up

A hint of sage muffled by diesel fumes

I heard a voice sayeth "My idyll's at a standstill"

Quote "not that interested in organ music"

Quote "not the clover I was hoping for"

This beatified oomph, or trill, these hard to get to chambers

The kind of ethereality lamps cast

By the extravalent grace of landlords

I pledge anteriority in porticos caught bungling

Bound but not Shreveport-bound

Alleging delegates at room temperature

Beneath clotheslines above cyclamen

I heard a voice sayeth "My toe hurts, Teddy"

I spoke with several tenants quote "not coming back"

MUGWORT JOURNAL

On Sunday, June 10, 2012, Ariana Reines gave me a sprig of mugwort and instructed me to put it under my pillow at night. She told me to view the bed as a sacred space and to have nothing else in it (cell phone, etc.) while I slept. When I woke up I was to keep my eyes closed and to ask what was the message I was supposed to bring back from the dreamspace. I followed Ariana's instructions for the eleven nights I slept at the Courtyard Marriot in Culver City, CA, while teaching in a low-residency MFA writing program. What follows are what I wrote in my journal each morning, unedited except for masking the names of a couple of people and inserting a few clarifications that felt necessary when revisiting this material four years later.

6-14-12

Slept with mugwort under my pillow—woke up thinking all love objects were avatars—these energy constructs that are transits between physical entities—avatar in the sense of an image that allows us to feel connection with one another—a form of mediumship—is it true that we're all connected? Then why do we feel so alone? Dreamt about L, who has always been so much about absence—doling out affection in bits—thought on the plane yesterday of what Marsha Campbell wrote in "Wearing a Tough Jacket," the part about how she imagines treating her plants the way Danny treats her, giving her plants a little less water each day—to train them to exist on less.

Made some coffee—maybe this will seem less muddle-headed vague. The dream was a lot about L—he was doing this approach-avoidance thing—asking me if I wanted to go picking mushrooms with him, then making other plans, saying that now he'd like to have a child, he could see the appeal in babies (the implication being that would happen with someone younger than I, who can have babies)—and he went to the bathroom and I left and went to yoga—stopped in at a yoga office and this therapist type guy kept wanting to engage me, and someone wanted me to fill out an endless form—I said no—I have to go to yoga—and in the dream I was proud of myself for developing a plan and sticking to it—there was an erotic energy to the exchange with the therapist, but I wasn't hooking into it—also with another of the yoga students—I wasn't interested—it was about the yoga. Dream L had said that Anna Moschovakis was having a dinner—was I going to go. Since Anna is my editor on *The TV Sutras*, I take this as an invitation,

a prompting to prioritize writing my book. Was thinking while waiting for my sub-par coffee to brew (grounds too coarse) that I keep saying I need to be writing this book, and feeling guilty for not writing this book—when in truth I've pretty much been constantly writing this book—I just haven't formalized and organized it. Writing this book is just about typing things out and editing—and letting whatever associations flow. It's already all there. Nothing to be afraid of. The book on the millennium cults Meredith Quartermain suggested is great for bringing some language of glory into the end. Really have to poop, so I'll sign off here.

From Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*:

“And this idea had such enormous attractions that no official condemnation could prevent it from recurring again and again to the minds of the unprivileged, the oppressed, the disoriented and the unbalanced.”

This pretty much sums up everything I've been thinking about cults. Also reminds me of how Republicans are appealing to irrationality.

6-15-12

Dreamt a person was making taxidermy arrangements around where I was living. A mixture of cats and books. Gruesome, creepy, humorous, and aesthetically satisfying. These bothered me but I kept checking them out. Some of them would grow, getting larger each day. Lots of careful balancing of energies. Right before I woke up there was a live black cat walking among the sculptures—and a woman was there and I said to her, aren't you worried for the cat? She was kind of *whatever*. Cats have traditionally represented the soul in my dreams. The books could be either writing or academia—or anything set and ossified. The dream seems concerned with protecting the live, wild thing, not allowing it to become ossified by aesthetics & formal constraints, be they writing or teaching. Lots of dreams, but this is all I remember for now. Of course I was wondering who made the sculptures, and a bit frightened by their stealth—they were created behind our backs, when we were sleeping. So maybe

the dream is also a call for awareness. Maybe if I devoted myself to these things more passionately they could be lovely *and* alive.

Also dreamt I got an email from L around 11:30 at night—he's only written to me in the afternoon between 3 & 6—very controlled that way—and I thought he is spontaneous, he is staying up late thinking of me. Checked my email—right now—nothing from him, so clearly wish fulfillment. He's been absent for so long he feels truly like a dream, a cruel dream that came back to haunt me then vanished, leaving this homeless desire behind it, a desire with no container on the horizon. Found an email to the buddhist—actually, it was a Word document on the desktop of my Macbook Air—the beginning of a long email I was composing to him at SFO when I was offline. And I was quoting and referencing bits from his email—and I was asking him—what do you mean by a habit of secrecy engrained so long you can't imagine changing it at this point—he was telling me right from the beginning the key to his impossibility—and I was just glossing over it, not listening/taking it seriously. Keep thinking what L wrote about his wife's issues with him: drinks too much, doesn't talk about his feelings, explosive anger. And his adding how all combat vets drink too much, are suicidal and heavily armed. Hello, Dodie, being with him would have destroyed you—still would destroy you. He was amazing and exciting, but a bad choice. His art is banal. You are too much for him. He could tell that ultimately you were unsquashable. He felt swallowed by you because he has weak boundaries that he has to rigidly defend—and his notion of relationship was squash or be squashed. Look at his poor, ruined wife.

6-16-12

Turned off alarm by mistake—supposed to get up at 9:00—and couldn't get up—first noticed this at 10:30. Christine just called and it was 11:30. Which shook me so fully out of dreamstate I can't remember anything. Part of the reason I wasn't waking up is that I'd be learning something and I'd want to bring it back but then I'd forget it—and I kept searching around for what I'd bring back and I couldn't find it. This enormous desire for knowledge and instruction I have in dreams is amazing. It doesn't seem to be about pleasure for me. I want to learn and I want to learn hard. Perhaps the message of my dissolving realizations is that knowledge is evanescent. Thinking of the

boy I saw in line at the airport—he was like maybe 11—that tender point/hinge between childhood and adolescence and he was standing with his father in line—we were waiting for that segment where we got our IDs checked before moving towards the scanners—and the boy stepped alone to the guard in such seriousness, like he was trying to be a little man, like he was trying to do it right, to walk the appropriate way to the security guard and stand there appropriately with a serious, adult expression on his face while his ID was being checked. He knows no other world, I thought, just as I as a child in a much different world, knew no other world—and it came to my mind: he's learning the ways of the world, he's eagerly learning them for he wants to do things right. The joke is—that there are no ways of the world, just shifting, changing systems. And that is the brilliance of the charismatic leader—they sense in their bones there is no way of the world—so they make up their own way—and this so excites us, this new way, we sheepishly stand in line to follow them. Reading about millennium cults is mind-boggling—dull but mind-boggling—one downtrodden group after another taking up versions of the same prophecy—which ends, after things get even worse, with the antichrist—the poor and the downtrodden being proven the pure and their ruling an earthly paradise—along with the pure downtrodden dead who have risen from their graves—for 1000 years and then all the pure ascend to a spiritual paradise in heaven. When things are going well for a group, this fantasy gets suppressed. When things are going badly for a group, nothing can suppress this vision—it arises, blazing from the ashes of hopelessness and abjection.

Heard from L yesterday, 3:29 p.m., his usual time.

6-17-12

6 a.m.—only 5 hours sleep, took an ambien because I had to get up early, which gives a fragmented, thought-oriented chatty dream—plus my deepest, narrative, visual dreams often happen when I sleep late—but in the midst of this fragmented chatter, a vision of 3 silver-colored mechanical pencils zoomed into focus—I have this pencil—used it the other day for filling in my calendar—the pencil I used for writing in non-official teaching events, possible things I could do for my own fulfillment. So it seems to be a reminder to carve time for the personal, the soul-fulfilling, but also, it is a writing

implement, so another hailing to write. 3s are a typical spiritual number, duh—the trinity—plus in the William Gass essay I read the other day, he talked about its use in myth and fairy tales—which again is a hailing to narrative but also to the realm of soul, the irrational.

6-18-12

Again I slept late because I was searching for the message from the dreamstate, and no dreams, more of this sense of searching in a landscape with no signposts. A sense that there was an inner connection with L and that I'm using externals, such as suspecting he may be a wife abuser, to deny that connection. My heart has closed with his 3 week absence and despite enormous curiosity and our history, I do not feel like reconnecting it. So I kept sleeping and sleeping, waiting for the dream message, and nothing would arise. I guess what's interesting here is that there is a self in the dream that is invested in this process, that so desperately wants to bring back information to me. That in itself is a form of lucid dreaming. As I awoke I was worried that I'm not having vivid experiences because I'm considering including this journal in The TV Sutras, that the dream spirits are angry with me—or that knowing others will see it, I'm already inhibiting myself, censoring material so that I'm no longer open to receive information. That utter openness and submission—all spiritual awareness comes with the intense focus and utter submission of an orgasm. Now if I try to make myself come and I try too hard, I get a massive headache—a headache so bad it feels like my entire head will burst open—it happened the first time with the buddhist—and then it happened with Kevin when I wasn't satisfied with just one orgasm and I was pushing too hard, desperate to have another one on top of the first one, greedy greedy. And then it happened before I went to dinner with Ariana, the night she gave me the mugwort—I was masturbating and I got impatient and I could feel the horrible headache coming on, but I was almost there and I kept on going—greedy greedy—and then bam—the worst pain in my life (that's how they describe such headaches online—the worst headache of your life) and I had to lie there for like half an hour gently massaging my head and relaxing before I could get up. Ariana said this only happened to her if she was no longer in love with the person she was fucking. After the second one I called the Kaiser advice nurse—I was having sex and when I came I got this horrible headache am

I going to die. The eventual MRI said no. I'm thinking of this because I awoke with a headache—I can think of other reasons for it—but I suspect I'm trying too hard for realization—and I awake with a headache, the connection is too perfect for me. Plus, there's the question of what's a realization or even what's a dream message—do dreams need to be elaborate narratives to mean something—that certainly sounds conservative from a literary perspective—send the dreams to an MFA program and teach them the rules of their genre. Reading in *The Pursuit of the Millennium* how one prophet after another began by going into a forest (they didn't have deserts in medieval Europe) and did their ascetic thing and waited for realization—so my sense of this endless nothingness in the dream, it's like this narrative asceticism. It's a miracle that I'm simply waking up, putting on water for coffee and writing writing writing. The wonderful physicality and precision of the fountain pen dancing ink across paper. There are no words on the cover of this journal—a dull white/beige field with an outline of a cross in red, with a sprig of grain angled across it. The book is about the childhood of saints. Saint Genevieve of Nanterre—422-512—Feast Day January 3—Patron saint of Paris. A few pages from the book are interspersed among the blank journal pages. St. G walking beside an ox that's pulling a cart loaded with squiggles that appear to be ears of corn and pumpkins. As a young girl G goes to see a bishop. “The poor little girl had hardly slept all night. She had been jerked and slapped before she left home. She had walked a considerable distance without any breakfast and she was shivering with excitement.” The bishop hangs a chain around her neck with a small gold medal on which is engraved a cross. “Never wear any other jewelry, my child. Do not wear earrings or bracelets such as other girls wear. This cross is to help you remember that you are consecrated to God and that you have promised to serve Him always.” And then the bishop gives his blessings to all the people of Nanterre. A flame has now been lit in the heart of a child. G's mother does not want the words of the bishop to make G feel better than anyone else, so she speaks sharply to G and cuffs her ears and rarely gives her more than a crust of bread to eat. G lived before people had rosaries to help them pray, so she had to *make up her own prayers*. G is my role model—she tells me it is fine and proper to make it all up yourself. As a child, my mother too thought I was weird.

6-19-12

No specific images returned with me, just a gleeful sense of life tumbling backwards, a carnivalesque ride of image upon image, colorful, that filled me with a childlike delight. The comforter has virtually no stuffing, and I like to sleep in a cold room—so I put the air conditioning on lowest—65°—and I fold the comforter & the extra blanket in half lengthwise, stack them on top of one another, and put the brown paisley wool shawl I brought from home on top of that, and sleep under this multi-layered narrow strip—and I got up during the night and pushed it aside and then I got cold and when I went to cover myself up the strip had twisted, like when you ring out a washrag—and I say washrag rather than washcloth on purpose for I'm tied into my childhood self—and I'm thinking of cinnamon rolls/strips my mother would make out of leftover piecrust, slice the dough into strips, brush with butter, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar, and roll the strips up and bake them—not much of these, just these few pieces of trimming, and they were such a delight. How beautiful to make something so yummy out of what most would discard. My mother is always very close to my dreams. Now, again, that flood of unbearable loss—this love that flows beyond emotions, a molecular resonance. Gone. And so my bedding was like a cinnamon twist I was sleepily trying to unwind, kind of like this project of listening to my dreams. And night after night no dreams—images but no dreams, reminds me of what I thought of Language poetry in the 80s when little of the avant garde made sense to me but I was trying to figure it out and I don't know if I ever really did figure it out—just through repeated exposure it sunk into my being like osmosis. As I was making this morning's excellent cup of coffee I was thinking about the notion of the End of Days and the millennium—the basis of *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, which I'm so enjoying, I read it at night and often in the morning, so it's framing my days—and most of the myth of the millennium—the whole notion of there being an earthly paradise for 1000 years—after the antichrist is defeated—and then everybody goes to heaven—how this is new to me—I'm unfamiliar with this 1000 year earthly paradise part of the story—and even the active defeating of the antichrist—just smeared ink on the pillow I had my journal propped on—should I make that my official dream pillow—I knew there was an antichrist and then Christ comes—but the story is more in bleeps—and this is because most of my knowledge of Christianity is a child's knowledge—and the millennium isn't probably such a big focus for Christian children—or at least not in the 50s and 60s when I was in Sunday school

coloring in the thickly outlined pictures of robed Jesus carrying a staff with a lamb beside him. I imagine my childhood knowledge of Christianity is just as sophisticated as the masses the Republicans are using to vote in ludicrous, oppressive people and laws. In *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, one prophet after another arises and incites the lower classes, the angry, desperate poor—and they become a real threat to the Church—sometimes murdering the clergy. In one case I was reading about last night, even after the charismatic prophet was killed, the Church still couldn't regain control and the only way they could wrestle it back was to send in their own charismatic prophet to reconvert the masses to a less problematic system. Logic, I feel, holds little sway—is that the right word—in history and human relations. Frightening how the Republican think tank has figured this out—a presidential candidate who lies—which marks the death knoll/throes of truth—or the official acceptance that the truth/fact/logic are meaningless, have always been meaningless. It's all a tumble of bright seductive images—and we giggle in delight or terror—or more often than not, simultaneously both.

6-20-12

Kept dreaming all night long about these two lesbian students—they wove in threads throughout the night—they were both people, but also these abstract beings who moved through the air, their movement creating sine waves. Colorful and peaceful and strong. Both have dark hair, are vegans, and write about utopian communities of vampires, werewolves, and witches. A mystical queer alterity. At dinner last night one said she was married for 9 years to a controlling abusive man—and they lived in Arizona—the parallels with L, who sent me an asshole letter yesterday—are astonishing. The husband didn't like it when she wrote. If they were sitting in a restaurant, and she was looking off in the distance, he'd say accusingly, "You're writing." And now that she's in a lesbian relationship she's supported in her writing. Her partner, who I met, has very nice energy. They seem so adoring of one another. The other student is an animal rights activist. These women in the dream represented power and freedom—and fully embodying my own truths (even though I balk at the word truth, thought I think it's a word that allows much more fluidity than how it usually is used). Got another creepy email from L yesterday—after not hearing from

him for 3 weeks I had time to sort things out and when I heard from him on Friday I didn't particularly welcome it—a brief abject note about how his wife he's breaking up with told him she was afraid of him—and his confusion and anger over this, how she was trying to make their break up all his fault. When someone who knocked you across the room and later said you deserved it says their wife is afraid of them, you perk up your ears. When I was 29 I was so into him I was ready to immolate myself for him—and he led me into some very dangerous activities. I had this whole Sid & Nancy fantasy going—even though I didn't know who Sid and Nancy were—but I wanted a love so grand it was suicidal—and it's clear if L hadn't dumped me—he tended to dump women back then once they became too attached to him—he would have destroyed me. He said he'd write a more in depth email on Sunday—and as I hadn't answered the Friday email—I wrote back on Tuesday—what's up—except that I was rushing in my office and I made a typo—and instead I wrote what's us—and this set him off. He wrote back sarcastically about how now that he missed a deadline, had he failed the semester. I'd said there wasn't enough momentum to the correspondence for me to hook into—this was about me exploring disengaging from him—this shift in desire in me to want to back away, despite the interest in hearing about this rightwing, gun toting drunk with Vietnam flashbacks who frightens his wife. Talking with someone who's not a card-carrying liberal intrigues me. He wrote back to me: “Art is free. Don't try to control me. No one can.” Rage arose in me. Since he's now printing photographs of trees in Vietnam rather than commercial tabletop stuff of guns and other killing devices—he must be spouting this I'm a free, wild artist bit and using it as an excuse for all his asshole behaviors. Groan. His type of fetishization of macho culture is so homoerotic. Looking back, I'm struck by how charismatic he was—many women fell in love with him, and men tended to also fall under his sway and have intense drunken, drug-riddled craziness with him. I felt freakish and alienated when I met him—the sexually confused equivalent of what Cohn calls “the surplus population living on the margin of society.” And the prophet gave these surplus people “a communal mission of vast dimension and world-shaking importance It gave them not simply a place in the world but a unique and respondent place.” With him I felt bigger than life—we existed together in a bubble of glorious alterity, laughing at the bland, trendy normal folk around us. I craved wildness and he was my entry into that. I can't believe he's come back into my life, how I'm forced to see him as human, as this sad, dangerous human—and I've been so resistant to that—I want this myth to remain

untouched of this divine young love that was the most intense experience of my life—and it's like I've been forced to look at him with my eyes pinned open—I'd moved from a spiritual cult into a boyfriend cult and from there I moved into a writing cult. My thirst for belonging has been enormous. And here I have these two lesbian spirit guides encouraging me to be radically myself. They're encouraging me to embrace that very freedom L wrote about in his stupid email. And they're reminding me that real love—such as what I have with Kevin—and freedom are not something at odds. Lots of loving, healing energy in this dream—and a vision of relationship with the world based on ease and comfort rather than striving to please.

6-21-12

Part of the problem is the alarm—that jolt like a crisis in a myth—brrrrringggg—and one turns with a start and Eurydice is lost forever—all this stuff about ways to cross into the land of the dead and come back safely—trying to survive the veil of amnesia. This morning I moved through the dreamspace or the nondreamspace—the other space—and I was content I had something to bring back—pushed the alarm on snooze & fell back asleep for like a minute and it was gone—the gods are crafty in their maintenance of secrets. Something about the art on the walls of my hotel room, I was exploring it. I wonder if nonnarrative dreaming is resting in more primitive parts of the brain. Was reading last night that narrative capabilities begin around age 3 when children begin putting nouns and verbs together—and that's when most people's first memories happen. Was I just now dwelling in a prenarrative realm? Is that the realm my cats exist in—an ever shifting, backwards erasing now? But they learn, they have memories. Sylvia searches for her toys and brings them to me. The frustration of nonnarrative movies—duration that makes no sense exhausts the mind, the narrative-making part has to give up and sometimes I can feel rage at that. Nonpoet's rage at nonnarrative writing—it's the terror of losing the ability to make sense out of the world. Something hanging on the wall is static and therefore its narrative or nonnarrativity is acceptable, though it's impossible, even in the worst god-awful squiggles not to create shapes, stories. In the painting beside my bed—a cream 3-inch horizontal band roughly smears against the black ground of the bottom, arising vertically are 3 darker black rectangles with bits of lighter black and some cream.

Instantly I see 3 skyscrapers on the water, extending into the sky—not exactly a narrative—but a stage setting waiting for one. We are no longer the wretched of the earth, we are God's chosen people and at the command of our latest messiah we will plunder and rule and there will be a new day of glory with bread and wine a plenty and a new community to replace the dissolution of the family unit. After writing that I look at the painting and the vertical rectangles are factories seized by the masses in a post-industrial revolution. Messiahs always make you feel special, chosen, fully alive, outside the rules of ordinary fucks who bore or oppress you. Many men depend on women to make them feel like a messiah, to be their one *devoté*. Art is free, L wrote. Don't try to control me. No one can. Yes my lord, I will await for your magnificence to appear to me. I made him go away. Once you see the pattern it's impossible to follow. When he was young the buddhist believed that his group was going to create a new social order. Marxism laid out the problem, he said. And his group held the solution. But after the charismatic leader died and the buddhist became a Buddhist clergy, he realized it was just a religion. The tedium of institutionalized Buddhism was driving him crazy. He seemed beaten down, trapped in a system he kept trying to leave but kept failing to leave for it gave him everything: community, sex, love, a job, and most important of all, power. Leaving would be walking out of a gilded door into the ordinary. That's how I felt when things ended with him: the terror of the ordinary.

6-22-12

A long full luxurious night of sleep—would wake up and there would be three more hours. The night seemed to stretch on forever. A sense of grains, an agrarian landscape—which connects to the grain on the cover of this journal, the little girl saint—Genevieve—and Michael Pollan—who Kevin met at the Northern California Book Awards—and Kevin said Michael Pollan was like 7 feet tall, so he was like a giant in my dream—and there was a recurring image of a being's mouth wide open and a smaller being's head inside the stretched open mouth. They were facing one another—and the image was frozen, like a drawing—it was sort of a sigil—like on *Game of Thrones*. And I know it's partially from my watching the previews online to *Snow White and the Huntsman*—where Charlize Theron sucks the life out of a young woman—to

maintain her own youth and beauty. And Charlize Theron is so lovely but that type of mass corporate beauty is always artificial and vampiric. I don't know if vampiric is the correct word—unlike some writers—I don't throw out words that seem intriguing but I have no clue what they really mean. But my frozen heads weren't necessarily about violence—it could be that one was about to snap the head off the other, or it could have been a tender moment about trust. The image was uninterpretable in that way and I was fine with it. The book on the Middle Ages (and oh my god I really had no idea of the violence of the Crusades) and watching the images of woods and green magical landscapes in the Snow White trailer brings back a longing for a simpler, lush, natural world. Going up to Mendocino with Bett next weekend and was thinking we have to drive through the redwood forest where it feels like you're swallowed in the primeval and the most magical sense of green.

Everything about the Middle Ages is dreamlike—these roaming hordes of sore-ridden bare-footed poor in sackcloth plundering villages and all in the name of Christ. There is nothing (everything . . . nothing . . . I'm into absolutes this morning which is the opposite of the unreadability of my head-in-mouth image) sophisticated or modern about religious zeal—it is this primitive drive like sex—it's about carving a place for oneself, a sense of order out of terrifying chaos. Thoughts of L flickering throughout the night—his rearing from my past, 30 years after he broke my heart—and the extreme physicality of our relationship back then—but now he's only existing as text—these nonwriterly emails he sends me. After his don't control me email, I sent him such an angry, mean, vulgar email—I quoted part of it on Facebook and it got 30 likes—“I don't care about your fucking balls. Find some duck in Arizona who doesn't have a clue to tend to them.” And that wasn't the half of it. I felt bad about my meanness but relieved because I was sure he'd go away—and two days later I get an email called Silence in CC (I'm assuming CC is Culver City) which makes it sound like he didn't receive my email, and he sent a vulnerable email about getting a massage and being weepy from the touch of the female masseuse because it's been so long since he's been touched—but the thought of being involved with anyone makes him want to throw up—I'm kind of on the same page with him there—I don't long to be touched, Kevin is enough for me these days—but the thought of being involved with someone else—after the buddhist—too makes me want to throw up. But this interaction with L, it feels like someone else is writing it and enjoying the process, the way it keeps sputtering along,

propelled by misreadings, typos, and missing emails. It feels like a tale rather than a modern narrative. And all the creepiness—the guns and dogs and violence and PTSD attacks in grocery stores—adds to this sense of a primitive tale—it's like writing to Paul Bunyan or Davy Crockett. I read this on the toilet this morning: "Annihilate the infidel."

6-23-12

Sleep interrupted by phone call from Hedi, calling to arrange our lunch. We're meeting at Cafe Brazil at 2:00. Which of course shattered my dreamscape—and I was being a good reporter, carefully taking notes to bring back to this journal. What remains was an image—3 identical circles with their edges touching—and the point that came up over and over is that they were all separate, but simultaneously one—a sense more of action rather than physical entities—against this notion of linear progression of past present future. Hedi's nervous about his upcoming trip to Casablanca to see his family, where he will be staying for 3 weeks—so three enters from the phone dream as well as the sleep dream. And of course this references the trinity we learned of in Sunday school—how the father-son-holy ghost were separate and yet one, and I found this so difficult to get—they were like the fingers of God's hand, but all still the hand—I think this is a bad analogy because you have this lump of flesh—the palm—and the fingers dangle off of it—not really an image of unity. Just remembered part of a dream—someone I knew had a crush on Aaron Kunin and we were watching TV in a public place like a restaurant or bar and the woman on TV said she was interested in this guy—Aaron Kunin—and the crushed out woman was devastated. A tease to remind me that narrative was going on but I lost it—I'm left with this symbol—all action, all character, all life rendered down to this cryptic sign that is both multiple and one. Lots of women do seem to be attracted to Aaron Kunin—he's so sweet and smart. We might see him tonight at Julia Bloch's reading—and I don't know why in my own dream I have to witness someone else's attraction—why I'm witness instead of protagonist—but there's this distance to the whole dream project—it's about stepping outside—and I can't decide whether to write outside "life" or "narrative"—and looking for structures. I want to write looking for "meaning" but this process seems to have been subverting meaning—it also seems to have been subverting desire to see life as a

linear narrative or life as a narrative at all. We create narrative to make meaning out of life, but narrativizing is about comfort—not meaning. Searching for structures beyond narrative . . . and then I dream of this clump of circles, a circular pyramid, a female pyramid if I dip into my cultural symbolic conditioning, circles equal female—but this non-linear pyramid is flirting with those god-awful sacred geometry people—the secret of life implanted by space aliens. The clump of 3 circles reminds me of cell division, which I was so fascinated with as a child—how one could become two and then clump together—but it seems that if cell division is about one becoming two, you’d have a progression of 2, 4, 8—always divisible by 2—not these mutant 3 cells clumped together. So what is it saying—time is circular and one—past present future these entwined spinning globes, a fused clover. In the sacred geometry videos on Youtube, the circles would overlap, many more of them—64?—creating that flower of life pattern—the Secret of the Universe—but here the circles merely touch—no overlapping. A peaceful balance that reminds me of the Taoist yoga class in Santa Monica I took last night—its focus on one breath flowing into another rather than the vigilant inbreath/outbreath usually talked about in yoga classes, like our lungs were these ever-working accordions—the yin/yang symbol, a circle with these two halves eating one another, flipping back and forth. But my 3 circles are more static than that—they are a symbol of stability, peace. An image to hold when I feel destroyed by goal oriented behavior—or attempting to make myself be goal-oriented. Aaron Kunin: the prophetess does not partake in living. She leads the living. If I were a true prophetess I would not be worried if readers would find my Mugwort Journal interesting. I would present my inspired teachings with such grandeur and confidence, others would be mesmerized, eager to rush in. I would wear a long flowing gown, and hanging from a magenta silk ribbon around my neck would be a large gold-plated triple circle, my symbol, my secret to wisdom and peace.

6-24-12

I was staying in a vast, at least 2 story, ramshackle house. This is not the beginning of the dream but the most clear narrative that I remember. I was suddenly alone in the house and it was a bit spooky—and I heard all this noise, banging, etc. and I was oh my god this place is haunted and it’s starting up now that I’m alone—so I started down the

stairs—and there were young, giggling women who had broken in. Two of them were simultaneously real women and more stylized, like cartoons—but mostly real women, who would slip into stylized images—and this soon made sense for the group of giggling girls were part of a game show and the two stylized girls were the previous winners. The stylized versions were images for advertising for the show. So the giggling girls were locked in a room with lots of light—sunlight seeming, but I don't think there were windows, a small room with a wall of sliding glass doors—we were looking in at them as if they were in a cage. The girls kept being bubbly and giggly as it was revealed the point of the show is that they would fight to the death. I walked away because I didn't want to watch it. Throughout my dreaming last night, there were 3 linked women: past present future—which makes me think of the 3 muses and also the 3 circle pyramid—it's about taking a process in as a whole, as from above where one can see a unity unavailable to the ground. When we saw Hedi yesterday he was talking about his love of reality TV, especially *Real Housewives of Orange County*. The contrivance behind the real, yet the emotional investment of the participants. He said there was a high rate of suicide among those associated with reality TV shows. So that most likely influenced my Hunger Games revision here. It's about agency and illusion—we live in a world of illusion—everybody but Christians seem to say that—especially Eastern religions and scientists—materiality is mostly space with these vastly far apart bits of matter—the illusion is constructed but our experience of it is very real. Despite our artifice, we are sincere little beasts, we humans—the way we blindly hurl ourselves into our life narratives with so little distance. All these systems and beliefs come out of a desperate need for distance—and for a desire that there is—to use a rightwing term, “intelligent design” behind all this terrible randomness. In dreams, aren't all characters supposed to be the dreamer—I'm the 3 fused women, I'm the room filled with these giggling beings fighting for dominance. This comes up with L repeatedly—he creeps me out, I'm drawn to him, I feel tenderness, I feel revulsion, I feel he no longer has power over me, I'm terrified of him. And this frenetic mental activity trying to figure out which is the official version, when they're all true—just ride the wave of my partaking of the complexity of my perceiving him—and having this person who has been unearthed from my past, like a frozen arctic beast thawed and risen—causes all sorts of fibrillations of my sense of past and present—it's like he in no way fits in this timeframe, yet here he is.

Went to a poetry reading last night—Julia Bloch and Frank Montesonti, and both of them kept talking about their dreams in their poems, their vivid dreams, and it felt like they were up there taunting me. So happy, this being the last night of the Mugwort Journal, as I fly back to SF this evening, to be given some snips of narrative. Aaron Kunin was at the reading last night, and I told him about the dream I had of him, which was embarrassing—and I had this curiosity about what happens when the dream person enters real life and you tell them the dream, when the two realms collapse onto one another. Kevin said my dreaming about Aaron caused him to appear at the reading. Aaron was sporting a new somewhat bushy moustache and a jaunty brown hat and an overcoat that made him look very LA Confidential. He looked like a character in a play, an amateur theater production, which was perfect.

One more snippet of dream—there was this artist on the street who didn't have any arms or legs, and he was lying on the sidewalk, on top of the same cloth where his art was displayed—he was no bigger than a shoebox—and I don't know if he could talk or not—he had dark hair and he was very angry—and I was talking with whoever took care of him—if it wasn't Donal Mosher, he had Donal energy—so I was talking to “Donal,” trying to find out why the artist was angry, if there was anything I could do to make him less angry. Donal seemed to think this was just his state of being. Who wouldn't be angry if they were that small and immobile and lying on the sidewalk. To give a crass interpretation, I think of all the half-finished abandoned and not abandoned projects I have committed to, my sense that life responsibilities are eating away at my creative side. So, I guess my mission is to protect and take care of the little guy, make him soften and happy.

The journal has ended and I have no great answers to the nature of reality other than a sense that I need to find comfort in unknowingness—and that seeing through the illusion means loving the illusion—and maybe that's what love really is—not seeing, but seeing through.

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We are still not for sale
I'm tired of explaining this

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Good to the last breath.

