



FREE







ELDERLY

lindsey boldt
emma wippermann
terrence arjoon
mary wilson
jane feinzod
domingo canizales
grant herber

WHAT THE SQUIRREL KNOWS

We call them Jerry and they are many
chit-chit-ing from the hemlock out back
now dead & soft near the front steps across town
almost cat-sized on the flat screen, entertaining Miette
who sniffs them 2-dimensional

Jerry, how did you get all the way to Canada?

Whose tail is soft & bushy
whose paws hold the popcorn thoughtfully
whose voice is pitched to scold
running up & down the world tree
the gossip, ratatosk, the skald
skuld, who cuts the life wire

Next fall when we eat the apples, Jerry
we'll eat your body
buried & sung into the dirt
to rise again
sap & dew

So many Jerrys
Jerrys all around
up and down the world tree
Jerry's in the ground

THIS IS ME

...

scrolling through emojis, looking for the syringe
the pick ax, the broad sword
the bow & arrow, the red swirled target
the old timey key, the broom
to illustrate my enthusiasm
for acupuncture
Katy sends back the fountain pen, the safety pin, the knife
seriously, use whatever

...

explaining
how sometimes I can't leave the house
mostly leaving out the part how
the world presses in around me
[like Philip K. Dick. oh fuck.]
& the bright California sky feels like its yelling
harried down the street so I lose my way
in a 3 block radius of the safe zone
and the mist here, up North, is a comfort
but lets be real, it allows too much
as cool as the word for it sounds, let's be honest
I'm hiding

...

reassuring Mom
that her love is enough, or it's great
though it can't solve the problem of my experience
it does help, thank you, I'm very grateful
Maybe if I let it wash over me and soothe me
if I let it make everything ok, like it was once able to
when all I knew about was her, the rocking chair, the house, a few others, what else
when I am an infant still inside of me next to me, Mom

...

apologizing for being a freak
then searching giphy for "drag race crying"
hoping to find Farrah Moan's pink tear soaked face
but opting for Manila Luzon's mascara stained instead
it's true, I'm the old queen, not the fresh baby

...

scraping the accrued crust
from below my newly gelled nails with this hair clip
this mechanical pencil, this other nail, this pine needle
I'm gross, always have been, never stop, never grow up
Still picking at my scalp, still grieving that loss, still bending that way
stunted and my therapist agrees it's the right word for it
so I lean in, to the hunch in my back, to the twist in my spine
to the freak in my family, to the expression of symptoms, to the artist
there's no undoing this so be it beauty

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO LEAN INTO THE SKID

Had one of those extended movie dreams starring Josef Gordon Leavitt
where we get abducted by a cult, a sort of hip Cocella style LA thing
but manage to escape and get recaptured in Buenos Aires years later, caught on surveillance
Who knew the cult's powers were so far-reaching!
Maybe that's why I feel sad today
I'm listening to Charlie Brown Christmas in a Youtube window
feeling how George Michael looked in "Arrested Development"
walking around with head hanging down
just me, Vince Guaraldi, and Charlie Brown
for no good reason except it was dark at seven this morning
when Radio, the cat, started barfing
He can't tolerate dry food anymore
We don't know why
Just wet, he can eat wet
and Steve went down to feed him and came back with coffee
but it made no sense with the jagged tree tops still mostly shrouded in darkness
Okay, okay, there was some light
but It's ok to feel this way, sad
I keep thinking how Miette, the elder, will die
and this morning what I should do with her body
where I should bury her: at the beach at Mom's, in the forest
or should I try to keep her bones like the tarot reader in Oakland
who had to restart the reading when he realized the dead cat in his bag
was exerting undue influence, making my forehead spin and the cards come out wrong
I could keep Miette's bones or wear her paw like a rabbit's foot
make gloves out of her skin like the Volva's did
I just want to be able to pet her forever
All the forest wants is to be loved
not protected, not defended, like a project, like work
I'm doing a lot of preemptive mourning, front loading grief
like Syd said before surgery
If I spread it out, maybe it won't kill me completely
Why am I so good at writing sad poems
Last year's vision was so bad I've been trying to forget it all year
If you know someone is going to die
you don't stop loving them
even if they're not born yet

from PLEASURE AS A SERIES OF OBJECTS

The finger on the phone's surface is changing the electrical capacitance, and that's how it registers my presence and self. Conducting surfaces on both sides. Her manicured hands are instigator and object: the right tapped the screen, the left featured on it, and both are deictic at one another. This hand is a sex tool and an information tool, a tool to truly point, scroll, hold the page, stroke, gesture to where it'd like another mind to follow.



Desire and despair both reorganize the individual, but the photograph (like an action), allows for the misremembering of a continuous self.



Re: the approximations we all inevitably make of one another—and how both digitally and in person, intimacy is predicated on the strength of these approximations. It is the strength, rather than accuracy, that allows for intimacy. The truthfulness of the images we conjure of each other in order to relate may create a strong hold, but a strong conviction operates just as well, if not better, than any truth, if there is one.

Perception privileges use over beauty, or punctum, or the vibrant that tinges the daily with strange. What's beautiful is often what's good, or godly; is punctum good, or the pierce and tear of a sight made useless?



As in: “Fantasy isn’t what fixes but it prevents destruction.”

The uncareful lover tries to destroy her lover's otherness, but desire inevitably moves beyond and adjacent to its object. Because relation is reiterated. Again and again, wanting means excess; all the longing won't fit onto the longed-for—yet awareness can pursue the remainders, gently, and one can love her better.

Oh but the lover wants her right where she can love her! Or the lover can note and question, can go back home to be warm there; she can trust that distance creates the conditions for endurance. She doesn't know who she is from far away—or on the screen.

TERRENCE ARJOON

LOCAL WATERING HOLE

I am the angel of that narcotizing faction
MSNBC- My Son Night, Bringer of Crows.

the sirens wail in the abandoned cage tenements of yesteryore,
and the streets brim with heavy fog,
that of history.

the primrose behemoths march down 2nd ave
and the stars are out tonight: Hercule, Victory, Othello.

I step over the exceedingly less pungent steaming body of my father
to move about in the endless night.

Abandoning the golden slumber of the wooden shelves within which I reside.

Interrobangs whizz by developing new systems for organization .

I go forth in search of My Love! *sheet-wisp-archive-moths*

moss growing halal
I peel with knife
I put in satchel

Moss can be used to repair tears in bindings and pages
when mixed with spit and root of sun-

My bag grows heavy; I could repair Alexandria with this load.
The horse buckles under the tremendous weight.

In the distance I spot the glow of my favorite bar, Horse Head Inn.

I see it
the neon pulsating
red horse head blood inklings

sawdust & beer
spill *disjecta membra*
on the cobblestones outside

don't go in must go to river
lichen
house
adjacent

The tide has swallowed my house whole.
must come back when lower.
must deposit heavy load

I didn't clean my knife
properly and now
it's rusty and weirds
people out when
I eat apples with it,
core and all.

my favorite bone of mine is the long one with the knots at the ends.
I'm a simple man.
They keep it on the wall at the co-op
and will give it back to me after I have paid my dues.

HOW TO REMEMBER DIFFERENTLY

I.

Called into the bungalow office of one
Johan Hora Siccama of the Harkstede
The workers on a strike of indifference-
smoking cigarettes on the side of the drainage ditch
pulling smoked fish and bread
from their shorts pockets
Siccama can see the problem ahead-
each intervention is its own hazard

sea dams are improved and drainage suffers
irrigation conservancies, flooding.
poverty, poor drainage.
a state of eternal disrepair,
and the catfish get drunk
on mud

*"the people of these lands have different laws,
because some worship the sun, some fire, some the trees,
some serpents, and some the first thing they encounter in the morning."- Sir John Mandeville*

The Dutchman Hora Siccama is living
at his uncle's sugar plantation.
There is a rotting smell in the grove,
sickly sweet
trapiched sugar cane
you could almost see it in the air
the flowers feel different,
have been placed intentionally
by living fingers
"Why should I go back to the horror show
of Europe?"

3:15 am Tuesday,
unknown quantity of rum and bhang
Siccama looks out the window
of the palatial estate to the dam.
a man by the canal:
short, portly, but with a straight back,
and a golden thumb, and he looks up
and he shouts:

Let us now begin by calling the sun a dog and the moon snakes. East of the dog and west of the snakes. The dog sets over busted leaking pipelines and laps up brown water. The old signified dog will now be called sun. Call it over. Listen to what it has to say. The sun howls at the snakes, delivering a plentiful bromide against disappearance. Ask Menocchio, he knows what to do. Before this there was a great sea and it all curdled into cheese. Transfer.

The shape of his thumb is said to have the shape of a fish.
Hora Siccama falls asleep.

2.

The Bramble Cay Melomys was pronounced extinct yesterday after not having been sighted for 10 years on a small coral island in the Torres Strait.

Its name, if my research is correct, translates to “Song of the Clod in the Sandy Bush.” This, my friends, was that same song Menocchio sang on that moony night, it is transcribed below:

Don't confuse a root
with a wishbone
wipe my glyph clean
with a harshness
we still perpetuate
the men made a mess
of things: a river of blood
outside sleep birds fall
a jackal drags his body
into the brambles
and soldiers hunt
monkeys
clods of dirt
sticking to their backs
my tamarind lover
your breath smells
of cock and sweetbreads
when you exhale you
engage in slave labor
and curse you witness
carbon ghosts of
triangle shirtwaist
i smell your shoulders
over the scent of tea;
row houses, rare lamps
fake houses, oaths, whistles,
extremely reasonous
wish my teeth were white

and my hair gray
and my nose like an eagle
and my clothes like a cloak

to my horror a large drop of pure rainwater obscures the closing lines of the song, which are I assure you are magnificent and quite delicate and most prescient, the lines which I think I caught a glimpse of stitched into the back of someone's sport coat at Ian Cheng's BOB opening. Someone had just made an offering of four cowry shells which the listless and long and red BOB careens around the temple occasionally accepting an offering and occasionally getting angry.

3.

I wish the mountains were more aesthetically pleasing.

The other night I had a dream about my aunt, and her mother,
who died a few years ago. They came to this county with my dad
in 1975. In the dream I had lost something in her kitchen,
and she was trying to help me, but I knew she was a ghost.

But this was sandwiched between being trapped in an elevator
shaft, and walking down the beach with Juliet.

The water was shallow and it was up to my shoulders
when I woke.

Ghosts, I have come to believe, are like fillets.

flattened with a hammer into a ghostfillet
or a ghost ham, ghost window, ghost horse
and by the way if you wish to learn more about
my Theory of Ghost Food please contact me
after the reading or visit my webpage
at ghostfood.com

And I couldn't help but wonder,
what would Hora Siccama do?
die probably.

the body sends a message.
you with your science
may have heard the call
of the snake, but here we have not
and to your groans do we
not assign words?

And don't you think it can go on forever?

In the hidden language of late winter,
when the sun is low and the crocuses
have begun to sprout,
and all the ghosts come out,
and the water in the canal
begins to flow,
and we can see the fish again?

LAST LYRIC DONUT

I won't bite you about this opinion
that it goes badly with us
professionally—
I'm basically a bachelor
or like a moment
known as a holiday
for kids.
I can't remember what
that feels like.

I mean, I can
but it's not "like" anything
enough anymore—
each pink dawn
diving into
the hollow of this donut
my doubt—
it's basically the 'O' between eating
and being awake

BÍOS / BIÓS

I love that paragraph
you texted me a picture of
how social the wildlife
in our absence rebounded
In the morning
I take half then wait, then
may be another half
so yes, she is better
I never use windshield wipers
I always throw everything away

TARGET

“Remember places?” Someone texted that question to Mick and I’d like to credit them, whoever they are. The answer is something about interiors. It might have been a tweet. Where one conversation competes with another and the auditory drift impedes your listening. “Remember when I told you about X?” someone asks, and my not remembering makes a lost place of the bar we were in. It might have been an anecdote. There might have been a picture of a Target in the tweet, a same-place built on the razed grounds of different-places, lost to the clutter of memory and ruin-porn. I woke up this morning to the news we all woke up to, and you can take your pick. Lisa Robertson asks, “do you sometimes at earliest waking observe yourself struggling towards a pronoun?” And I want to say “yes,” but at earliest waking I don’t observe myself. At least not where “observe” implies a luxury. I simply bargain between the pull of bed and food until food eventually wins. Which implies a luxury. Or on hot days, a kitchen counter spread into usefulness, or at least an idea of reaching across it.

OAKLAND, SUNDAY

My landlord is making unnecessary noise around the house, using machines in place of rakes, brooms. I'm basically waiting for the poison oak I walked through yesterday to make its appearance on my dermis, though I relish having the time and opportunity to walk through poison oak, which in this part of the country does not grow absolutely everywhere: not in the cracks in sidewalks, not on the upper-reaches of lampposts, not outside the Walgreens or the fence your car door grazed on the way there, not on the sign that reads "there." Also not in sincerity. Also not in a coy refusal to be pleased. Also not in Californians of good conscience, who must, on occasion, refuse what is elsewhere denied by default: sunlight, vegetation, the ability to open a window in February at no personal cost, which takes the edge off more and less than we care to admit, there being worse things in life than stale air, and all of us feeling that, and saying it, but also sometimes not feeling it, and saying it, or feeling it and not saying it.

QUARENTINE JOURNAL, DAY 1

I'm reading *The Decameron*
on Google Books which
has preserved this marginal
note, it's amazing, a student
(I assume it's a student) writes
asks what to say
in the margins right
to the left of where
Boccaccio writes
if I return to the city
what can I say more?
And it is
a question
this teller of tales
has asked us, right?
Who otherwise has much
to say on saints and inter-
cessors, namely
that they work
whether saintly
or dirtbag—
for example,
in the first tale
if you petition God
through a mortal middle-
man that cheats, steals, lies
on his deathbed
in both senses
(he's lying on it, and
his final confession
is the purist of bullshit)
He in his wisdom
will hear you, which
these days looks
like a circular medium
a delightful transparence

EXAMINING APOCALYPSE YET TO COME

It has always been effortless,
finding a way to create ruin.

After all,
you and I are countrymen of a vampire state
oblivion was taught as patriotism,
and we do not stop within the home,
we bring it inside ourselves, extending outwards
towards each other; we bite into it
and take a deep breath, gasping towards
our collection of cement blocks.

All at once there is a shift and a loud sound
and I am crawling up the stairs and it's
early April once again and we still have
our children at home but we know it cannot be
for too long. I am uncaging the farm animals now,
as if I was never on the stairs. I am uncaging them
because you will be angry and then I will be back
where our children have gone and I cannot look at your face
by pressing my fingers along walls, trying to find something that resembles--

I no longer keep time. I took a hammer to
the watches and tried to read from passages
if you cannot understand, then I have found
new ways of experiencing doom.
The storybooks repeat and they rise and they fall and
looks towards what Rome once was for inspiration.
People like us would rather look at the now--
The sea is rising and evaporates before it hits us
And our children are gone but they are scared
From beneath a soil going sour--

How must we expect the end of all things?
How must we avoid the nihilistic
How must we shred the philosophy books that

Warn without consequence, without
Jurisdiction, how must we protect
our children? How must we protect each other?
If all that can be done is hold each other as the wreckage crashes,
Squeeze the side of my head that is bleeding.

FORESEEN

I will never be the oracle you travelled all this way for although I have promised
to look for the future although it has only brought me towards your hands and teeth

every prophecy I've ever written by scratching at the walls has been an act of severity
sightseeing in the future, offering gold rushes and fountains in Rome has been for someone
who looks

more like the waterfall that sits besides marble deposits, the other side a firefighter's station
I am at my wits end when there is a forcefulness in the mind pushing back, seeing you above me

stand above me again and I will try to make you forget what makes me and if you'd like
I can forget the month of April and I will clutter my mind with something easier

the ring and the wine and the toy rifle and the lost stockings are fractures of
the night I pretended not to see who we have buried, the night I could not know you could not
know

I have retired from divination but I cannot retire from your hands and your teeth.

DISASTER RECIPES

Arachnida from Rio in pill boxes
Three fourths of a case of Diptera
Quarantine for cholera
Pistols and a cutlass
A hundred thousand Oscillatoria
Four bottles with animal spirits

And now everything is in flames
After so much sea sickness
And misery
After so much of the snails and spiders
And beetles, snakes, scorpions
Ad libitum

Loosened pieces of memories
Differing widely from any known genus
Lowered jaws in lecture rooms
The county clergymen
Look more like pelagic beings
The proper geologists
Want to transfigure into foxes

And now I have had to dig into the ground
Discovering what was left behind
And giving something in its place
It's more bitter than it is cold

It's been five years since I moved into the salt mines
My sisters married grenadiers
While I was divorcing sleep
My brothers married philosophers
While I was divorcing safety
I have had no need for anything
Except the knowledge of everything
And to write down the recipes of the old gods
So we may better remember next time

DEAD MOTHERS SOCIETY

I dream of my mother in my thrift shop
White dresses
Crystallized and mortalized
“Why couldn’t you save me, dear girl?”
Left San Fernando for a pickaxe on ice
He whimpers, he doesn’t know
Girls with dead mothers who wear
Black stockings
Fine, and rich, not rich, just pretending
In a cathedral with the man in the ugly hat.

Sacrilegious? No
Just ugly grief but not from my mouth
Safety pins in my hair, can you blame
A pisces moon?
There are spires you can’t see, but they can

And they long to live there with
Sons and daughters and other farm animals
Oh, she’s made of cotton dust bunnies...
“*Au revoir, mama*”

Your crypt is half empty because I burned you in blue velvet
And now live in the ocean’s throat
The Pope told me he finds you in bad taste
We both taste like cigarettes, or we both used to
You will not relent in life or death, you won’t
Give up on mineralized suffering in a mine
Outside Las Vegas

When dawn comes the dog will run away
I repeat songs about Pont Champlain
Visit your tired sister who lives at the
Bottom of the Colorado River
Like Barbie’s Dream House

I don't care to talk to ghosts anymore
In Siberian ruins

I did this before, and I'll do it again
Carve my path through hard stone
I won't see you again

DOMINGO CANIZALES

[GILBERTO 6/13]

hello gilberto my name is armando do you remember me do you think of me it was sweet the way you laughed at that girl who laughed at me it was sweet the way you swung your arm all bravado it was sweet and annoying in a kind and genteel way and do you know what gilberto do you know how the sky blooms and plumes of lava flow over both of us gilberto oh yes i am armando gilberto and i know i know gilberto how the rocks bury us both

hello gilberto i am gonzalo i just met you and tonight we will die lovely is that you suffering gilberto from these inconsistencies permutate gilberto the last is the first gilberto i know i don't mean you a thing you never do mean anything gilberto the day will come fear not gilberto tonight we dance and drink tonight we drink to night

hola gilberto me llamo ricardo gilberto es la noche gilberto la noche para bailar gilberto es la noche de su gilberto de su es la noche and may tomorrow never come

hello gilberto my aren't you a fine sweaty dandy gilberto a good looking man gilberto my mother said never to trust a good looking man gilberto my mother gilberto but then again she did tell me not to wear this dress

hello gilberto call me joshua gilberto eyes green glaze and sweet sweat dollops gilberto the sweet ones and my you are a sweet one too but the old ones gilberto not for all the blood in orlando gilberto and the white ones gilberto and the white ones too

hello gilberto have another gilberto two more gilberto am i trying to get you drunk gilberto another gilberto i will take you home and i swear this will be the last

goodbye gilberto their tears are helicopters gilberto wave just wave gilberto wave a thousand gunshot eyes gilberto just wave they're screaming for you gilberto they're screaming gilberto don't look gilberto shut the door just shut the fucking door gilberto they want you gilberto they want your suffering you're suffering gilberto they want your suffering they want it for their own

[SOFT ARCHITECTURE]

“what if there is no “space,” only a permanent, slow-motion mystic takeover, an implausibly careening awning?” –lisa robertson

memory reveals the softness of memory. a dissolution as we reach back picking at places where clouds had been, the spaces between windows, houses and trees. we live in the negative field of memory's soft architecture, columns at the forefront and the mystery beyond the fence board's mangled shroud. walking in a line between this field and the next we catch glimpses with our hands, hold them at the edges where the body ends.

in the examination of soft spaces we settle back into the handling of fragments, the absent corners and holes. we remember the house yet lapse to grasp the dimensions of the doorway, the fundamental darkness of its halls. a darkness concealed by the portrait on the cabinet. a darkness in which to hide. guided by the absences we make our way through this topography as it grasps at the moment's crossing, a cartographic motion where lines extend beyond the frame. an abrupt end like a brush stroke running off canvas, the way it obscures the intent of the line.

and yet, in the blankness of the field there is a superimposition of detail, of sunday morning church drives and the sky's sepia twirl, a lamb's ribcage lifted from the shallow tree-line, of green eyes and the scent of a girl. there is the kitchen without its furnishings and a landscape held in the blackness of a window, there is the rooster and the slaughtered cow, the silo and the crow. there are the empty wings on the sidewalk and a subdued smattering of blood.

the sky is a memory whose colors change based on the body's positioning. she falls in and out of favor and decides not to be present while mingling with the absence of ground. in this way there is no horizon to separate us from our eyesight and we allow the immensity of gravity to dissipate, and the foundations that anchor us become obsolete. the site absolved into the body is reconfigured into sadness with rain when once there was none. it becomes a river and the image is drowned, yet we are dragged by its motion, held against the branch until it gives way.

we in the cyclical waves lead along the soft edges of this cartography. the map
pencilled in shifts with the slightest quiver of desire and we motion it to move
back into the frame.

in this place the space is contained in the moment's unfolding, all memory
inherent in the action as we become. the "i" and "you" are rendered useless in
their implication of separateness, for the mystic swirl is a careening unavoidable in
its inevitability, how it merges back into itself. in this way we can only grasp at
virtuality like bears for salmon, the cold water a knowledge of its once and will-beagain.
we do not face the reaching middle but move in it, are the mechanics of its
motion and design. we are the center of light which does not hold but molds the
grain of its passage; we are the trajectory and the trail.

[ODDISH]
for Maui Saldana

oddish:

weed pokémon.

“it wanders around at night sowing its seeds to create more
oddishes”

between the two, unable to gather its dusk.

from plains sent vastward to

wood seers, unable to create more

oddishes.

whenever i doubted it, the rain.

to bring myself backwards. to say i never doubted you with the
odds of it.

i remember. am in fact a collection of memories waiting to stay.

to create more oddishes.

to wander onwards without sound.

[CAVERNS]

and the small tune plays without any direction. you follow corridors, spun, walls inhaling fragments of lost time blowing back shards through your nostrils. different colors expand at every corner you reach, nameless, untouched by the hands of time. the maze breaks to its own directions, a labyrinthine network of rhythmic cords bleeding like dreams. halls stretch into sky and curl back in on themselves. you stare wondering how to travel upright, and even as you think it gravity churns and you are falling, a leaf tilted in silent chords pruning the air. there is no dizzying sensation as you land, only another color, some would call it purple, tho you would not. dark and placid as the sky setting over mountains, curls of lightning etched into its mortared cracks. it strikes white yellow and the thunder is a far off, ancient sound. you look to your feet and your hands, bare but for bracelets, the emerald and garnet gems. they clink and you listen. they tell you to move on.

seven doors. five in the five directions, one above, one in the ground. the door above like a cloud but solid, unmoving, waiting breathless and untold. you approach it. the door below is a mirror. you step lightly so as not to make a sound. you reach the knob, stretch tall, bones tugging at your joints, feel the skeleton in your skin, tips of toes etched into the ground. brush the knob gently. it twists. opens. you fall.

the forest brings its own melody. fog surrounds you like a voice and the grass choruses softly as you rise to an elbow. meadow. trees a distant audience observing with their hands. a moon in the sky saturates the fog in yellows. blue grasses match their hue. you have not left the labyrinth. a croaking rattles you, and the frogs begin their operatic tune. there is only one opening in the tree-line. the grass is wet. you stand and move on.

you first notice the crows. not their calls but their fluttering. the beaks maw at you with a noiseless, phantom sound. the air is too thick here for music. dead leaves crunch silent beneath your paws.

you walk in the snow and ask it to be beautiful. the foot allows itself a footprint, the gesture allows itself to act. to ask the weft of it, the cord woven across broad surfaces, soft in their caress. the golden sun spun into a fine wicker of snowflakes.

and still we walk on down this road

our shadows taller than our soul

the sun vying out for attention. it falls behind mountains and listens to us whisper its remains.
and all of it carved from the same speck of whisper, the same dream a boat once knew.

*who sheds white light and wants to know
how everything still turns to gold.*

the snow is a vital footprint who holds us. you photograph nothing you wish to experience as
beautiful.

*and if you listen very hard
the tune will come to you at last*

“‘the truth,’ declared the kestrel, ‘is a shard of ice.’”

because i am a dozen sharp puddles waiting beneath you.
because i’m agasp at your soft edge.
because, in a strange way, they are distant and you linger.
because, in strange way, you carry on.

[from GLIMPSINGS]

2

i want to write without sentences,
content or form. i want to exist beyond
the measure of things, within the gaps,
beneath and above the line.

to be singular is a monstrosity, a
disconnection from revelation of the self
as holy, an entity not withstanding the
forces of nature, not separate but a
separate form.

life is a box of condensation and
rainclouds, a segment moving with the
gist of itself, a cycle of habituation or
calculation of abstract tendencies written
in the autoscapy of dreams.

feel me beneath these sentences,
above and between their lines. remember
i am human as you are human or this is
impossible.

unless you've heard of such things.

you thought you could make a
notebook of it, cut a box and fill it with
abstracts the density of snow.
you thought you'd make an attempt
to writhe after, to really dig in to the
fold. you said scope me out a landscape, a
place where foundation is built, a plucked
cove shovel buried dirt in the ground.
an aimlessness to your imaginative
use of crystals; thought you'd wrap a
book in them but left undug up like your
memories beneath tendrils of fog.
you set up to bury your mother the
same way, a drone of living and a task
where you dreamt and those too you
can't remember.
years after you'd drown your pillow
in labradorite and dream crushing azurite
crystals to a deep blue rouge in your
palm.

9

you've fallen collapsed by the
wayside, failed to grip the pebble in your
hand.

your dirt roads are seen in trenches,
your will bends like the rose.

remember me not in fig trees, nor
the leaves hidden behind fences, nor the
kissing taste of sand.

make not your rosary of yew berries.

falter us not in the will of a god.

i sing to you the world.

guttered in the sick of it, the pain
subsides to a floundering, a panicked flail
which breaks the surface and drags us to
fragmented depths.

they hollow me a collar, condense
us into cages of flecked glass. the wanton
acts are innumerable: desire plastered like
semen on the shelves.

their concrete is a figment of
lostness, their stable the unreckoning of
sound.

return now to the grasses, gesture
towards the mother they've sought and
murdered and stole.

41

why can't you be like this?

the wind is secondary to earth in its
masses, the brush is secondary to the
pine. the hallowed web is a grave who
robs us, the other utterance a pity of
time.

why can't you be like this, pass me
blue in transient places, adaptive to
pragmatic occurrences in the depths of
space.

the still green pasture binds our
footsteps to the closest, the lackluster
mud caked in sand.

our gravel tethers us to branches,
our hearts to our hands and the scars
they touch.

SOMETHING ABOUT CYNICISM

Shortly after Paradise burned down the idea of offering a “recommendation” on how to deal with apocalyptic, life-altering fires became funny to me because the word “recommendation” in relation to anything so brutal and awful just seemed kind of silly. I grew up in Paradise, and people would ask and ask about the fire when they saw me, which was often uncomfortable. Soon I began to relish the idea of a deadpan remark that could liven up this recurring conversation I didn’t feel like having. As I would run this scenario through my mind people would ask how things were going and I’d say, “Well, I don’t recommend having it happen to you.” A response like this probably doesn’t make much sense to others but it does to me, and for a while the idea made me chuckle because everything happening around me felt so absurd.

Late one night I was amusing myself with this scenario and it got me thinking about the first time I felt my opinion was worthy of a recommendation. Not just saying something was “cool” but the first time I felt I had an insightful view on a subject of some importance to me. Feeling we possess a voice strong enough to make a recommendation seems like an important step in our development of a “self”, so I was intrigued. The memory was also similarly taboo to my Camp Fire recommendation, so perhaps there was some music there. Anyway, here’s how it goes: I was probably seven or eight and my childhood best friend, Chris, and I had eaten taquitos from the Target Cafe in the nearby city of Chico. Thinking of them nearly thirty years later I can best remember their taste as “nondescript”, which is unfortunate given what would follow. That evening we both came down with nasty bouts of food poisoning, the first (and, thankfully, one of the few) I’ve experienced in life. This was a very memorable vomiting episode; Chris and I both spent the evening at our respective households horking up taquito after taquito as our tiny bodies shivered with sickness, the cruelty of the Target Cafe came fully into perspective.

Following the food poisoning, I felt like something of an authority on the Target Cafe and became an outspoken critic of it, voicing my opinion to practically everyone (most of whom had no interest) that they should avoid it at all costs. This idea of avoidance, however, shifts the topic to another lesson from this story: how a single, impactful event can make us avoid something entirely once we know how it can harm us. When Chris was ill with taquito poisoning his brother, Matt, taunted him with a really gross suggestion: when he felt like puking but couldn’t, he should think of warm bowls of mayonnaise to help get things rolling. Chris later confessed this had worked like a charm but even better than expected, to the point where he avoided mayonnaise well after he’d recovered. The idea of it made him retch.

Avoidance also affected our friendship. Chris and I drifted apart in middle school, set on different trajectories by a stupid squabble that (obviously) seems unimportant in hindsight. We patched things up awkwardly as young adults but sometimes you can’t stay in touch even if you want to. I remained close with his brother, Matt, until Matt passed away nine years ago on Thanksgiving day, an event that I’m still tremendously bitter about. Following that, I tried to be

in closer contact with Chris but it just didn't pan out. Chris and I haven't spoken in years. When the Camp Fire hit, his family's house burned down. His father had a stroke while escaping the flames and passed shortly after the new year. Having spent more time thinking about it, my recommendation idea doesn't seem so funny now. I'm serious: Don't have it happen to you.

ON BEING BLUE

In tragedy,
the perspective of others
contrasts our focus.
What's significant for us
is a light haze across their horizon.
A loose mist so dispersed
it's often unnoticed,
like America's white supremacy
& half of what we own.

DRIVING SOMEWHERE, OBVIOUSLY

Cold-wedded limbs bend solemn in beige moan.
Somehow it's willed that
there's harmony among more of them,
their wild coils ever lunging toward the light.

Driving by,
I see them,
their sculpting presence shifting perspective,
warmth of life spread long over varied afternoon hues.
Sky's volume unfolds before me
Clouds drug out—torn from same source—touched in tangerine flair.
Haste ushers me forward,
I drive and drive
blur of running waters, smeared sages, meadows loaned then lost.

Sometimes in the city
reminiscing on nature finds uncertainty

as if

you worry you'll lose touch,
cut yourself off completely.
All impressions shy from their details over time
becoming amorphous, nonsense entities.

“FBI BIGWIG HOPES TO CATCH ABSTRACTION”

Newsprint title says some, leaves most imagined

An agent is closing in on the neon steam feast pulsing on the edge of town.

It glows across reeds, brittle branches & dry brush creek beds; it bowls along knobby trees,
rubbing their crumbling bark in deep, deep red. Out there

nimble lines of neon frenzy into strange braids, pooling above packets of collected moisture.

In some instances, this stinging light strums water and ebbs off wherever,
becoming an adjacent precinct's problem.

No matter the cause:

The agent is in love with this

spectral aberration burning darkness outside their drowsy town.

They hunger for gone-over details tinged with new theoretics

and find that —while searching inside delirious obsession—
they've lost track of time.

Sometimes,

passions burn brighter than neon blaze.



Elderly is a bi-coastal magazine

Creative Commons Attribution-
No Derives-NonCommercial

This is issue thirty-two (32)
for 13 Mar 2021

END CAPITALISM NOW

THE BAY/NYC
elderlymag.net



