

culture

DANIEL DAVIDSON

KRUPSKAYA ■ 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Portions of *culture* were originally published in the following: *A*bacus*, *Aerial*, *Avec*, *Central Park*, *Cyanosis*, *Kenning*, *lyric&*, *Mirage #4/Period[ical]*, *Poetics Journal*, *Remixsponse Categoriarrray*, *Stifled Yawn*, *Talisman*, and *Writing*. *Product* was published by e.g. press in 1991; *Image* was published by Zasterle in 1993.

Copyright © 2002 the Estate of Daniel Davidson

Distributed by Small Press Distribution, Berkeley
800-869-7553
spdbooks.org

K R U P S K A Y A
PO Box 420249
San Francisco, CA
94142-0249
krupskayabooks.com

CONTENTS

An Account	4
Transit	18
Desire	39
An Afterword by Gary Sullivan	59

An Account

Regalia, pause is draped and phrased. Slake is draught with thirst. I've a word that it, some type of daily cactus, hoarded and juice-locked, is more a stop. The west in grown men lying clockward limns and herds the land. Note the criminal, benighted, and all these compositions are in bedded terms. And oh, the perfected certainly do train! Water drags the bay, a lip-cutting trend. Flowers bloom in print, plots of mustard where spruce declined. Exiting, this place unquestionably exists. The narrative trout swim with necessity, memory biting at straws too, in line.

History begins with a temperature of one.
Life as an idea is ripe for the picking.
Charisma details the track to power.
Colony after succession recedes.
We're not just making exceptions,
we're jettisoning a specific kind of analytic strain:
the lamp black of intimate lives,
the discursive form for what we do today.
So pop goes the gun, into the clear traffic shell,
the cool mark tapered to pleasure, silence, and dread.
The best that is is in the field,
starving its quarry out. In torpid waters,
standing vermin with an apostate glow.
The object can corrupt even these.

We sin with our hands. A mini-series breaks its mold, bites its tongue, and feeds you that spike of fruition. Inside, a trip wire tracks its way down, the external rushing into the head of an attractive, found logic. One method is to construct a joke to lean on, conceive and tell. Another receives the result, an envelope of habitat driven home. Bitten into, and choked with a strategy that can't be fingered, what tramps past memory is the grade of notch, the sense of stint. After all, what happens to you props up something, doesn't it? With bird-like rapacity, the screen contemplates its perpetual itch. The novelty of a world, finite and golden in a bloodied eye.

Fear trapped the goad, bringing a human resonance
with the utility blanked out.

To have a larger world to be still in,
an angry discount marked, mapped and bled
inside a splatter shield of trouble-free lore.

Then something passed the front,
nothing set loose in the escaping flow.

I have a long list of doubts, which I'm happy to relate. The lap of luxury snapped a neck, as I recall, but this is less fun than it seems. The beautiful, charmed souls of late afternoon drone on about their cars and bars. Books tell about knowing. Coins graduate to grandeur, autocratic profiles in leading dailies. Let's put the top down and swing with the score. Wondrous procedures of extravagance, suckling jingo, the Great Cow. And the reasonable, the restrained, the responsible, let it growl, let it roll.

Any specific fiction mines with a preemptive stain, tears and tears, roads and doors, an unlimited innocence of guile that has time to catch you in your air. This is the anguish of our seeming, of a chaotic synthesis. What about childhood, and beyond? Quite a lot of people drink here, deserted as a kind of participation in the glow of belonging. As if you don't think about it, but then this *is* the work we are doing now. Unofficially, and awash with identification.

Someone might say I have a bomb.
Out of sight of the letter,
such national taste is done well.
Past the world are four walls at war.
We've caught the action, where the ear splits
and passes into another, other, tragic film.

Having arrived and here you are, dogged and drugged with a semi-sweet discourse of extreme pleasure. The conversation moves into multiple languages, distances split up and served, establishing an incentive. Let's see. . . You are reading, your eyes wander. This is true, and where your hand goes so goes the face of value and apprehension. Nothing can stop you now.

Lurch with me or stay stationary, a full dose of educational law enforcement, and that's all the time we have for today. What's the fuss? What's the percentage of zero over one? The corporate media runs its virtual shield of cops and composting elegance. I/you brought the pictures, the projectors and the facts machine, and the telemarketing system churns up muck at the going rate, money equaling silence, silence equaling shares. The security of one state laps against another, all of what remains of our credibility. Theory seems to give rise to great digits of credit. Nothing lasts forever; it just seems to, tired of a preoccupation with changing channels.

Decorative, habitual beauty lends itself wholly
to the qualities of form, documenting the future.
The head will come later, and will seem to be invented.
Technologies advocate that things be made "useful,"
prompting the absorption of conflicting ideologies.
But where will the notes be filed?
What reconstructed terrorist will blink its eyes
in a politically convenient sound bite?

Let's talk substitution. You first. Let's talk submission, whispering agreement, reeling off a prehensile circus of breakdown and need. Telephones receive the exchange, the daily repetitions of "wait," "limit," "calm." Particularized, the chuck wagons glimpse a dream of hardware. No easy force of knowledge, paper-goods absurd enough for an immediate throw drop on the lawn, their hair trigger set to relieve you of your sight. Basking in its mirrored finish, the day was contained. Long ago in a land far, far away, on the radio, related stories danced in the service of poverty, a two-fisted romp designed to do your painting for you.

I drifted along a mixture of extremities.
You sensed the desire that came your way.
I was balanced between obsession and denial.
I embraced ideas as goals, a long list.
You proceeded to conquer its content.

I imagined it had turned to funny papers.
I was followed into a dream.
I established the mechanism of possession.
I added my name to the list.
I carved a place no one else had seen.

Without much attention, the proper place of security is body and property, rest and documentation, desire and fetish. In a sense this buys the store, running between the aisles, to brush against those who are prepared and then speaking. Is the heat on, or are we only breathing between flames? In the quiet, gelatine surface of the negative, an entire arena of possibility becomes reduced and unhinged.

Act one: The libretto abandons its theme of transition for an apotheosis of desperation. Act two: Today commands with measurement. Later, a bout orders too much to say. Act three: Our ensemble performs and thought mops up, delivering one shoe at a time, constructing a machine along the ground or through the air. Act four: Just look. Anything.

You read this sentence as a discrete film.
You broke sight of what characterized persuasion.
You asked about the knowledgeable.
You tired of the thread of autonomy.
You entered the sound of discussion.
I discovered what was beneath the ground.
I dressed my thought in rags.
You had a thought in common.
I never was heard of, or really alone.
You wondered what to name what part of speech.

Frame one: The imaginary word. Frame six: The promise of the sentence. Frame twelve: Much later, ideation is breached. Frame fourteen: Questioning content, one hand meets the other. Frame twenty: I believe you've mistaken me for someone you think you know. Frame twenty-two: Absorbing the end of reason, Turbo masters the functions of communication, and utters a promise to a complete stranger. Frame twenty-seven: It's beginning to think to hurt. Frame thirty-five: Curtains in the middle of a reply, an interstitial mission. Frame thirty-nine: Within the limits of daylight, vendors form a shadowy realm. Frame forty-two: The narrative, revealed to be a copy of the completed text, is closed.

**She brings great theaters of
imaginings.**

**Following along, she thinks she
finds her sleep.**

**She allows what towards, is the one
to exist.**

49

**Not only is the ground gone, he is
not walking.**

Opinions only matter to seem.

**Tethering, the fragmentation
appears cohesive.**

56

**Resolution avoids challenge,
just quite vertical.**

Thanks for sending.

**Dazzling the public arena, the
palm is holding the
photograph in the hand.**

64

**One manner of telling, that a
story attempting to integrate.**

**A kernel, wrapped in the guise
of sense, brought the day.**

**Who pronounces, contained
and framed another view.**

67

**No, this is a show, and as such idealizes tragedy
beyond the limitations of the real.**

**The real, better than most, buttered toast with orange juice
in morning, etcetera.**

72

Now that we've got the facts straight, we can proceed to telling lies outright. Beginning with the myth of the disenfranchised, class-based analysis is as defunct as

socialism in the twenty-first century and beyond. Remember, you are an individual, and as such the holder of a vast cavity of well-defined rights and responsibilities. Let's go to a fern barn, and munch our way back to your apartment.

Soon the bread will arrive already on shelves, part of the present tense promised by our beloved founders.

The diction you master will decide the state of your life; the cut of your demeanor is evidence of blessing.

75

IN THE FUTURE

Your God is a symptom of your desire.
Facts borrow numbers to compute unity.
Screens elevate thought in the out-of-doors.
Truth can fail to record levels of popularity.
Read me the price of your favorite song.
The shields we dream about are cheap and easy.

IN THE PRESENT

Facts compute unity.
Read me the price of your song.
Screens elevate thought.
The shields are cheap and easy.
Truth can fail popularity.
Your God is your desire.

Invasion is a credible means to incredible ends, capturing people's attention and love.

As a tactic, deception decides the scope of information as well as its content.

The mind is a powerful weapon in pursuit of new mechanisms of assault and murder.

79

IN THE PAST

Shields.
God.
Facts.
Truth.
Screens.
Read.

The totality of human experience can be accurately deduced from the natural behavior of those we know well.

The strong persist through their innate superiority over the weak; the weak feed the needs and desires of the strong.

God acts in all human events, favoring we who understand His wishes and obey his commands.

85

Linkage of the unspeakable, that ideals are devoured to devote. An afterimage of conceivable percussion tears thimbles of practice from the nails, extracting a fire sale of devotion from those otherwise unobserved. That is what is not to know, or know you, a practice of wayfaring between die-offs, like pulling your pleasantly greased hand from the fire. Or are we comfortable now?

PERSON

Retell the story, and presently begins. A desire to match what had, in reflection, to show the matériel. A specific message speeding toward what room, I bump against the tragic reminder that story disappears in the dull light of common sense. In time, appraised the predicting flow, no other present but passages exist. So goes the shell, a pattern that succeeds itself.

THING

How do I count thee? Embracing hat, hood, shade, gun in hand. Friend, not winners at the 7-Eleven. This promise remains for the perfected citizen: single-lane pushups had a train to hold (not the irrelevancy of it), and the bra to spare a heart-warming prize. You think *I* know you know someone, sitting the television in the TV chair. But doesn't attention swarm every winter, with the natural drift to November's ritualized Loss of Lease? Face it: The employer is him or someone with the same name and social security number, the mind lost on fifteen grams of nineteenth century.

PRIORITIES

I sit at a table where different coffee of the same kinds were being confused. Three intersecting conversations travel to the left, junctured in the questionable neutrality of a grey flannel suit. Road to Rio commutes to the right, speaking diligently the idealized rhymes of his distant, universal school. Silent to not express position, the entire distance between "X" and "A" is declared violently devoid of meaning. Oh/zero/aught. Conclusion: incite any vehicle and quit this crazy suburb. Rewrite later.

READER

Trust dreams the thought of the Greeks. Deep sleep comes often and soon, in the wonderful aegis of the eyes. As the subject finds a way through the disappearing hedge rows, text of pristine draught, the distant hills are often seen riding into the blind. Party to parity, name to none, increased definition, then mixes in box and glove to go 'round. How many expensive, explosive coverings constitute ideas of the soul? Patterns estimate the rectangles of hands, maintaining sense. Creation, consumption, the full treatment continues: I blink I save I cease to exist.

So Happy Days poverty leaches into town, handgun at the ready, preparing for a democratic convection of fright. The cathedrals rebroadcast their hand-to-mouth driven sphere, spreading a belief in the anonymity of gain and the righteousness of its eternal absolution. Breakfasting on the lawn, doesn't the powder on her face look swell? Laws take part in the trick, pulling and tugging, tracking the steps back to the frontier. Hop along; it's the prerogative of the few to just stand there. I think I'd like to see this in beige, if you don't mind.

Deep-six company headquarters troll. Gribble-headed corporate stupe.
Leisure-suited crust incontinent. Six-digit impotent pasty flake.
Vertically integrated fat-cell geek. Silent killing master-dude.

Cutesy lawyer civet lackey. Highly leveraged free market chamber pot.
Multi-muddled neocon. Ptomaine scullery disposal sheet.
Moldy thinking leer-eyed tripe. Silly trotting executive shit.

Heartless money-hungry porcine cur. Politically rabid predatory pond scum.
Hollow crab-infested transnational pimp. Robber baron preppie snot.
Unscrupulous flag-waving malignant stool. Corporate welfare bailout cheat.

Greedy stammering unconscious misanthrope. Lying dimestore business slop.
Low-normal precancerous land speculator. Flaccid industrial back-alley job.
New-moneyed reactionary hustler. Vicious profiteering sot.

Consequences bark at trees, the time being shaded indoors and locked from view. The problem that emerges is one of hidden influence, getting the curtain up before the trap door has a chance to be found out. This tends to involve faith and belief, two of the most powerful pieces on screen.

Dear friend,

Think for a moment. . . . You are driving past a local State or Federal Office building on your way home from work. You slow down and look out your window, admiring the building's beauty and grandeur, the lofty ideals reflected in its gleaming surface. Then you see them. Clusters of idle, shiftless people leaning shamelessly against the building's exterior.

Your heart is saddened. But one day you are moved to action. You walk up to the public sidewalk in front of the building and see a small group of people just like you. Some are praying, some are carrying signs, and others are pushing their children in strollers.

Before you can kneel to pray or take ten steps, an employee walks out of the building and hands you some papers that say you are prohibited from protesting. You are not trespassing or breaking the law, so you continue to pray or walk up and down the public sidewalk.

Ten minutes later, police cars arrive with lights flashing. To your utter amazement, you and your family are handcuffed, pushed into the back of a police car and hauled off to jail!

All this is happening in Dayton, Ohio right now. The court there created an order specifically aimed at people like you and me who believe that the colony's posture is bad, that too many people are idle and that something needs to be done. The lazy and listless could gather by the same building to express their "views" -- but should anyone dare to speak out they are immediately subject to arrest, jail and a \$500 fine. That's not Freedom of Speech! That's tyranny!

Does this sound too outrageous to be true? Everywhere, the unruly slack their bodies against the popular edifices of our nation. The time has come for each separate, responsible, crime-fearing citizen to offer a response to this headless insult to our country's standing.

Now more than ever, we need your financial help. We are quite literally on the front lines in the battle to preserve American freedoms. Please respond with the best gift you can. Victory is within our grasp. Write today.

Write it down, and keep it there. I infused a dream of rumors. . . . Hidden in the body, the law of averages, limits assume precision, the progenitor of uncertainty.

In fashion, thought is a document, victory a stroll. Politics, but only after a discrete moment; then someone packs up and goes home. . . . Prodigal, are you that special someone?

Blank wall. . . . Threads of a lift forge the hook of intended trust, above a background of unquestioned increase. But do you simply see, or is something prodding you?

Imagined results, in the foreground, employ the power of speed. This sense of pattern, device, service, developing drama, a sound, a possible designation. . . . Like others, some hear the remainder as an ordered stillness.

I hope that the eyes you have can wind their way through the corpulent fields, and return to town. Alone in direction, the route, points of restraint, what is, after all, an adornment, an abandonment. . . .

Equivalent contradictions absorb license. Yesterday's struggles have been noted — or have they been collected? Memory isn't what it used to be, it only seems to. . . . In the quiet, tentative land of this distant war, policy is diffuse, does doesn't say.

But what about modern, ancient life? The present — resting on a foundation of “the way things always are” — slips infinitely into the past, only to awaken here, in the steady-state ether. . . .

Who would have believed that the sun could wrest itself from the need to make a day. Words shatter at the tongue's tip, but question this: do we blink to stare? When the larger world — the one between the outstretched hand and the horizon — inhabits a narrative, the page just turns. Told in place, or found on a flat screen, sentient life pushes to the edge and then falls off. Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink, able to leap tall buildings etc., thematic inserts have application far beyond those of mortal men.

At the border of the cosmetic, apostates are retired. The usual dosage requires a body, a machine, its repair cycle, and a furtive backward glance. Like-minded segments (gear assemblies, pay-off schedules, enterprise zones) must all seem part of the original mix. If you are prepared for the worst, any permutation promises a continued harvest based on the transfer of risk, that is, on an ordering of the trough. Never forget: blood is money, and a hands-on approach works best. Your success is our success, and to forget that would be a very serious mistake indeed.

**Anything not used in the creation of profit is automatically
suspected of being subversive.**

**Power is exercised at a rate relative to the capacity
to distract attention.**

**Status details an array of targets,
finding place in the play of crossed-out forms.**

**The expediency of violence
moves against the periphery, a common state.**

**For the guilty visibility is an offense,
the crime of occupying space.**

**Shunned, illness is its own reward, even more obvious
in the luster of places that will soon become open.**

**A willingness to make others conform to social conditions
you find offensive is the true power of the State in your life.**

**In the planned economy of the imagination,
fear of the tasted forges a landscape.**

**The hunger of the poor is displaced by the hunger of the rich.
Speaking, authority rises to its feet
marking the vulnerability of a reclining form.**

**The blank vacancy of eternal migrants translates something
threatening into a virtual sense of relief.**

**When seeing someone lying unconscious on a city street, it is
appropriate to continue walking, essentially unaffected.**

**Belief in the fairness of power is often
a way to excuse wholesale slaughter.**

**Acceptable sexuality masks a behavioral strategy that
integrates desire into a system of enforcement.**

**In our society, rape is a crime
because it violates property rights.**

**Under some conditions the human body must be separated
from the person who inhabits it.**

**Employment is a means of control, keeping you too
preoccupied with survival to think about your position.**

Unemployment is a means of control, keeping you too preoccupied with survival to think about your position.

Censorship, war and economic adversity are the prices Americans must pay for their freedom.

Accurate information about the specifics of US foreign policy is much too disturbing to be examined closely.

The military longs for a time when war will be the single greatest unifying force in society.

Unlike the present but much like the past, the future will be a place of harmony, prosperity and opportunity.

It is considered appropriate to sustain conditions which are against the best interests of almost everyone.

The incarceration of a large percentage of the population is seen as an effective way to insure the well-being of society.

To be natural, ideas must conform to a system of distribution that favors the interests of those in authority.

Happening on the margin, I hold a reflection of deep-seated advantage and persuasion. Experience works like a mirror, popping up anywhere. A clear-eyed drift through thought and belief, if only everyone would absorb the canon and inhale the aspiration then all things could take their natural place. What a construction to fall on, and on, and on, and where to go from here: you are not the only one on board, it's just that so many arrows point in the same direction.

Within this frame you can listen to people from very different backgrounds.

Absorbed, what the time it is to sleep.

We stand within the rapid motions of expanding markets.

Television relays a range of appropriate responses.

What is most acceptable for the person you wish to be?

How does this object come to exist?

What alliances are necessary to your success?

Let's imagine a way of thinking that won't impede enrichment. . . . Clearly, the regulation of dissent enters the story, resistant to the dislodging of invisibility. What is soft is redefined as dangerous, and what you don't know doesn't kill you. Heat, breath and light prompts the launch, locates the fray, the civilized targets, precise military persuasion speeding down stairs, through doors, past the children of bedded lovers, unnoticed and forgotten in an ultimate transaction. Thus liberty transfers itself, repetition in defense of comfort and salaries, unbridled objectivity translated into ashes beneath the ground.

You know what you have to do . . . and the fit ties nicely doesn't it, a perfect example of theory and practice. The history of the present mesmerizes as it consumes, from hair to teeth to bone to lack of sight, holding what is known to a one party strategy of certitude. Belief is a matter of policy, incapable of culpability. The flashing attractors of homelessness, poverty and disease keep the system open, and everyone has a job. What choices there are reflect the same — the survivability of life itself echoed in the success of the corporate state. And the most obvious conclusions, like the sun, are seen at night.

Transit

1.

Waiting.
The
present
knowledge
to
stand

is past, a completed state. And knowledge
is the target, an approximate
network on a backdrop

of ground. Note among sense,
and may decide, which specific
direction is often unnecessary
in the virtual domestic arrangement.

Make yourself, if not at home,
then “at,” a habit
that waits at the hub of motion.
Inside is still, outside is still,
an image that slides past the windows.

You are, we are, now entering a tunnel.
Execute the available within these lengths,
in that you, you beautiful doll
so harbored and quiet.

You are (or) calling from what is
inside this costume and reside, take one
to step forward, sit, and then continue
in flight. A surge of voice at that placement,
resembling the temporal state,
another with windows boarded up to resent.

The danger may be justified,
leased, difficult to read, alert, asleep
accustomed to sitting when maintained. Imagine

never having to get out of your car —
any quantity of fibrous landscape
could then be convinced, easily conceived
a well traveled constant within the
well spoken hum, winding around a fixed measure.

As opening, one to another,
the rooms are glazed in steel.

2.

*The
beautiful
body
sits
naked,*

relies and remains, the
fabric of discussion, journey of the
whole name, if all that entering into
hopes to be. All are distinguishing some,

and they, quantified the touch of profession
bring machines, then disgorge into
crowd. Ravenous. Return into one,
one into another, then return of the
entry of one. Without convergence the personal

conglomerate slits, looks out, enters
motions the individual, transfers
the physical, then locution, rhetoric
the place where work, the home, and following
the dismemberment, any memory that sells.

Dissolve into place, then into stream,
forgotten ahead, lunge to surround.

What is
the name? Nothing, surrounded by move.

3.

*What
history
empties
into,
between
places,*

mirroring use. A pretty face is not enough,
returning the above, each
of the highways drain
into the remaining swamp. Distance

is preserved in an enclosure, listening
for the right speed.
That maps spreads and loosens the hold,
and separation, to begin,
believes we are there.

I am opening a door, and then . . .

All motion is a sexual act, following memory
that plunges into thought.
Motioning, the relevant finds, tries,

heaves in the opening light. The
tracking starts, acts, speaks,
with the intent of a deafening roar.
Or, combining to propose a day,
a route of one.

In stages of react, digest, an
occasion of remove, falling is
as falling away, from arrival
as complete as its lack.

4.

*Anticipatory
sign
endeavors,
fails
to
glow,*

the silver fins raised up.
Then the seam, longing,
distance to receive, timed meeting of line
locating the horizon. Made up and dressed,

the gun of a smoking withdrawal
attempts as a charmed reaction
here we are, if a mob,
as a limb, a plot. A dislocation
to observed fact, destination
that thinking signs.

One comments the end, finally distracts.
Many prefer hats, another
watches, shoes, and speaking
leads with the hands. Visionary,

that the seating is deranged:
impulse, convenience, compulsion, effect,
of price hanging from one
like a bar to the head.

Trouble that recorded its address,
offence, then left behind,
or anyway, it's a job. You are,
that is, truth, then accretion.

5.

A

mainspring

surges

forward,

snaps

shut,

cycles through, rush to depart.

A drive-by shooting is delivered,

you pick it up, transferring range,

distribution, the screen

of admitted admits the exchange,

and founded on distance, expects habitation,

extending intent up to the line.

Not that irony, the fat, precedes

alignment, of front, or back, to easy exit.

Siphoning a way between them

often succeeds, entitles, propeller of

invasion, blood of remove.

finally, it comes to

mean *sailing over or under*.

6.

*A
thin
veil
of
crowd
control,*

spreads its account or
leisure that the completed version infers.
The connecting tissues follow an
enveloping route. Running page, to word
word to page, tracks of the trail

on its way down, or thought,
isn't it, hovering that thought
at all. Or is it? . . . the body breaks
down its natural state. Note

that precaution is lit, continuing
on into the backdrop, a letter or chain
of attention: *I* boards, that
is a contiguous I.

Attending the complaint,
its figure of one diverts, appends,
applauds to remind, whose presence is fixed
is there to lend, to sell,
and the sensation to fall.

7.

*Soon
the
receding
edge
holding
shape,*

becomes face, enters line. Excursion places
what form has left wanting, the perfected, practiced cube
of linkage. The personal is absorbed without trace, code of one,
then another, in the exceptional device.

Expecting appearance to align, perception sits within act.
We distinguish ourselves and are extinguished,
jagged peak to jagged peak, unmoved for a 360 degree view,
one skin, glass, voice, handhold, stance.

8.

*Place
that
looks,
renaming
the
agreement.*

An average of light directs the way,
that between frames allows others to
board and begin. Passes that

final gate, turn to center, you that must regard
physicality as incomplete. As incomplete as you are,
you are, immediately, complete. Thus the pay-out
resides in someone, in you, manufacturing place
and time in the lie of writing.

Looking across fields to descend.
When excursion assumes remembering,
the lurch which wanders out to the sights
returns home again. Loss is a record of replacement,
thus the lights up ahead,
where we share many things, speak

of the edge, wan of flesh, rend in display,
the flash of light a life,
realized, burst, still, traced.
No one doubts their existence,
the right to sit, speak,
walk, get a ride. Either or not,
a branching effect returns you.

Beneath the archway it continues to rain,
and the context or presence of name is lost.

9.

*There
in
an
alternate
schedule*

time places distance and removes.
Play of an emergence, a spectacle
digression competes within the occasion
when another comes to occupy the event.

Glare to imagine an exact relation
ensorious to absolve, one
is preferred within a sequence, separate

and then moves,
comes back. I am involved
in my own trace, prisoner to retain
to create and disturb, recollect

which withstood, rests
and is yours
the hands grasp and release.

10.

*Sifted
in
association,
the
signatures*

of none break with the past
composing a series of flat planes.

Into a conversing flow,
we are expected to reach
and then maintain a critical speed,
making the detour ultimately complete.

Yielding, we begin a descent
extracting entrance from below
always following to another exit.

Focused and wandering through
located as destination
time equals measure of pain and flight.

11.

*Assembling
the
service
of
needs*

a truce assumes contradiction,
blending disbelief into what space
must now occupy. Dispersed, an
estrangement fills to remember

how briefly the surrendered
are pulled from the wreckage. Delaying
the thought to engage, self awareness
withstands belonging.
Following a quiet occasion
of rest, control renewing

an artificial distinction,
the spread of insemination, the rocking limbs
frightening the sighted.

Here you are, an exception. Irregular,
the movement concludes in
the accepted landscape, language

accomplishing acceleration,
the poverty of your brief pause
forming the lessons of skin.

12.

*Seeming
to
partake
the
periodic
flow,*

substance stems the chance,
the blade. The retiring colony
prefaces many who apply,

partitioning the long interval
and shuns the glance,
decides the share.

Anyone who finishes
figures in the installation of scene.
Labored and prolific,
the everyday code of address

pushes to excess, glint of
illness and neglect, driven
in the obscure light.

13.

A
legitimate
defence
remembers,

access tapping at the gate of decline.
Stepping up to the attraction,
moving beneath a complacent surface
the frame of skin indicates
a struggle, a response.

Conversation leaks through the noise,
knotting a string of appearances.

The choice, not the subject, is yours
a marble of faces to reflect a screen
the numbers of you you think of
a winnowing of impediments

the lens of thought reclaiming
the cause of departure.

14.

*Transgression
collects
the
particles
of
desire,*

flattering the channel.

The finder of appetite digests it,
pleasure shearing the fastening law,
always an incomplete expression.

Extended, the hand marks the source.
A world away, the mortal looks to be found.
Laughter, seeking sincerity
dips into the wet features you fall against.

The break in dialogue succumbs,
heeding imagination. Upon another,
a voyeur, listing appearance.

Following an asterisk, a trenchant reply.

15.

*The
possible
adheres,
appearing
to
yield.*

Conducting an artificial tense,
anticipation is scheduled, tenuous.

The air is a regulation without fear.

Certain of address
the needle is in place, counting
on the perpetuity of desire.

Where the road begins,
a thousand live underground
kept clean in the drift beneath florescent tubes.

What rest there is rests between,
in the glare that rushes along.

The sun is pushed farther away
and another occasion resets,
carrying the transition.

Paradise misses in a row of stoppages.

A mediating residue tugs at the remainder,
an imminent task of rust and sleep.

16.

*In
way
of
the
restricted
form,*

one question decides residence.

Lists detail the feast, the intimate
soul of defeated motion, that turning
replaces a wide expanse.

Barriers complete the charge, drawn-up
in the thread-like array. Directions

assert demands, the dissolving eye
what notices placed in the new life
includes the red of receding light.

17.

Desire
rides
the
gaze

practicing the formal upon
the form of withdrawal. Ending lines
compass a remark, within a concrete rail

a coat of below beneath the side
a picture perfected as a host for loss
that returns scheduling ease.

Enunciation, the fluid regards control
within the continuous advance of noise.
Sky covers road, the classical order

power following act to discharge
a mounting logic holding the desirable rate
in the flux of approaching motion.

18.

*Doubling
something
difficult
to
see*

in even one layer, the division acts
as an occasional track with hands.

Many windowless views rise above
look from below, knowledgeable.

The paper thread, the living, if only in
the length of time it has to contend.

Or book's passage. A wealth of planted tongues.
Structural. "Oh its special beauty."

And after thought the bright remains
at home, skin in a wealth of thirst.

Where was the curtain falling, or water
the ground happening instinctively.

Maintaining theory, friction, the numberless
set of none repeats its sum. Thanks you for arriving
is responsible for the pleasure
of mere residue, heavy in columns.

19.

*Pleasure
fixes
the
romance
of
tours,*

in the context of a spectacular show.

Identical hands,
the charge is often a shield above
appropriation, direction

responsible for the inevitable
the spoken, powerful
and with a tremendous knowledge.

Expedience wandering within,
disproven and unprovoked, as experience

that pens a response, the shadow day
seeming a legend of recollection.

Along highways, all of a piece
shadow of the tangential.

To assemble a lengthening wire
into a knotted whole. Provisional,
theater of doors, of hours.

20.

*Then
the
body
is
placed*

in the habitual city.

Occurrence through cavity, the opposite site
or words in its belief, a theory of substitution
annulled at intervals. Ceremony drifts

in the blank academy, hears in the remaining direction
a continuation, an integral line of air.

Admonition considers flesh, invests longing
the parallel performance sliding into mute order.

To meet head on, all that speaking, of the whole
marginality, assumes in a response of layers.

I as a link retrace, contract, practice seeing.

Desire

Next to falling, memory is the greatest of all occupations. Objections create a language to consume, an entity to create. Various more, we listen in the dark to thought after thought, and after rest, move between possibilities, formation and exchange, answering one for one in conception,

*The erotics of enforcement
seduces and consumes a
collective image of the
body. Insurgency embraces
the nutritionally perverse.*

absorption, necessity, the amulets of effect. Partitions converge in the narrow of approach, lengths of air in a day of fields. In the next moment, a following through entry, so much time emerges, beginning again with hands and recognition. Emerging, one gallery contains a book, one book contains a landscape. Descendants repeat themselves, capturing other than stream, or flood, the functional beauty of a single face. In the insertion of what seems to be a mouthpiece, there are millions of game show contestants. Where division bears me, an array of difficulties bare remains. A tunnel is written in circles, the developing crisis describing an envelope, a passion. The two of us are few in number, some occupying a valley, or a season. Let me tell you a story. Once, part of the moon slipped from the sky and fell to the earth. Hidden from view, the people who lived there glowed in the night. Pressed against such an invitation, the place we occupy is killing you. You misunderstand me. . . . Exposure, like the longer months, produces fullness and weight. Making holes in the work of secrets, presence drains up from the hands, lighting dreams of our mastery.

*On his death bed, Lee Atwater
expressed remorse for the
characterization of William
"Willie" Horton during the
1988 presidential election.*

Imaginary? Lying in arms of the given, rapt windings of spectacle are embracing, in the fortress of this finishing arcade. Whether I believe or not is an endless task, you camera we, one in the zero year. The sound of my listening covers . . . I know which garment waits but I cannot find it here.

*To be both absorbed and
absolved in this masquerade
is the double-dream of our
time and place.*

Senses replay in the inhabited fields of memory, stepping into view. A reflection with the force of motion, the eyes, a mouth, the inverted skin. While this slice was perfectly matched, I knew you, and then you were here. Who I thought to know before me was my twin, the present holding us both at birth. To only speak, to sleep in the wake

of night, a speech of speech kneels. The originating hour when we both were filled, banished in a filling age. Above, spread over me, you stop abruptly and continue, stop again and then fall, unaware. After the breath of postponement, your scent on the page. Now that these words have appeared, I find the night in the matin of your face. Each word is an echo, a light, a play of evidence and form. To thread past your sleeping figure, a joined silence, I thirst to replay my shadow and my nod. Failing sight, I am uplifted. All of my sheets of warmth, song to sing and return to.

*For the price of a movie rental,
you can help teach kids that
Michelangelo isn't a turtle.*

Grace, then, is a dangerous place to injure. Inside you glisten and turn, meadows opening out. And the falls hover above you, bringing hands to your ears. I was not speaking, and you did not listen, in the roaring beneath us, or the figure of our skin. Only one step stands between us: the stillness of

*The tension of an entirely
emergent realm increases our
preference for distances, even
as the rate of acceptance
promises the immediate.*

our mutual sight. On my back in the sand, on your side in the afternoon, you decline to drop your eyes, while mine wander at the horizon. At this moment, somewhere. Movements close to the soundless condition of present time, more possible than this spell. I am cared for by memory, something written in the custody of ash. Finality is a brittle veil, which I hope to remove from your face. A theory of frailty, disguised as an embrace of latitude, or the crime of breaking with your shaking arms. This is what I required, an arboreal hail of possible longing. As a ticket of debris paid against what came before, I refuse to cheat you *yes I see you know*. I have a taste for you, rolled on the blade of my tongue. I choose the splendor of appearance, and a willingness to dwell, where this chasm, too deep in the moss and rocks to secede, out-waits knowledge and matter. In the morning, care shoulders you like a single letter. I risk thinking of death, when you cover my hands with your face. There is water in our drifting sleep, and the lessons we take remain unfinished, reminders of our work.

*Legendary. Paris in the '20s.
Hollywood in the '40s. Legendary
writers, actors, adventurers with
style. All in their cotton khakis.
Casual. Elegant. Khakis just like
those we make for you.*

How do you imagine pleasure and passage — to position yourself while remaining unknown? Movement signals near as distance, a familiar guise. We are mammals in the boundaries of your legs, episodes of all you give birth to. Whether water, or nape, or involvement absorbing the view

*Almost without meaning it,
the person creates a visual
career. How often does the
version we know find comfort
in the person we see?*

of each, I prefer the sight of you, the density of your breathing and survival. Meaning resides in the resemblance of lamps to heat, a simple act of skin populated by evidence of sound. Here we are, gently adrift in the morning, pictures and disagreements leaving transparencies to arrive here, particles again. Never going far, the lands have lost their sight. Soon we come to recognize that a

delicate thinness embraces us, the series of hidden conditions I seem to offer. Can I follow these, arbiter in the bare furrows? The present thinks little of promises, futures being far too soon to consider. An occasion to remember, approximating what I've awaited, moves down to us, or to the ground, or outside into ourselves, to make the world safe for tears. Light breaks from our privacy, where what we see is not all in our sight. These hands and lore are beyond us, blessed, obscure, forgiven, all that this offering holds. At the end, turning on the barren floor, I think of you and find where momentum came in parts and voices fell. Nothing quite retains us. We begin again, to end enthralled. I write all night, and you never sleep, to listen while music, sick in the eyes, sings sweetly.

*In 1984, Gary Hart was a
credible challenge to Ronald
Reagan's reelection as
president, until Hart's
extramarital promiscuity was
made public by the media.*

Strolling out among the spectra. The devotees are mushroomed and disturbing. My quality of life waits for a bus, but it's fogged-in. I think I've found a plan ahead . . . do you see it where you are? She says "I am unsure. I am waiting for the bus with you." I am waiting for the bus with you.

*Where the confines of
limitation define, they
inadvertently describe and
thus negate who you are.
It's not personal.*

Tomorrow we were sitting in a nearby park, watching the lawn. Yesterday I will retrieve a letter from the foot of the stairs, and then wander off somewhere, perhaps to a series of patches we call "the ground." Whatever I want from the table is yours, machine part, legs, hands, abstractions. What are we protecting now? Titles next to another wall, the purely attributive without its attribution. Out

along the highway, huddled in the back of your car, here you are, within this photograph, the girl with the cigarette. This is my gift to you, an exchange between distant countries or the practice of light in shadow. We are separated by no other day than this, in a void of difference and completeness. . . . The picture explains everything, the floundering of details awash in action, the rounding of a deck in continuous pursuit, the mesmerized glow of collective experience slipping into sleep. Where have I seen you before, if not in my emptiness? Surface temperatures exceed the limits of the human, far below those levels needed for life. Finding your way through the toppled stones, each name carries an etched identity, no place any longer to exist.

*Sheer poetry. Our exclusive
ruffled chiffon sleepshirt is as
pretty as an evening blouse
(leave it up to her to decide
where she wears it).*

Everywhere is habit and possession, the whole of it equivalent to nothing, like the city-sky. We are left to sweat it out where we are, finding what we knew to know before. Stay in your sight, and we'll enter the cool, clear waters of reason together. When you've beheld, engaged, and competed

*There is no sense comparable
to expectation,
unless it be the clean smell
of betrayal.*

between details, receiving last, right, soften taken in arms, these interleaved, parquet moorings beneath our feet will anoint every glide, a harbor of sighs falling from this momentary world. Not having been outside for oh thirty or forty thousand years now, it almost always becomes, as the impossible drama seeds through,

a question of Why? There are so many theories of motion — stellar, cellular, orgasmic. I'm not sure which I favor, but I have to believe that *something* is occurring: expansion to dissipation; contraction and implosion; continuous but unexplained production; a stable distance, more or less just remaining here. In this strata of ours, the most recent accretions are memory and prediction, in a contrasting state. "If you strike a match while saying this prayer, your love will instantly appear." Note the nature of the instructions, how personal they are and how visually correct. Here begins a long string of invitations, some accepted, some declined, but all of them designed to serve you as their kin.

*If this is your dream . . . your hair curving
in, curling out shining, falling exactly the
way you want it to, giving you the guts to
go out and get what you want or who you
want, in this big wide world.*

I live with you in darkness, between the brightest of days. We are the unsubmissive country, beautiful in its decay. Dependent, my hands trace red, sustained in the traffic. A narrative breath, remaking a dream of heat, like poverty or the kindness of strangers, an alluvial emptying turning in the open

*Resolving the world into speech
only confines the probable, making
it more difficult to dream.*

fields. At the surface, absorption and escape. Beneath us, recognition, occupation and encounter, finding in the recesses of our disillusion that we are alive in the currents between us. Memory, the vice of renewal, and the obvious, specific location. Is it sufficient, this rendezvous, where inhabiting the past, as it does, you've often

asked, is it me?, . . . me. There is little seeming where there's little to be seen. Does it feel like a lover or a killing, the rich, shaking center of the abject? In a state of stable flux, going faster demands going slower, while only this remains to be seen. Among the grasses under our feet, I count the days. There comes an end to traces, as there already has been, silence where once there was presence. Even the skyline is higher than I saw it was, our intelligence and adaptability sharper than the present, and the limitless limits of scale.

*For all those who have their feet on the
ground, but find a lot of neat things to do
there. For all those for whom childbirth is
the continuation of an adventure, not the end.*

We present an automobile.

So there are four of us . . . you that I've known, you, and so on, uncovering and braided an initial substance. Our imagination of the city is whole, engaged and involving. In the next moment we are here with you. Is this too abstract to be held? There is religion in the voice, at the shaking root, on

*Cultures do not die merely
because they are told to die.
They must be methodically
killed, which takes time.*

the radio, and continuous growth into even the smallest towns. We're always welcomed here, most of the homes already having communication in the room with us. And now to begin the run, piloting a family of distant objects, the hand-me-downs of industry. Oh green story, signaling what is reasonable and feeling secure in

it too. Their stores in miniature, taken in circles of bone, water, stone. The kitchen is simple, just a stove, a sink, and a small wooden table by the window, you, the red and black sorrel parallel, opening like a hand. As though being unknown in the place of your birth. What did you look like before you were born? One, two, three, and then the story's concern with peculiar, spectacular degrees of excitement and

*Alluring lingerie may wow him
into bed, but once he's there,
it's up to your hair, makeup,
fragrance, to keep him aroused.*

splendor, here at hand beyond reach. Time speeds on. What I did on my vacation slides into summer, one blink at a time. Rereading this, I am speaking to you without knowing what follows the present. Most of what can be told is heard but not directly spoken, words met in the halls with little but origin.

But categories persist, and inherency drifts farther down the vine. Brisk isn't it, the brink. It happens to those who learn to speak, and then speak it. Hear what you're saying . . . you looked once before, what are you seeing? State of rest and a possibility that the stage, the play, brings up blinded history

How can we be enticed or threatened, except by the ultimately unsatisfactory device of brute force?

trussed at the knees in modest, self-pouring traits of residency. No, it is open on one position. We honor fate as the founder of these starved cities. No, it is opposition. Finding in directions all along, abundance in whatever is left, too few or too many depending on the night. They'll take it out in trade, coin of the realm. This is where the story begins to

repeat, with a visitor, deep in relief. And if there are no objectifications, I'll look to you for appearance, as do you. One touch is seldom as good as another, capacity and context to remain close by. They're fully alive in a self-describing form, charity grasping the lewdness while traffic mounts it, swimming in arousal and then releasing. Opulence awakens with you, the written eyeing of a song, and permanence, mimicry in the extreme. I've followed with my eyes, following your sight, playing and questioning in the wet surface, what was promised to be the accustomed place.

At the end of this case you will come to one conclusion: that a life is more valuable than a penis.

In the life of the body, practice swings like the king of clocks over troubling minutia. There is little to romanticize in its substance, but the cadence is useful. To make a new literature, theory must yield to the bow and let itself in. In kitchens, there can be no darker history than a forgotten one. In

*What I am saying is that the familiar
is always and again to leap into the
abyss of our helplessness.*

content, consonant unison on the fibrous plains. If only it was you I'd learned with this before me, as it's always been another there, or else who would I'd see? In hours we were leaning against each other in the salty flow, damp, idle, and prepared for concentration. Stand before your exclusive differences, the tactile strand, in differentiation. What begins to believe with was the stories captivated as children, attributes slipping in among our approaching majority. The abandoned reach of traces, peace following a secret, electric immolation. It was almost natural, coming as it did in a string of participating sound. If facts are stupid things, our hands have always enjoyed them. We continue to perpend the days between the present of our arrival and the moment of your sleep, while following behind.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

A thousand properties have become unveiled, foundling mortification and design, vaulting scarcity, degradation and conditional response, of stratification, bleeding and revived. The edges grow thin, decline, leaving the fabric behind. It's you who I thought I knew you were, and what's left of us.

*Putting a story next to hers,
the speech of those who have
no voice unites with those
who cannot hear.*

With the force of values bravely appeased, I've lapsed drunkenly into arrears. She says, I've barely chosen one . . . I'd rather you be encircled than defined. No not one, but one like no other; no, not nothing, but one from the start, born feverish. The present stepping, seeping allusion. And not without some effect, changing the water,

then the sky, and now look what you've done. It took time to drop to us, which explains all the afterlife in the basement absorbing details, telling stories. To be watching, being watched, fragments and strategies that hold us to the bone, the warm damp filtering through our pores. There are no rules, unlike other condensations, and the fire is certainly upon us. Found at night, in the dry at the top of a hill. It's established after the smooth, knotted silk is untied, the cloth of the body, drapery, and your fluid breathing, theaters of finery in all directions.

*They're coming. And someone has to stop
them. Millions of illegal aliens, flooding across
our borders. Demanding services. Taking jobs.
Threatening our way of life.*

You've held me to like a shell, listening. Have the sentences begun? Is there something to hear, or something too soon through, too soon to. After all, my theaters are in rehearsal, and all the halls are full. She was memory and possibility; he could not have imagined her beauty, nor the details. I'd

*. . . altogether justified in our
minds, accounting and
allowing for conflicting
ideologies and beliefs.*

have stopped with you in the same room, shuddering as we shared the seasons. We've applied ourselves, halfway into the cathedral, a disrobing centering on edges, telegraphed by your intentions. So explicit a settlement, basking in the night's breeze. With what we know, mutations must endure, leaving a persistent,

dispassionate existence. It's so excellent not being afraid. After nothing more than a squared circle accord, the specialty of another war on the heals. Then he came running on screen on the open road in a failed dash for freedom, still there was one more moment. Risk like stress is a necessity; bite an apple and then you bleed, or so the scars say. I don't know really, known to be part of the illusion. Meaning in a name, *not a habit*, 'ya know? Soon so close to zero, the effortless exactness of every perfect flaw. And you within a hand's breadth of pleasure, appropriately clear, sliding my fingers into a dream.

*The need to fight for recognition in
men's worlds is gone; men's worlds no
longer exist. Neither does the need for
the cosmetic equivalent of chain mail.*

Is it really that I should wait for you before?, without which there would be nothing at all. . . . Oh yeah, and I've decided to grow my hair long, as if you didn't do something, something, do you. I was waiting for the twilight to change, waiting for you. Watching an accession to grief, then retreating

*I cannot illustrate the tugging
represented, the harbor tied to
the places of service, the
methods and practice.*

from that solid, quiet tune. And what if we're wrong, stepping too late to forget, too much like a forgotten spring? The whole world fills an enigma, a step ahead of distraction in a target's eye. I saw you this night in a dream, again, reaching into my eyes. That being gone when I awoke is an imperfection, but on

whose part? It's an enormous world, bigger than this, and somehow different. Such a thing is beauty, I flinch whenever I hear the sound. Which is much too bright to beg, or even to begin . . . but if you give me some paper I'll sing for you, about the necessities of survival, the heat of it, now, while contingencies are deferred in the moment of arrival. Hand me a mirror and I'll see about the sun, brighter than the fingers on your locket. What is it worth to us, to lie here, baking? I'll trade you three lay-in-the-sun-baking-days for two clouds, a blue sky, and a moundfull of grass. Or aren't these really equivalent, prompting the pastoral, the fallacious and pathetic, to take a breath, breech and breathe.

*The body is sometimes exulted,
sometimes degraded, sometimes
simply presented as is, for the
world to see and understand.*

Shall we lower the curtain then, in order to explain the dark? You said, Turn down the light . . . I don't want to see you seeing my body . . . see my body in the dark. This is the information we carry, retinas, retinues from invisible worlds that penetrate and fill. I see you, and I want to be seen by

*So much pleasure sheds its skin
in our drive-by democracy, each
of the possible moments.*

what you see, to see what is seen by what sees you. The possible is a seemingly distant task, still the eclipse of reason makes our habits well worth sharing. Which may be, finally, not entirely possible. But the tendency to travel unveils even the most lavish

of apparitions, our codes and belongings, of our lives as selves, certain to reveal behind it an enormous mess of exquisite, elegant, difficult order. What am I to say? That my qualities of acceptance outstretch my qualities of design? Conversation hasn't changed significantly in the last 50,000 years. There's just been a refinement in the use of shadow, one of the more effective tools of architecture. Time, alerted by attention, becomes aware of the pretence to attachment. As it is, what moves will resent the assistance, which shouldn't be such a surprise. What would you do, hung by your fingers in the rain?

Fashion is shown in three distinct ways:

- a) It is photographed on professional models.*
- b) It is photographed on personalities.*
- c) It is drawn. Which method do you prefer?*

Are we all alive like this, strange kernels separated by grains of sand? One moment there is someone standing, and then fields of wheat spread along a gentle slope, fire after harvest, harvest before rain. There can be no belief stronger than itself . . . We only became like this after time, drenched in the

*There is a threshold of
perception where the viewer's
unquestioned experience
crosses over into her inability
to rely on what is real . . .*

shifting glow that leaks through tiny cracks in the door, signaling another transformation, one whose conclusions no one ever knows. Death is the greatest wilderness, never be no Golden Arches there. And in potentiality's continuation, the small, spectacular endings are far and away the most important, inarticulate and neurological as they may be. It's not as though

I don't know you, it's just that I don't, not yet. The predictive quality inherent in enunciation remains as mysterious now as at the moment it was first observed.

Singing of the future in the present, thought begins thinking itself out of an inner realm, the domain where our present habitation occurs in a subjective future, soon to become the objective past.

Empiricism . . . it's such an arouseable mélange that the best we

can hope to do is to see, connect, and then beget the most pleasurable designs, entering a vessel of incalculable tenderness. Volatile, I hang by a single, drifting thread, and the dampness of your thoughts, insight into a coral sea bringing me to the surface, the edges and gestures of my affection.

*. . . asking you to consider
the possibility that what is
seen is something other than
not entirely illusory.*

Life is short, justice long. But time passes whether you're enjoying yourself or not, so you might as well . . . you'll never be the same again. Time passes the way of sound sounding, hearing about people wanting things, even you. There's gold in these rocks, you can see it layered in the milky

*Understanding the pervasiveness
of need, people put things on the
street they no longer want, but
feel are still useful.*

quartz. Before the Spaniards came, placer deposits of gold lay in huge swaths along the sandbars of northern California rivers, washed down over the eons with other sediments from the Sierra Madre. For many thousands of years, this was of no particular interest to anyone. I suppose I'm speaking about

the past, but I never knew what you wanted, I never really understood. Or maybe it was you who didn't understand . . . I suppose it really doesn't matter now. To peacefully leave and never return, I think that would be nice. Only where is there to go? Far enough
away for another view, for another reason to. . . . Once, part of
the moon slipped from the sky and fell to the earth, as if every memory were enacted, and we would know a thousand different worlds. Where it is that you dissolved, if not divided somewhere between here, and who you have become.

Live in Prague for Free.

So we lived and lived, a passionate neglect elevating the realm of intimacy to stasis by fine degrees. The protected are also the guarded, prisoners of their own intricate design. And in all of it was the hand, the mirror. How can we ever expect to evade our own persistent grasp. . . . Will you meet me

*In the self-aware singularity of
incompressible distance,
change manifests as a
concealed ally of the present.*

again, in the cool shadows of the big rocks? Just before sunset . . . you remember the place. Like motion within the senses, the infinite is limited only by duration. There can be just so many examples of our endless capacity for phrasing. But we are not entirely sensible, quiet and short of breath. Or when we are alone,

we seldom notice how dependent we are, within the overwhelming lens of static friction. Can we hope to have any awareness of our divided present, reading and writing these words at different times? This blade displays a lack of striations, and a polish common to the harvesting of wheat stalks. To feel really, truly safe, an emergency response must precede the strategic event. That is, who is this one of stories, the one with the white-flour face who steals a person's fat to lubricate machines? Don't we know him, arriving with violence, taking without justice or compensation, isn't he rusting in the front yard between the weeds? Sunspots dot the horizon. . . . To survive the shock of entry into an abstraction, first close your eyes, and then look.

*Been there? Done that?
Try endocolonialism with High-
Power Microwaves, Infrasound
crowd-control and
Electromagnetic Pulse weapons.*

The necessity demanded is saying yes, *now*. But that single, decisive moment is so unrecognized, so final, with no chance to prepare. You're on your own to do what you'll do, with all intentions aside. In this context having a body is expected, a given of explicit, immediate presence. The

Existence is seen as entirely corpocentric, defined by the efficacy of our limbs and organs, and embodied in the capacity to move about quickly and with a degree of security.

question is unavoidable, though not critical. While matter is fundamental to material existence, there's barely a wisp of the stuff in much of phenomena. You said with some distress, I don't know how to talk about machines being somatosensory. Or when your arms are open whispers, I fall through reentering the world, like living monkey wrenching all the time. Ending up where we are, here among the last of the generations to make

it through in style, just when we've leaned against the lamppost, dressed for power, just then comes a dark, pouring rain. One day we would leap over that wall, climb the barbed wire fence, but at the time there was little evidence of the defiance that was soon to come. Anything different? We cannot live on the bread of television alone. Empty as we are, we've never broken stride within the fullness that we furnish, furnaces of wakefulness and sleep, crowds surging easily past the barricades.

Our deep cleansing formula penetrates as it protects, targeting tired, depleted cells to leave a brighter, fresher, healthier you.

Seeing her on the street, I didn't recognize how far the smoke had cleared. In joy and sadness . . . I had forgotten the child, and the adult appeared. It's always been that way, after time, for awhile. Where are we now, slung in a trench between the roadway and the ground? What does it mean?

These habits of mortality are a fragrant work, urgent tones of sleep, and daylight heated in rivulets. We swept into the warm air that surrounds us, and could not be seen at all. The light is a refuge, a daily reminder, the fading shade lacking for nothing in all the world around. After fear, a little past

Culture derives from an application of consciousness to experience . . . subjective, rapt and shared by everyone.

memory and the forgetfulness upon which we depend. Nothing else can be so apparent, never promising more than a now of moments. Undercut between the cloth, something precious is slipping away. You watch the climb of stories to a gloom alit on your forehead, among hands taping the certain tattoo of familiar

events. Soon, the repeated invention uncovering warmth, and a gentle exposure to arms. The colors you came to alone seem frail and pale with rage. There is nothing so solitary, nothing here for us to separate, or bid invisible in the infinite world. Sighs declaring boundary of luster, what is it you think about? The sand, the hourglass, the graceful flow of the most perpetual letters following resound. Something here in the time we have, a whole released and reached an opening that seeks us.

Just Say Yes

Afterword

Dan liked to joke that the title for his seven-book magnum opus, *culture*, seemed to promise everything and nothing. The one thing nearly all 20th century American poetry had in common was that it limited itself to the decidedly *human*—and Dan, a perpetual anthropology student at San Francisco State University, thought it was as funny as it was appropriate to point that out on the cover of his one-day-to-be-published work. He also liked the snobbery of it: “culture” (Dan had, after all, come up with the name of my then-wife Marta and my magazine: *Stifled Yawn: a magazine of contemporary writing*). But he ultimately meant *culture* in every sense of the word—including the transitive verb. The idea of growing something in a prepared medium wasn’t, frankly, very far off from Dan’s sense of art production. “Prepared medium” was a limit he recognized as almost inherent to the activity of art-making, but which he seemed to work his entire adult life attempting to extend—with at times astonishing results.

Although Dan never said this, it always seemed to me that his art, which included agit-prop buttons and flyers as well as poetry, was in some essential way intended to be a kind of site-specific, confrontational activity. He was semi-famous as the guy who sat near a freeway exit with a sign reading “Will vote Republican for food.” During the Gulf War Dan made up a batch of pins that read “Iraqi.” The idea was that you’d wear them in public—which I don’t think he convinced many of his friends to do, although he certainly wore one himself.¹ Although he had a fairly broad interest in the visual arts, Dan paid particular attention to heavily politicized practitioners like Barbara Kruger and Hans Haacke, and had a particularly strong interest in Jenny Holzer’s site-specific texts. More than anything else, Dan loved confrontation.

At one point in our friendship, I simply ceased going into neighborhood bodegas with him, because he consistently used the act of buying a candy bar or whatever as an opportunity to confront the clerk (often a teenager of color making minimum wage) about his/her direct support of capitalism. I never understood that portion of Dan’s project, which seemed to imply that, because he was on SSI and thus spared having to work some deadening retail gig, he wasn’t part of the capitalist matrix. Which I knew he wasn’t stupid enough to believe—“complicity” (including his own) being one of his favorite topics of discussion. So, where did he get off being confrontational with what some might see as *victims* of capitalism? In retrospect, I tend to think that Dan simply wanted himself and his art to exist in a state of total confrontation.²

* * *

Dan started *culture* in 1988 or 89, about a year or so after having had open-heart surgery to replace an infected valve. I think the constant “ticking” of the plastic heart valve—which you could even sometimes hear outdoors amid city noise—gave Dan a real sense of urgency, not to mention a sense of the limits of his own body (and therefore the limits of form in general). He became obsessed with the idea of writing a long “important” poem, one that would not only encompass as many aspects of “culture” as possible, but which would play with and extend ideas of form and artistic production. The first book, *Product*, was written from notes taken, as Dan liked to say, “in situ”—meaning, he would sit for hours in various malls and department stores in San Francisco, scribbling furiously into notebooks—which he seemed to see on

¹ Benjamin Friedlander recalls telling Dan he’d wear one if it read “Arab” or “Arabic”—Ben felt that if Dan’s point was to humanize the “enemy” it would be more accurate to refer to them as a people (Arabs) as opposed to a government (Iraq).

² The only people Dan spared his ongoing rap—I certainly was not inoculated against it—were bookstore clerks. It was hardly an arbitrary decision: Dan was such an incurable book junkie he simply couldn’t bring himself to compromise his access.

one hand as a site-specific project, and on the other as a kind of writing-by-osmosis. Later typing the raw material into his computer, Dan then ran the now digitized notes through a software program called “Breakdown” that had caught on with some of the younger Bay Area poets (myself included) in the late 80s. The program acted like an automatic cut & paste generator, taking text and spewing it out, in re-ordered syntax, endlessly. I remember paging through nearly a ream of paper at one point, filled with the computer-generated re-syntaxing of Dan’s department store notes. About a month or two later, the poem—largely mined from his “Breakdown” results—was complete. Marta and I published a portion of it in *Stifled Yawn*, and then the whole book (on recycled paper—a decision Dan and I made together), in 1991. I thought Dan’s idea to run three blurbs on the back to be—well, to be honest, *obnoxious*. I had the sense at that time that it was hypocritical to copyright your anti-capitalist poetry, much less blurb or advertise it. And *three* blurbs? It was barely more than a chapbook! But Dan was dead set on it, and felt that the blurbs were an important part of the “total package.” He laughed when he talked about them. Not that his arguments didn’t make sense; I just assumed the real reason for the blurbs was that, like almost everyone, he needed public validation.³ Dan later used the book as an “installation piece” in at least two different group shows. In one, curated by Laura Brun and others at San Francisco State University, Dan simply placed the book on a podium in the middle of the gallery. Again, the little cynic in me told me that this was more about Dan’s wanting people to know about his book than any statement he was making about what the book, finally, *was*.

In hindsight, I don’t think the gesture was completely selfish. Each new book of *culture* involved extending the work beyond its status as a poem or book (he published limited edition chapbooks of “notes” for *Image* and *Bureaucrat, my love.*, and made large fluorescent flyers out of the “insults” section of *An Account*), as well as manufacturing new “situations” out of which the writing was to be generated. The two exceptions to the latter being *Bureaucrat, my love.* and *Anomie* (which he originally planned to publish in mirror-direction type). Unlike *Product*, he didn’t throw himself into a manufactured situation to write either of these books; he probably felt it would be superfluous. He had been, after all, at the mercy of bureaucrats—who doled out his SSI and Medicaid benefits—the whole time I’d known him. Reading *Bureaucrat* now, I see the broken man Dan was, sitting endlessly in offices, waiting to resolve this or that red tape issue, simply so he could get medication, food, rent money:

“Who are you that I go out of my way? Lives intact and and my body into/ not something.
// I pay rent to a man of impeccable etiquette.// I write my name is a question ...”

In part given his own vantage point, but also from a general understanding of contemporary culture, Dan saw *anomie* and an unavoidable relationship with bureaucracy as the given human condition. “My love” was not simply an ironic usage of the phrase, but a sense of that being one’s *primary relationship*. It was, after all, his own.

The other four books—*An Account*, *Transit*, *Image* and *Desire*—each had their own special “situations” Dan created to write out of, as well as general areas of contemporary culture he used each to explore. The most vivid of these in my memory is *Desire*, for which Dan amassed a sizeable collection of women’s beauty magazines. I remember coming over one day and, as he opened the door to his room and ushered me in, being confronted with an overwhelming toxic smell so strong that I just assumed there had been a chemical leak somewhere nearby. Dan had some fifty-sixty beauty magazines, open to various pages—the room was filled with dozens of different perfume samples all competing for airspace at once. I don’t think I lasted five minutes before begging Dan to let me treat him to a burrito. As we took off to the Mission district, Dan joked that he had been living like this for more than a month, writing much of

³ As it turned out, *Product* was the only book Dan published in his lifetime that had blurbs—although a collaboration he’d done with Tom Mandel, *Absence Sensorium*, published a month after his death, included one from George Lakoff, as well as a blurb attributed to “David Thomas Son-El”—an obvious amalgamation of the authors.

Desire inhaling these toxic “fragrances” as though they were opium. Like all of Dan’s jokes, he wasn’t entirely kidding. After all, he really *was* filling himself with toxic perfumes and “writing out of them”—even if that was merely a side effect of working with some of the source material.

I often wondered how much writing poetry was in part an excuse to collect “source material” that Dan wanted to have around the house anyway. Dan made similar forays into mass media (*An Account*) and art and culture theory discourse (*Image*), which in both instances meant collecting more books and magazines (as well as watching movies and television). Not only that, but one of his ongoing visual art projects, which he liked to call “The Family of Man,” was a series of albums filled with photographs he would find on the street.⁴ Because he was exceptionally poor, hoarding things seemed to become one of a series of survival skills.

* * *

The copy of the completed *culture* that I have was inscribed to me on May 15, 1995—and I think Dan put it together very soon after having completed work on the book. So it’s a reasonable guess that the project took about six or seven years from start to finish. It wasn’t the only art Dan worked on in the early 90s, but I don’t think he wrote much other poetry during this period. His life became this book—friends of his, myself included, can testify that there were long periods where he couldn’t, or wouldn’t, talk about anything else. He approached the book almost more like a method actor than a poet—the book for him being more of an event or conceptual art project in many ways than “pure poetry.” That, in part, may have been a “Bay Area thing”—it seemed like everyone there in the early 90s had a long project they were always in the middle of. But Dan took his to extremes. Who else had the audacity to call their project “culture”? Who else was putting up flyers from one poem around the city, publishing notes to another, installing yet another in a gallery art show and, at least in his early conception of the project, publishing one of the poems backwards, forcing the reader to literally “coax” a reading out of *Anomie* by holding it up to a mirror.

Reading through *culture* today, the book is so much cleaner, more obvious, more haunting, more *on* than I’d remembered it. I can’t imagine what any other reader’s experience with this will be. With any luck, I’ve been able to offer one or two anecdotes that may shed some light on the life that produced this incredible document, this truly extraordinary work of art.

Gary Sullivan

⁴ Dan and I looked through these volumes numerous times, and just recently Dodie Bellamy sent me a paragraph from a journal wherein she describes going through one of Dan’s found photo albums: “I got a burrito to go and dropped in on Dan. He made me a cup of herb tea as I ate my burrito at his kitchen table. He showed me the dried shark hanging on the back porch then asked me if I wanted to see the latest in his album of found photographs. Having been immersed in the Dark Side of Passion it felt so good to be bland, innocently sitting on Dan’s living room floor beneath a campy 50’s lamp that looks like something I would own, examining page after page of unidentifiable smiling faces, party snapshots of people we’ll never meet, an amateur copy of an Edward Weston nude her back curled like a bell pepper, bad chemicals creating psychedelic metallic effects, some pictures ripped in little pieces or more often in two, a woman framed by a jagged white line where the other half of a couple used to be a bit of his striped left shoulder having survived the rupture: disjunct artifacts without a narrative line like sex with too many strangers, we are silenced before their inaccessible histories.”