

"If god had form, it would be circle"

- Joanna Storm
age 16

august 5th, 1985

my first action upon waking is to ~~f~~ f e e l my
teeth with my tongue. they erode exponentially
near the
gums;
they are the antique hourglass museum
trickling grains ~~ix~~ in unison toward a
cavity coated casket.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

I am supposed to refrain from
indulging such...
morose thoughts -
m. says I must, and with
increasing frequency.

the likelihood is
it's a simple case; I over-think everything, examine
all external stimuli like a small sculpture
but from angles that do not exist.
oh, like angels cast in the fires.

my mouth, perpetually dry, causes my tongue to
accumulate astounding amounts of bacteria whilst I
unconsciously demonstrate textbook symptoms of sleep
apnea. presumably this is the explanation for my heightened
sense of decay - I've been assured that if I were to
analyze my asymmetrical "assets" in the mirror I would
see my molars mangled and stained, but no more so than
months ago. regardless of such promises, I almost always
attempt aversion of my anterior self from facing future
failings.



I trust not appearance.
hollowed out
unhygienic
funeral.

next step:
gesticulate at empty companion sheets.

Minerva in the kitchen, voice barely perceptible.

I reach for synthetic companion left on the
nightstand by last night's Alan.

Hermes, the swift foot and mind.

I do not need them, legally speaking, but
Holy Hartnell do they help me through
the days

&

 nights.

my preferred hours of creation,

 the night time.

enfolded in the cloak of dusk, I roam the streets
unfettered by societal obligation;

THE PUBLIC

&

 THE ADMISSION PRICE,

"what splendid cumulus clouds coating christ's
domain!"

Other, more violent crumbs cling to the cloak, yes,
may leap out from shadow hoping to harangue and harm
somebody with something, but I am nobody, with
naught but a tobacco pouch and a mind muddled
with half-insane theories. besides, I'd rather die
than agree upon apodictic ~~xxx~~ atmospheric conditions
again.

Hermes makes these inevitable daylight
dialogues tolerable, makes my evenings more
productive, helps me make up for time lost in
vapidity - time better spent writing or painting or
splicing tape or staring at the lint lounging in
the corner of my living room carpet. choosing to
leave it, giving me the option of cleaning it
tomorrow, when I will inevitably decide to leave it
again.

 it's the little freedoms
 you need sometimes.

"freedom".

the ability to choose.
I still need a nest to nurture
my idle dust-bunny, a place to piss in private;
to have that you must manage other people,
their trash & troubles
one in the same.

there's not much you can do otherwise.

my mother used to call it

"PLAYING THE GAME" -
tirelessly told the revolting teen I'd been,
"Alan, sometimes you just have to play the game."
infuriating when I didn't choose to play anything.

my father once forced my brother and I to stay awake
until three in the morning at a cheap motel,
playing two goddamn games of monopoly
until he won. I despised the entire scenario.

Holy Hartnell

I wish I would've won

(just to spite him),

not ~~just~~ simply submitted to

The (self-appointed) King

with the rest of the room, but alas I have always
been and will probably always be

a coward.

"coward".

aware enough to realize the structural flaws
and that renovations are required,
but terrified that the tower

could collapse in
self-defense.

I am a mole who flees his hill
only to perpetually ponder on
the probability of my

prescriptions'

poor quality.

have I not truly faced a

mountain?

I am

The Shaking Fist of Sisyphus

and

His Stilled Tongue.

L A T E R ** -

I depart for my daily
walk to work
after kissing
M.,
accepting a sack lunch,
and lovingly listening
to The Lady
laugh at the phrase
"sack lunch"
for five consecutive minutes.

carrying my coffee out the door always feels like a last meal or the remnants of one. the sun peeks out briefly from behind a cloud to remind me that I should've been a member of the drama club in high school. there's some sort of reluctant struggle between my brain and feet on the second step as my muscles attempt a rebellion against reason half-heartedly, as if today is the day I decide to forget my employments' obligations and unfortunate neccessity, but it never is.

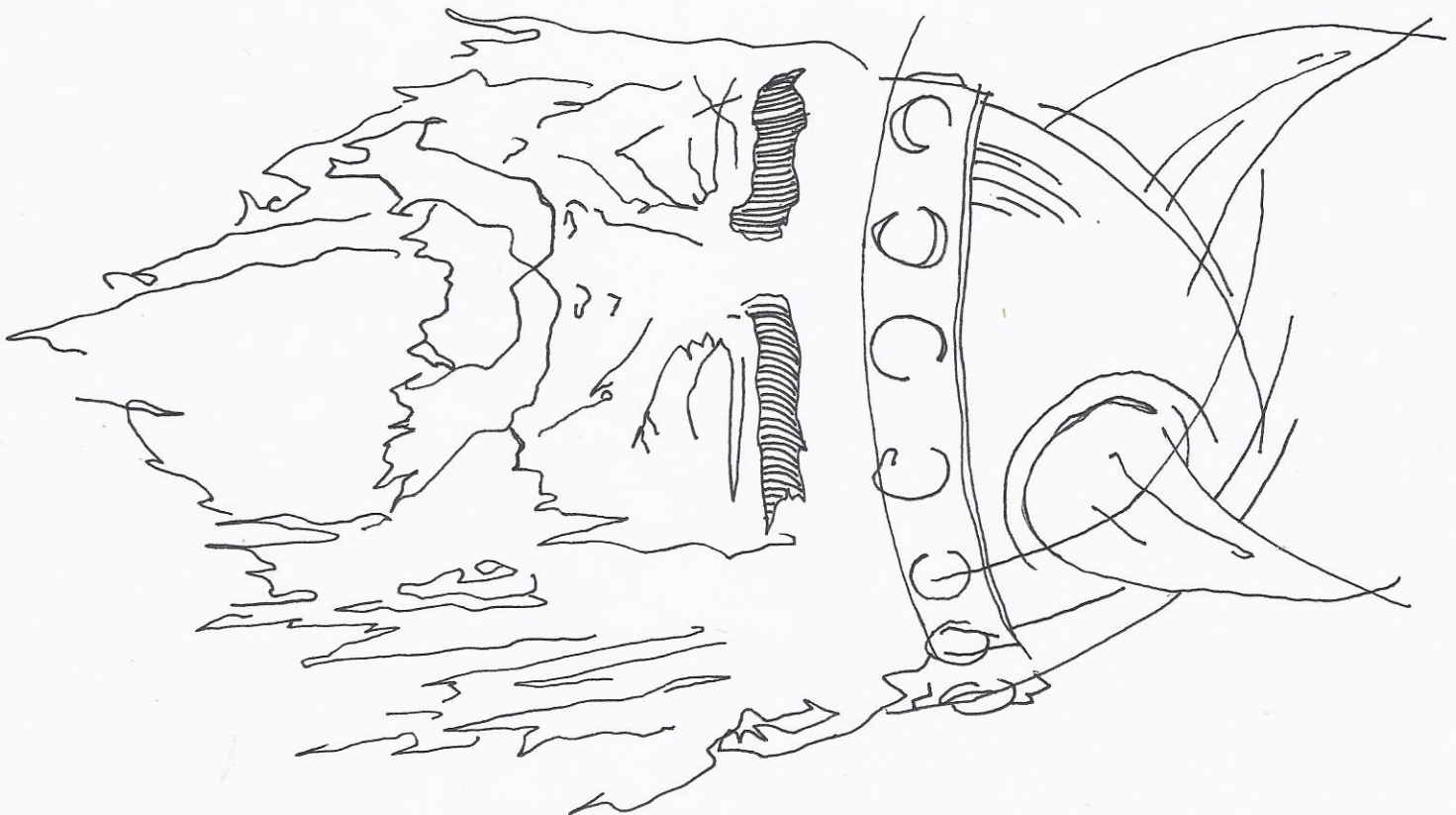
it never is.

why must so many miniscule moments remind me of my seeming inability to work with the ways of this world, forcibly drag me into a dancehall to tango with despair?

I depress myself, perhaps.
in my eternal impatience (~~subconsciously~~ I feel the need
for instant results. I blame a culture of self-help books
and fast food "restaurants".), I reach into my pocket and
break off half a leg from a Herm, swallow it with the
dregs of my coffee. ~~I~~ I'm unsure of whether it's the
chemical solution or the long-term effects of gradually
gained sleep deprivation that make it so, but the action
alone of ingesting the messenger raises my spirits, if in
a merely anticipatory capacity. it's better than nothing,
which is enviable in a world where I generally prefer the
nothing.

my sister once, in a discussion of her religious beliefs,
informed me that I have none of my own; she was partially
correct, but her phrasing was far too vague to accurately
describe my position on such matters. I'm no ~~atheist~~
atheist champion, ~~xx~~ nor am I a morality-free nihilist
(not that lack of morals is a prerequisite of nihilism);
I believe there is a universally proper and improper way
to conduct yourself in relation to others, that you
shouldn't murder or rape or...pillage villages.

let my official spiritual stance
henceforth be known ~~as~~ ~~xxx~~ as
A N T I * V I K I N G ,
subject to change.



this is what it means, though, to say I don't believe in anything -

I don't trust the very fabric of reality,
down to the microfibers.

I don't believe there is a god,
but if I were to be accosted by her
at my local watering-hole
and she,
to prove her divinity,
turned the bars' beer into water,
I would be far more irritated than astounded.

I dislike conspiracy theorists
and their minimally researched
claims,
but if this entire city had been created
entirely to accomodate my eventual birth
so it would have the pleasure of
systematically steering me to
suicide,
I would say that I almost expected it.

...

I don't though, really, it's a ~~pre~~
preposterous notion -
but to be fair,
so was the idea that these ink stained
slices of wood pulp could transmit
the intangible,
once.

if this typewriter were
to disappear from
beneath my stuttering finger tips,
never to be utilized again,
I could only shrug,
bewildered for the moment.

this overwhelming sensation,
this feeling of being unable
to

actually
grasp
the bones of
the

~~XXXXXXXX~~
N A T U R A L
W A Y O F
" T H I N G S "

and that the

L A W S

governing
the whole of
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
Nobody's
are

C R E A T I O N

S U B J E C T
T O
~~XXXXXXXX~~
C H A N G E - *

it
imposes
itself
like
this:

01. I need to sleep.

02. I am asleep now.

03. I am dreaming

I am on a porch, coated with cigarette ash and the discarded
limbs of long-gone ladybugs, talking with a tall, long-necked
prostitute;
she calls me "baby" and lets me squeeze her left breast.
it's small,
saggy,
stricken with
stretchmarks -
she must be a mother,
supporting her son

(says I who hold out in hope for humanity)

the giraffe's remaining skin is pulled taut over veins that
pulse with blood ~~in~~ already coagulating due to needle holes
refusing to close out of practicality.

she must be an addict,
supporting her habit

(says I whom observes with jaded lenses)

I give her every cent I have, and she walks away four dollars
richer. I go inside the house and there is a change;
I am in an icecream shoppe I've worked at for years,
the owner points me toward the employee schedule and
it is inscribed with non-numerical scratchings ~~and~~
~~d~~ for days that do not exist.

a voice way back in my mind insists
that something is off, that this isn't how

T H I N G S

are supposed to be, but it is weak and swiftly silenced
by the need to accept my surroundings.

I work all day and night.

04. I wake up somewhere
else entirely.

my mug, now drained of it's mission, is cumbersome to hold and yearns to rest in my backpack alongside the myriad papers it ~~holds~~ protects like refugees from once great forests; I pause at a bus stop in front of a woman's health clinic to deposit ~~the~~ it and withdraw my tobacco, hoping for a minute's rest.

as I lean against the clinic wall to support my slide down to concrete

I notice a woman standing at the corner,
waiting for public transit.

poorly cut gray hair

dark, heavily tinted glasses and

what appears to be a rainforest themed scrubs

she spares me from a singular look, or so I think,

and I feel safe from potential tedium until

she suddenly (though still without facing toward me) says,

"sure wish I could sit like that..."

of course, my back won't let me."

innocuous sentiments from an elder stranger.

fuck.



fleeing politely is not an option,
as we all know,
and I become muzzled by an airborne spiderweb
synthesized silk soliloquy's son.
she scrawls her medical history and interwoven tragedies
onto my synapses, and it is a curious tale.

hepatitis b from an infected blood bag in '79...

a wedding night spent in a hospital bed^x;

repeated cataract removal that lead to

being legally recognized as blind.

this would explain her lack of visual contact ^x and
questionable fashion sense.

hey, maybe I'm legally blind too

this information is relayed to me at a
cross-country clip,
hits me like a javelin with concise and
pointed phrases.

with the tank finally exhausted,
I stand and mumble my desire that she have
a pleasant day

make my move onward to
journey's end.

with the woman and her words behind me,
I am slowly swept into a delightful disposition.
upon reflection, I realized that I had
actually appreciated her choice to
~~RM~~engage me in conversation,
however one-sided it may have been.

my respect was examined and found to be for
reasons
two-fold:

firstly,
that the thoughts tossed toward me were
of a serious, meaningful sort -
she, to a complete stranger, conveyed
emotionally drenched snippets of her
existence,
moments that undoubtedly altered her being
with drastic, far reaching fingers.
perhaps the essentially anonymous nature of
the street social soothes secrets,
coaxes the throat into secreting *
ideas typically reserved for
nightmare somniloquence.

secondly,
the manner in which she delivered the dialogue
was damn near robotic -
calculated, clambering ~~fx~~ out from her
vocal chords ~~x~~
already formed,
like a ~~x~~thread pulled from clothing who's
departure only served to ~~xxxxxx~~strengthen
the shirt.

a far cry from the vapid clouds of conversation
cast over every gathering of humanity.

awash in a bath of amiability,
I turn back for a ~~glance~~
~~glance~~
chance to glance at the
~~serene serene~~ woman who...
burst into my consciousness
with force enough to mutate
multiple paradigms
(though which patterns she shifted I cannot say definitively)
with a mere five minutes of speech.

she seems so serene and saintly,
staring without seeing -
I can't suppress a smile that
spreads from sun to street

a n d d d

s i m u l t a n e o u s l y , s h e s h u d d e r s s s s s

though she is facing the road and unable to see me, the
coincidence is chilling.

her head cocks to the side, suddenly showing suspicion or
some similar storm's genesis

she looks to her right

traffic twisting through time

she looks to her left

the trigiday transit
approaching with
steadfast speed

she yawns

she seems bored now

or possibly exhausted

without warning she becomes a diseased dog and walks with wide
steps into the road

the bus she'd been standing
in anticipation of for the
~~the~~ p r e v i o u s ~~the~~
pages smashes into her frail
form

no time to even attempt
avoiding her or braking

once vital organs are dispensed from punctured skin across
pavement and vehicle and
persons and psyche and
purse and paper

first land loaves of stale skin laced with liverspots

then veins violently vacate the vicinity
spraying hemoglobin in lieu of champagne
like the birthday girl's glitter

a bloody bath that rests on the bus stop bench
inviting her right eyeball to marinate before the
désintegration truly sets in

the eye accepts

escapes it's home on stretched string
the devil's yo-yo

1. I feel sick
2. I am sick.
3. I become sick

my vomit joins the pessimistic painter's palette

everything swirls together

I become irreperably confused

I am the imparting departed dead in an intersection

I am the faceless driver

swept away in an instant

carried upon currents

caressed by

The City.

no, I am the feral cat licking life off spilled purse insides.

NO , NO .

I am alan. yes.

alan again
and again
and again
run toward cat speaking and again
it's language and again
and again
enraged.

flight of the feline, furious

my stubby bones retrieve this piece of the deceased's debris

a cold core of metal

an exoskeleton of internal fluid

everything swirls together.

4. I wake up somewhere
else entirely.

august fifth, 1985

my first action upon waking is to f e e l my teeth with my
tongue before ~~xxxx~~ scratching at enamel with a trembling
index finger. they dutifully dissolve
day by day

they are the hourglass
~~xxxx~~ shook by sugars,
flipped at womb
vacation,
counting down from one
chapter's end to the

N E X T ' S .

as with every bodily examination,
they bring me back to essence of
organic matter - the simple fact
that atrophy attacks all living
creatures, regardless of attempts to stymie
it's domination, even after it's
dealt the final card of death.

I feel like I'm dying.
we all do, don't we?
the whole city,
maybe beyond.

a catastrophic state of affairs, to be sure.

I leave ~~h~~

blanket's warmth to

stare into my own eyes

exhausted

and my gut ~~gixxx~~ gives me

the impression

I will be vomiting soon

I don't understand why

XXXXX
XXXXX

next step: take a stimulant to chase the various pains away,
to make my muscles feel functional again.

feel,
feel,
feel.

I go sit in the kitchen,
head in my handss
defenders against the sun's rays.
they seem unnatural, surreal -
so does my chair.
I am doubled over vertically

I am sunken in further than the
laws of mass allow possible

I occupy the same space as the chair
or I've moved it in a way that's
imperceptible /// impossible.

????????????????????????????????????
??why do I start my mornings??
??convinced of such nonsense??
????????????????????????????????????

m. brings me a cup of coffee,
quickly plants her lips on
my forehead,
walks off to an ~~XXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXX~~ unknown corner of the
apt.,

silent with a phone
held to her ear the
entire time.

I assume with a relative,
but I have not the time
to play sleuth.

I grab my backpack
and head for the d
door.

as I cross the threshold
I hear her laugh and say
something about, "lunch".

I wonder again who's
on the other end -

who makes her happy?

out the door.
on the porch.
simple enough
but on the steps I find myself halted,
hesitant.

was I not just in this same position,
preparing myself for a day of mundane
trivia, hazing my soul so when their
hammers hit the head, the nail
stays straight?

to be fair to time, it always does.

it always does.

just waking up.

just about to head out.

just about to be home.

just a compartment for model unit no. 340
to half-charge batteries between shifts.
a full charge allowed after every ~~paycheck~~
paycheck, for forty-eight hours -
just enough time to make rebooting
a pain disgustingly sharp.

they haven't discovered a surefire way to
rid the machine of it's ghost, otherwise
we'd all have disappeared a long time ago.
undoubtedly ~~they're~~ they're attempting to now,
using blue guinea pigs in stained button-ups.

why must every ~~movement~~ movement remind me of my unfruitful
attempts at obedience to this world of faceless, overweight
kittens and isolate my perception of

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

The City's
true
conditions?

I can't help but
feel entirely alone.

I isolate myself, perhaps.
in my cyclical frustration (in regards to my natural
dispositionx), I make dubious decisions. in this moment,
that decision is to dismember a Herm, and I swallow the
short-term solution with what remains of my daily beverage.

get my blood pumping

get my thoughts whirring

with any luck,
stabilize my mood

not that I believe in luck

not that I don't believe in luck

maybe I'll buy a lottery ticket later

I probably won't, I didn't
yesterday ?

my mug, now stripped of purpose, whispers weakly ~~for~~ for
knapsack cloth caress, so I take pause at a bus-stop,
located about halfway between my work and my apartment.
I sit down against ~~a~~ ~~the~~ the closest wall, remove my shoes,
let my footsies breathe outside my shoe's confining cover.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

a woman walks past, stops near the shuttle sign;
she does not acknowledge me. I am thankful for this
miniature providence but she will never learn so.

she ~~xxx~~ speaks rapid spanish to an energetic child of about
twelve who bounces around the pavement whilst holding an
uncrumpled paper bag. I notice the corner is in danger of
ripping and spilling it's contents like a gutted animal,
but ~~XX~~ I'm sure he's aware, having handled many bags before
this one. they all rip eventually. rippreparation is
standard procedure from ages ~~9~~ nine to seventeen around here.

I forgot my meal in the refridgerator, I realize, but it
doesn't matter much, as in all likelihood I wouldn't have
eaten it anyways...lack of appetite. quite the prominent
side effect. makes my ribs stick out from my skin's curtain
like feet under a blanket.

accidentally make eye contact with the hispanic mother and
attempt to hide inside my backpack next to my
papers and pens and cigarettes,
snuggle against my figurine lounging in accumulated detritus.
the figurine...it lingers in my palm with a familiar grip;
while I don't recall laying eyes upon it before, I have no
distinct memory ~~XX~~ that could contradict the claim that I've
been the figurine possessor since birth or soon after.

I examine the figurine in the sunlight.

metallic muscles

skin of red...paint?
almost completely
faded away

I'd estimate roughly five, six inches tall

visage of the stoic
or of the fauxstoic
male

eyes vague and undefined

feet firmly fixed to
his cast locale,
unable to move
an inch from
where genesis placed
him, by chance or
by design. by chance
design would be most
accurate.

I feel for him.
more accurately, I feel for myself
reflected in
him. through
him.

I need to leave this place,
immediately.

I leave.
a cat follows me for some distance, it's presence disturbs me
for reasons unclear - everything is swaddled in fog until
Hermes gets here. He arrives a few minutes into my shift, I
welcome him with a sigh and a snuck smoke.

the day is uneventful.

A F T E R W O R K

I arrive at my apartment to ~~a~~ find myself alone and my mood swings with the door. I kick a dustbunny in frustration. I'd like to switch it all off, it feels wrong.

feel,
feel,
feel.

I sit on the living room couch; it is comforting in the way ~~a~~ one might find a lover whom they believe to be unfit for public acknowledgement. staring at the figurine I've planted on the table for ~~at~~ ~~xx~~ an hour, minimum, and pondering it's origins /// my future.

stuck thinking about being stuck
stuck in my plots to become unstuck
I am the web coated fly unable to
accept the forthcoming removal of
my innards.

stomach already weak from lack of sustenance, this image causes me to dry heave until a few droplets of acidic fluid force their way up my asophagus and out of my mouth - I confess to not being much of an arachnid enthusiast, though I've found myself rather enamored with one before. a spiderfan, not a spider.

where'd that go?

safety and lack of courage, I think. you can only vandalize so many properties before you become either a wrecking ball or an architect, and there's a moment prior to your decision where you can't enter any homes at all for fear of making some irreversible mistake.

I say "you", but I mean "me".
I'm afraid nothing is absolute -
perhaps the events transpired
in a completely different fashion,
or with entirely opposite motives.

still, I consider it the greatest gift I've ever given, and if I were asked my two biggest regrets,
I would say that my ceasing to pursue that woman is foremost,
and the use of the word "footsies" a couple pages back as a close second.

in a world of oddities, the ability for humans to distort memories under the command of subconscious whim rests in the upper echelon of bizarre reality.

this skill, if one could call it that, encompasses all of past retention -

memories of a mere second ago

of a minute just passed

of hallways

dimly lit

that become ssttrroobbøe lliigghhtt

labryinths once escaped,

the minotaur fresh off your heels.

I clean myself of stomach acid

change my rancid shirt

and decide that I'm actually going to buy that lottery ticket

to hell with my past and probable futures.

while walking down the street with a cigarette in hand, my head turned inward to staunch the blows from wind's fist, I pass two homeless men shoved into a crumbling corner of The City, deep in destitute dialog.

segments of their sentences imitated dead leaves upon a lake, intended meanings altered by omission - words sunken to the lowest 'pelagic and abandoned by all ears present for the capsizing.

"...a puppy, no, but a raccoon's muscle, all dark grease..."

"...Israel weigh one fifty-six..."

I use such vocaltrash as an auditory Rorshach test, move onward with soon-forgotten interpretations.

on chilly treks like this I have nothing but sympathy for the men, abandoned by their fellow citizens. not those who choose to hold a sign instead of contributing in some way; I've done similar to fill gas tanks while travelling east, and it's far more lucrative than the uninitiated would expect. I feel sympathy for those on concrete who struggle with mental illness and physical disability, whom have fallen through the cracks of society, or through unwillingness to seek assistance lowered themselves down.

why do borgeous law makers keep down proposals that aid the streetsleeper?

I suspect one reason is to keep color ~~in~~ on the corner and in the conversation during those annual pilgrimages ~~to downtown art competitions~~ to downtown art competitions - nauseating middle class orgies held on vast canvases painted with kitsch in plain view of we poor and poorer, gazing in simultaneous horror and longing.

I amuse myself the rest of my journey to the cornerstore walk by imagining the participants and their

grand, self-inflating statements.

a man in a designer jacket pining for a vintage red
arm entwined with the arm of
a woman who is a sort of canvas herself
caked in makeup to hide the lines
developed by years of
worrying about the necessity of
hiding the lines from other's view

they walk past the homeless men
The Grand Man would tut and say something like
"what downtrodden chaps! somebody should help them."

when the men shamble up to them
palms naked and hopeful
The Grand Woman would let out a small ~~shriek~~
shriek

and say
"get back you rugged vagabond
 you urban primitive
 you wasted brute
I have no change
I only carry circular metal in
my pocket
when I'm hiding my wedding ring
on trysts such as this."

they would hasten to

the warmth of

regentrification

and

exclusive whiskey bars.

people are strange.

humming old sixties songs,
I enter the store.

the lighting is dim; either faulty bulbs or owner preference
hold it at a gentle glow to peruse overpriced products under.
I'll pay more to support local, though my patronage is for
reasons more selfish than economic.

the storekeeper recognizes me but keeps ~~acknowledgement~~
acknowledgement to a familiar nod.

it's substantially cheaper to shop at the supermarket chains,
but at Trigiday's (the nearest of such businesses to my home)
you quickly get lost in a blizzard of people ignoring people,
pretending you're the monster in the closet as they ring up
your goods -

you're just a number and commodity displacement device.

ah, what tormenting contradictions!

I don't wish to be spoken to,
but to be almost entirely ignored during
trans- /// inter-
action

as if it is a meeting between two separate phylums?

well, that is more than one can oftentimes bear -
especially if one is tuned to every
subtle, devastating nuance of the human condition,
or at least believes they can interpret
all actions by ~~arduous~~ arduous analysis afterwards.

~~the~~

the corner store head nod is the nearest to my ideal exchange
that I've found in this wretched synthetic forest,
so Chandra (the owner) ~~has~~ has my dollar.

exclusively, no,
but I am absolute in my dedication to avoiding other markets
unless required by product selection or M.'s wishes.

"you can't live off of potato chips and craft beer alone, ~~in~~
love."

as I bring my bag of chips and six-pack to the counter, I notice a muffled voice emanating from some unknown quadrant of the building. it seems to be pleading with 'Sean' to let him either in ~~xxx~~ or out; I can't hear well enough to discern which.

I assume that Sean is meant to be Chandra; I dislike the way the voice took a beautiful hindi name and shortened it into a more western masculine, anglicised title.

globalization may be the death of us all.

"make way for a new era of Johns, Joes, and Jims!"

"to the gallows with the gentiles!"

I assume much about this mystery man and his disposition in regards to race and title, but it matters not; he'll never know my thoughts, I'll never be disproved, and the planet shall continue on with it's revolutions while our own attempts stumble in peat bog. it'll be as if I made the whole incident up merely to ~~xxxxxx~~ entertain myself.

I didn't though, for the record.

I'm without a doubt recalling it incorrectly, but you know, strobe light hallways.

it's only after ~~xx~~
I've purchased my snacks,
walked home,
locked the door,
relieved myself,
sat on the couch,
and coerced a ~~xxxx~~ bottle top to yield to my makeshift cap removal apparatus
that I realize what had truly gone awry.

I didn't purchase a lottery ticket.

I didn't get the damn ticket!

the realization strikes me like the inflatable, carnival prize hammer of Gelos and I'm overcome with laughter; laughter that wouldn't be out of place in a theatre playing one of those ridiculous slapstick comedies I detest so intensely.

veritable guffaws fall unbidden from my mouth and I become aware of how stupid I sound, how judgemental I would be were I to hear my laugh replicated by some anonymous being in the cinema dark. this only redoubles my merriment, and my mania, no longer content to be expressed through vocal chords alone, plays me for a ragdoll that promptly knocks the beer bottle over on my living room table, soaking notebooks and day-old candy wrappers alike.

my laughter subsides as the pool grows; I observe how delicately it absorbs the table's rubbish - it creeps up swiftly and envelops the paper ~~ix~~ not dissimilar to the way in which gallium infests aluminum foil. when they bond they form an alloy which is extremely weak, and shockingly easy to tear apart. the beer ~~fixed~~ soaked paper becomes similarly fragile, a newborn's neck resigned to the fate cast by

N O H A N D

and seen by

N O I M P O R T A N T C O R N E A .

stray dog hairs from my mother's last visit float in the ~~spix~~ spill

paddleboats adrift in the waters

fleas in head to toe lace
holding microscopic,
twirling parasols

in the midst of this small-scale chaos stands the figurine, acting as solitary watchman and island, exchanging powerless expressions with ~~me~~ me on the couch.

I clink a fresh bottle against his head as a toast, say, "to old habits! may we die young in escape." take a healthy gulp of my drink, then stand up with intentions to clean up the mess and take a smidge more stimulants.

however, when my legs have extended fully and my body has
readied itself for action,
I am overcome with a brief full-body paralysis that starts
simultaneously at the top of my skull and the soles of my ~~feet~~
feet,
meeting in the middle with a sensational crunching as if I
had transformed into a mammalian spirit garbage compactor.

do I grab my drugs or clean the beer up first?

I am frozen with indecision over such meaningless tasks.

it isn't the pointlessness, exactly, that halts me,
but the equal pointlessness of the two gestures.

neither is more urgent than the other,
for my body and the table are equally saturated with a ~~chemical~~
chemical to be addressed in the upcoming clock ticks and only
thirty or so seconds would separate their completion.

looking around desperately,
I see a coin and seize an answer -

let chance decide!

it's always worked out splendidly for me in the past.

limbs once again supple, I flick the quarter into the air,
watch it spin like a thrown tire heading toward it's
inevitable end.

I make no effort to catch it when it descends,
just await the outcome with bated breath
and revel in my lack of choice.

it lands with a subtle splash.

the currency gives it's answer,
a child coated in afterbirth with
eyes coaxed open by mother's nipple.

H E A D S .

the solution,
in the thicket,
a two-dimensional man's visage.

H E A D S .

if only I had assigned sides.

august 5th, 1985

awoke to the sensation of sand between my molars

I had been dreaming of being buried alive on a beach

I lay
staring at the ceiling,
allowing M.'s
arrhythmic breathing

to wah
 wah
 wash over me,
interpreted as soothing waves.

before I close

my eyes for the final time

I look at the time

it is roughly four thirty am

~~amk~~

august 5th, 1985

like a my figurine, stuck between dreams.

my teeth feel stranger than usual

my eyes are different -

I see exclusively sights and scenarios previously observed,
but through new lenses.

lenses prone to paranoid interpretation of the most trivial
occurrences.

example for your amusement:

a man whom is an acquaintance of mine at work
(whose name I have gone out of my way to remain ignorant of -
I know not this man's role in my future, but he strikes me as
significant in some way I have yet to define...sometimes, in
my more serious fits of delusion, I believe him to be a...
moderator of this level, passing by me in a flash, dropping
his pace speed just long enough to deliver unto me an
ostensibly light-hearted statement before vanishing off again
into the wage slave fog. when I later examine his words in ~~th~~
the fashion that one would examine a minimalist painting or a
sculpture, ~~mix~~ they appear uncannily pertinent, a red X on
the beach marking the seeker's final destination...this is
why I wait to divine the potential map-maker's true name,
building letter by letter through time and careful
observation.)

unnecessary parenthesis for a tangent up there -

let's try again.

"a man whom", attempt no. 2, delivered in straight fact
~~af~~ from recollection and with concurrent mental processes to
better display my swelling psychoneuroses.

a man at my work whom I know to be amiable approaches me and offers some sweets. I respond swiftly with an overenthusiastic affirmative and, seemingly pleased, he hands me four paper-wrapped candies. noticing this apparent eagerness to provide, I become instantly wary and begin scrutinizing his actions in hopes of discovering his motives.

he departs into the fog and I eat two of the treats, my suspicions subsided until I believe I perceive the flavor of some unknown chemical. the most likely culprit is some preservative or food coloring, my tongue overtly sensitive due to my perpetual lack of saliva, but I become convinced that I have been drugged.

my body feels like what I would imagine being trapped inside a drunk man's camera shutter would

I have difficulty discerning different objects

I am unable to navigate my surroundings with any degree of certainty

& or

lucidity

a malfunctioning program, I spend the next two hours waiting in terror for the drug's effects to fully kick in while attempting to disguise my distress and debating whether or not I should ~~xxxxxxx~~ leave work early due to 'food poisoning'.

after awhile it becomes a terribly clear that I've been laboring under a paranoia-induced placebo effect and acting in a grossly irrational manner...I

I might need ^{wonder if} psychiatric assistance.

my ink ribbon just broke,
damn it.

on my walk to get a replacement
my line of sight

begins

thickening

inexplicably

the concrete
is vast

I am too small
and the world
too large

a zero least

on a binary planet

"I long for
the indoors,
for finite
parameters."

- the figurine

therein
lays (and lies)
the comfort of routine
and collared life,
I suppose.

the "hated" clock
(over which we obsess),

the safety of another day's salary,

the assurance that tomorrow will be
the same -

I loathe these desires as I've loathed
so many others.

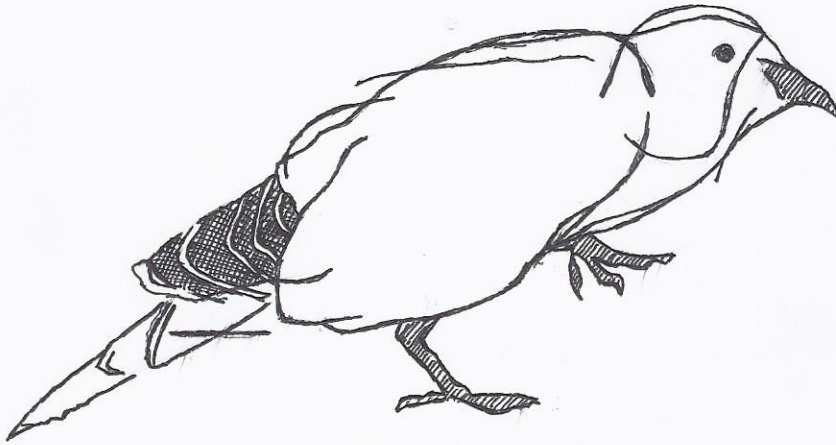
what would
truly content
me?

freedom from responsibility
and the release of
shackled impulse?

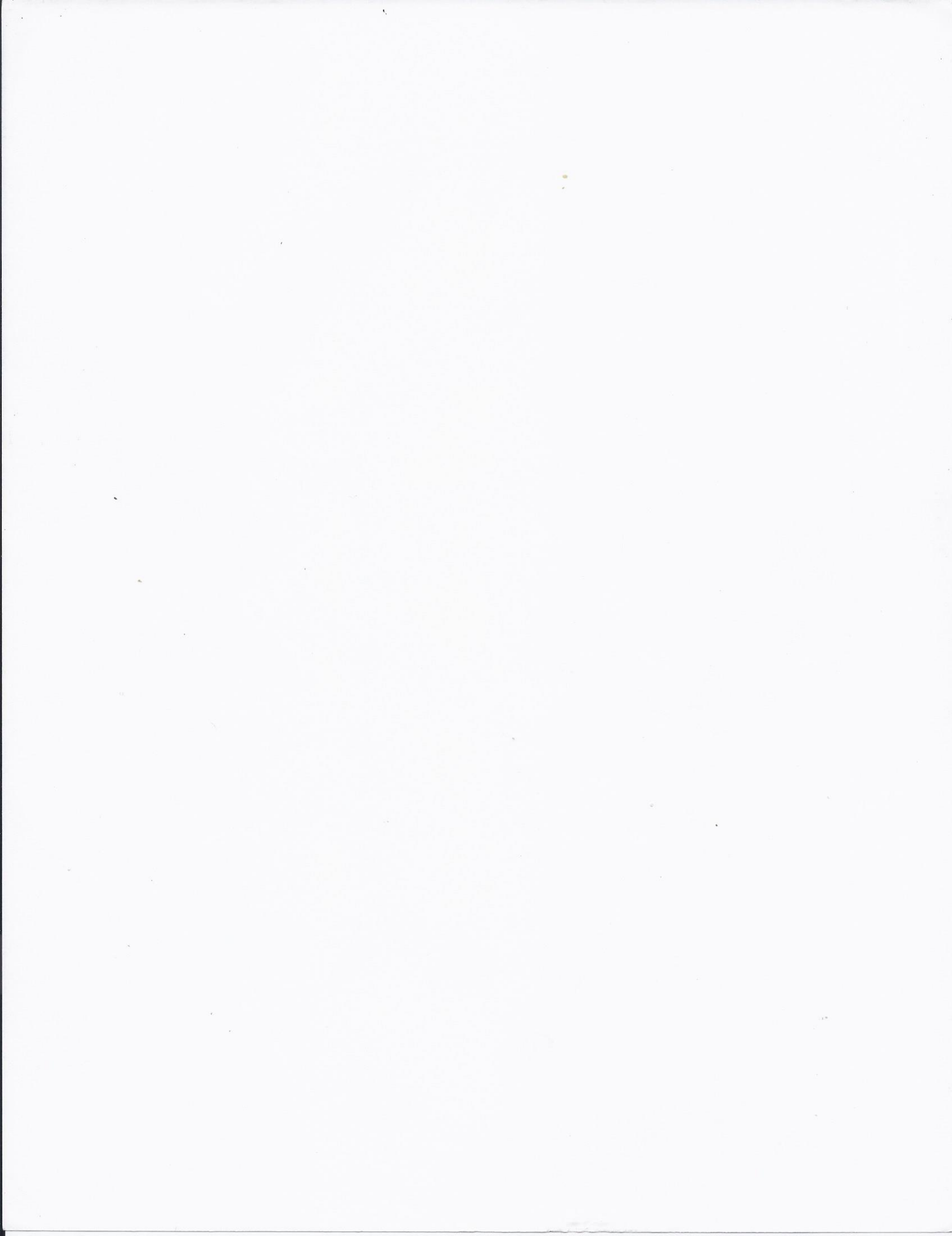
.....

Architecture blues.

for maximum effect, please destroy



this page before proceeding.



it's night now...I'd hazard a ~~xxxxx~~ guess that the clock reads
about three am.

ever restless and unable to sleep~~x~~ due to moaning molars,
I~~x~~ head to the front porch to engage in a session of chain
smoking and pondering the day's vexations.

on the way out of the house
I halt at both doors,
check the lock~~s~~m multiple times;
after assuring myself they will
not close ~~xx xx~~ and leave me

~~xxxxx~~
vulnerable to chance chaos
with no escape,
I leave them open anyways.

better safe than (platitute omitted)

Hermes must have ran off on me,
leaving me more paranoid
than ever before

I stare out in disgusted veneration
at the urban spread

so many people's lights dimmed,
neighborhoods saturated with silence -

and towering above it all,
the trigiday factory spewing smoke from silver columns,
third shift peasants drudging through
the dark
while their bosses shit themselves with rage
over improper attire.

the building strikes me as sinister,
the exposed digestive track of
capitalist corpse
rotting away under the moonlight.

a demonic lair posing as growth;
a malignant tumor with the fascade of a mole.

cigarette after cigarette after
cigarette after cigarette
while I ruminate hazily
upon
the factory's logo.

an owl

wings outstretched

a thin, greenish strip
held in the beak -

perhaps an insect

flailing fruitlessly for life

but it's difficult to
discern details
at such a distance.

the ambiguity only increases my
discomfort.

I will not be able to sleep tonight
for fear of talons tearing the tongue
from my ~~unconscious~~
subconscious mouth;

I return to the nest,
seat myself down at
the kitchen table with
a rolled washington,
porcelain plate, and a
Hermes to be disintegrated.

my nostril burns

my eyes shudder

my hands play vibrato on invisible strings

it is all so reassuring.

I ~~draw~~ draw a dove with a broken wing hidden from view
on paper acquired from
silken, topaz imitating chair
adjacent to my person until

I feel the urge to once again
step outside and
blacken my lungs.

obliging myself as both

the guilty father

and

lonely child

I roll up a
cigarette with amphetamine focus,
return to the porch
closing the doors with

driven purpose.

crisp wind on its eternal rounds
delivers unto my body
the same refreshing caress
what has soothed countless cheeks
before me,
that will
cool the charred remains of future fire victims
and

carry the newest airborne sickness to

undeserving children.

a dog, somewhere unseen,
yelps once and is quickly
silenced

conspicuous in the near-silence punctuated only by my ragged
exhalations

streetlights

f f l l i i c c c k k e e r r

and
the factory
still stands

stoic sentinel
sneering at sinners' shameful secrets
studying some suburban sailor's sorrows
set sail
sans sobriety

a ship with
shattered side

s i n k i n g i n t o

~~shalt~~
solemn
seas

BAAXCXKXXIXNXXTXHXEXXKXIXTXCXHXEXNX.X.X.X

I sit with intention to elaborate upon
my dove,
my sword with which I intended to
oppose that owl,
but I'm unable to find its
paper cage.

on the chair still remains
the stack from which I had
selected the scimitar's
sheath;
my precious weapon nowhere
near the unselected blades

even stranger

while searching the room for my
absent avians
I notice that the dish I utilized as
the runner's final resting spot
is also playing hide and seek or
was kidnapped,
held for ransom in a dingy apartment.

the plate, at least, is quickly discovered
in the cupboard,
devoid of Hermes'
signature pink stain and
giving off a gregarious gleam
in the company of its contemporaries.

did I wash it and forget,
preoccupied with
them two
creatures of the clouds?

no, not a chance...

this was not my doing.

not my fault;
must've been
minerva's
doing.

simplest solution.

thank glitch
thank glitch
thank glitch
thank glitch

I ~~m~~ borrowed
occam's razor to
shred substances

otherwise I would ~~frustrated~~
be befuddled by
this trial

as for my wounded-wing wearing warrior,
a sheet shuffling is sufficient to show
her home has been hoisted

elsewhere -

m.
tossed the tail-toter
into the trash
then
took the trash
to

the curb ?

reluctant to return to
trigiday throne threshold
I assume my solution
correct in its core details;

examining the bag in the bin
in the corner of the room in
the house in the in the in
the bin, I see she replicated
rubbish to disguise her sly
crime...

nice try.

yes,
nice
try,
but
I'm
wise
to
lies

the question
is
why?

maybe misplaced
my mass missing
on our
mattress making
minerva mad
mad enough to destroy
my darling dove

alternatively,
sommambulism
is a viable
alibi -
though one with which
I have qualms.
could a sleepwalker
punish my
poor paper,
grant garbage
gift,
remove
receptacle,
replace
receptacle,
and return to rest
without me
noticing nocturnal
activity?

no,
this was nefarious;
surely she'd
snuck silently
around the house
snuck silently

a s l i t h e r i n g s n a k e

or

a scared.....
shit.

bugs like

corrupted
chernobyl
centipede

congregate
in
basement

concrete
cracks -

whatever those are called.

maneouvered
like an amalgam
of the two

glittering
exoskeleton
serpentine^{on}
shape

legs so swift and populous that
one is quite unable to count

I sit seething
on the
sofa

for the remaining
hours of the night
with
intention to
initiate an
irritated
inquisition the
instant she's
risen

to duly catch her off guard
and ruin both of our days

-

I would have been successful
in the second
but as I
sat in the
silence
my suspicions started ~~shifted~~
shifting
from small schemes to
preposterous plots
farreaching
and
frighteningly realizable

is the city truly
designing my downfall?
m. enlisted by an unknown entity
to ensure my worth decreases til
I desire death?

woefully plausible

I decide to say nothing of the night's narrative,
instead begin itching to investigate her actions
under these new florescents.
when she wakes I smile and kiss her gently;
kiss her with lips that she'll soon see become beak.
the entire city will see - I'm onto their game now.
let them think I play with closed eyes until I
reveal my pupils no longer painted over my lids.

let them believe me castrated
sheep

let them believe they hold the
staff
and summon the dog that
wrangles

I am the self-shepard

they will understand in the end

august 5th, 1985

they're called silverfish.

the title is ~~affix~~
off-putting -

you're either an insect,
a fish,
or an insect inside a fish.

make up your mind,
you sickly children of
nook and cranny.

august 5th, 1985

by the celery of peter's lapel,
what a bizarre day,
though seemingly innocuous

yesterday's paperwork was dated for
the fifth, or at least I thought they were;
the journal entry before this is definitely
emblazoned with the number.

however, every calander,
clock, and classroom child

~~IX~~

I've come into contact with
assures me that today is in fact
the fifth.

not terribly distressing in itself,
for I habitually misplace many things,
and time is the trickiest to grip,
but the number was just the candle on
the cake dropped by the manager.

quick example for your amusement:

I forgot my age last week,
for an excessively absurd duration...

still not sure I have it right,
but I'll look for my
birth certificate
in the boxes
relegated to a darkened ~~XXXXXX~~
corner of the basement
next time
minerva is out of the house.

until then I'll just
avoid being asked my age

stay away from
parties and bars

that will be a struggle.

humans are intensely ritualistic
to be sure
we need routine
to be pleased

in certain aspects at least

praise christ on sunday
take a shower in the morning
take a shot after work
read a book when you shit

structure is tantamount
to the day's veins
for many of us
helps us maintain the illusion of control

every person passed
attempting replication

of previous passages
down to the T.

haven't laid down to rest
since getting out of bed
two mornings ago so
this may just be
sleep deprivation

imagine
living in
salvador's sliced eye

this city is an eye

open

closed

lidless

iridescent

so irredeemably exhausted

terrified of stumbling

upon another piece of the plot

"we'll pretend it's the fifth and make the same movements as the day before, in perpetuity; that'll drive him insane!"

resounding applause at the city council meeting, unanimous approval of the motion,

slumlords chuckling over cocaine and cocktails while their tenants roll on the floor, overcome with merriment, losing control of their bladders and staining priceless carpets which, after the meeting is adjourned, are ~~cut~~ divided into six by five inch segments, sliced, and ~~distribut~~ distributed at the exit ~~dar~~ door to be hung on the walls of participant's homes next to the what-happened-to-you wedding photographs as a commemorative keepsake.

one life later -

"remember when we conspired to make that character crazed? that was hilarious. why don't we ever do anything anymore?"

jokes on you,
citizens -

I've got a bottle of anti-insanity
and eyelids adhered ~~to~~
open with truth glue.

upon reflection, truth glue sounds like
a professional polygraph administrator's
ejaculate....

let's just reinforce that I'm aware of the situation.

I am aware of the situation.

august 5th, 1985

can't sleep

can't eat

hands shake like tambourines

off tempo from the tune with which they are meant

they say it is the fifth

they follow footsteps

traced & retraced

constantly working on writings

and compositions

in the hopes of subduing these

increasingly disturbing delusions

delusions deemed justifiable by

my ~~mindx~~

mind's manager

pause

only to inhale a hundred-thousand

wisps of smoke whilst

staring at saint trigiday

the owl with wide eyes and mystery in the beak

by the flute of pertwee

it terrifies

no synonym available to deliver similar

justice

dark days

bright nights

papa storm remembers this

proclivity for nocturnal activity

papa storm remembers this

proclivity for nocturnal activity

last night, a new plateau of chaos
or the night before
or the night before
the night before
or the night before that
the night of august fifth

minerva confronted in regards to
the doves

"you hid them or
destroyed them or
worse
you gave them to
the man that was
here during work
the man with soles
similar to these -
his footprints
adorn the grass
out in front"

hostile heroine bristling at
unsubstantiated statements

defensive position
perceive
d e n i a l
l i a r

boosted resolve
character ~~xxxxxx~~
delicate thug
now a
downright terror

telephone tossed

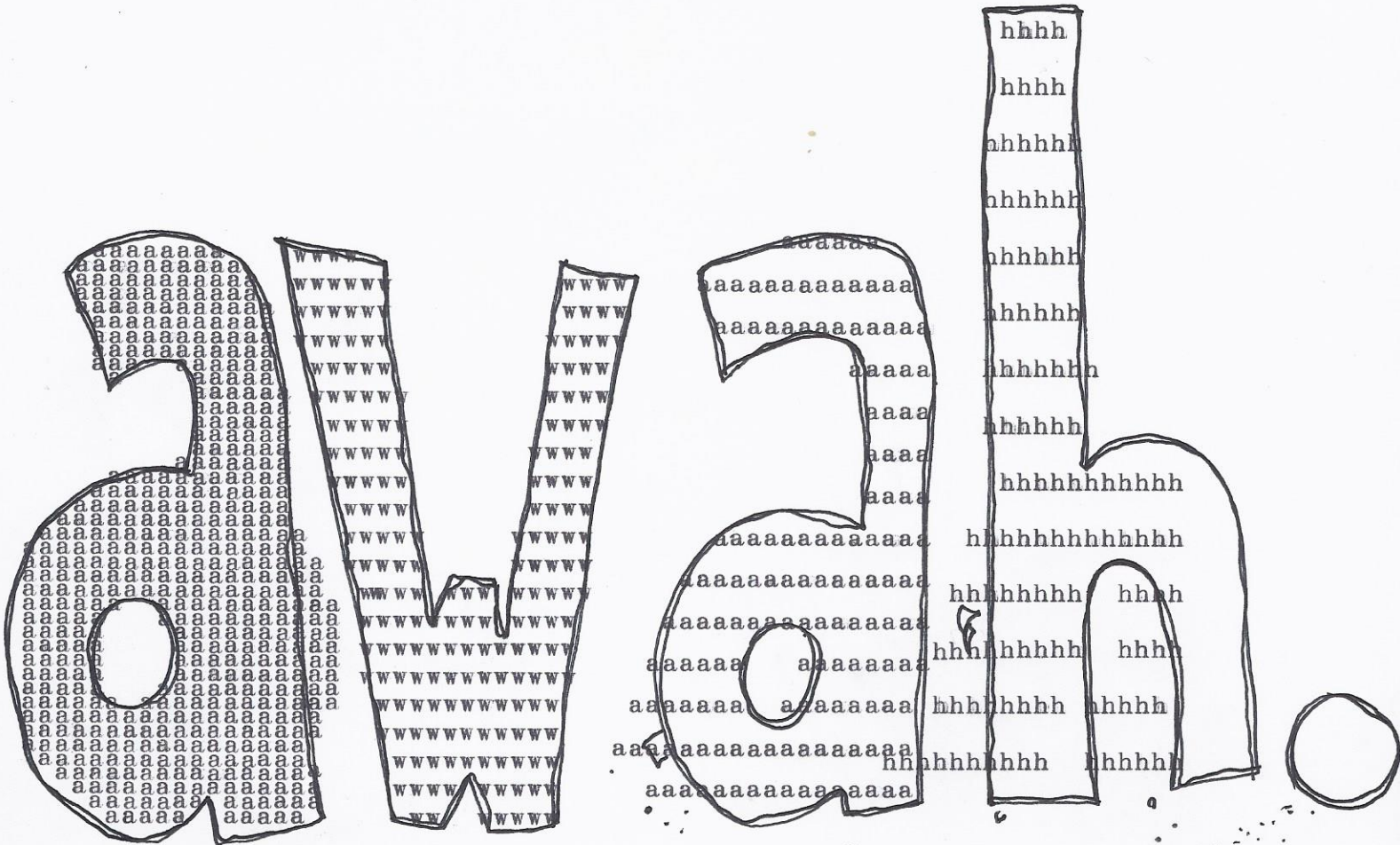
art, assaulted

SSSCRRREEAAMMIINNGGG

any lingering rational thought
clinging desperately with grime-coated calluses
channel lemming, let go
un frozen

racial slur non-sequiturs like
conservative celebrities,
cocaine crazed

back bitten by batshit
baby boy
little bitch indeed



favor the hands
of hope over
threads woven
around my throat
favor the hands
of hope over
threads woven
around my throat
favor the hands
of hope over
threads woven
around my throat
favor the hands
of hope over
threads woven
around my throat



I'd like to be admitted

I explain the events of
the moments previous

she, the rotten tooth
coated in faux gold ~~xxxx~~
crucifixes

in wait to taste my sins
and offer them up to the
man on top a skyscraper.

I am asked ~~xxxx~~
several questions that
hold little import to
the trials at hand
in my ey es

when she asks if I was thinking of killing myself,
I chuckle uncomfortably,
tell her that in the current moment I did not wish to
but that I contemplate the act often.

she suggests I dial 911,
have an ambulance bring me to the hospital;
the line disconnects and I proceed to heed
her words

another woman answers,
listens to my ramble
in which I will forget my tenses
have enough tense in my posture
to sap conception of
past
present
future

two realities duel currently

she dispatches a vehicle.

a cop car casts
its crooked

shadow
shadow
shadow
shadow
shadow

over the porch,
my safe haven
violated

they interrogate me,
already having the
"correct"

~~answers~~

answers
programmed into their
subhuman skulls

they leer at me from on high
as I sit broken on the carpet

I begin to understand that
there is no help coming;

no relief.

XX
X I am taken to jail and processed X
XX

I suppose that if
tthe day does a loop
ssome specifics are
bound to be lostt
in the trans

oh. oh. oh. oh.

august 5th, 1985

I've been flailing under
faux-fact rafts that
bash me with opposing
wakes

the rafts hold afloat
a belief each

(I've grown weary of typing
this word, belief)

a.) the first of the bouyant bastards posits that I am
addaddled; ~~mit~~ it is indeed the fifth, as
T H E C I T I Z E N S
claim.

b.) the second ~~submerged~~ ship savior says I'm sane;
submerged
it is no longer the fifth, and
T H E C I T I Z E N S
conspire against me for unknown reasons.

now in the depths I see the murky outline of another
potential personal christ -

I entertain the notion that ~~ix~~ it is shredded rafts
coagulated, a piece from each safety model.

c.) it is no longer the fifth, but
T H E C I T I Z E N S
are themselves the duped, genuinely convinced of
The Fifth's absolutism.

am I the lone observer of contradiction?

I worry that I am.

august 5th, 1985

from the ages of six to ten
I had a reoccurring dream in
which I stood with a friend
atop a narrow brick
building - it may have been
a clock tower now defunct,
or I may just recollect it
as such due to my current
preoccupation with
The Hands.

in any case, no bell ever
rang.

we lounged from on high, basking in our lofty position,
clouds nipping at our heels
and ~~then~~
my friend's skull ~~would~~ burst with confetti, spraying the
humidity woven tapestry like a grandmother's guts when
struck by bus; and I would
stand, scared shitless and silent,
as a girl appeared with a man in uniform.

she'd tell me not to worry for my friend;
that she herself once suffered from similar symptoms.

a raptor from a cartoon I was fond of would then scale the
structure, begins a heated indictment of some unknown
party.

at that point my head, too, would explode.

it doesn't mean anything, really.

this concludes part one of the city...

thank you for your
participation