

A black and white photograph of a winter landscape. The background shows a dense line of trees, including evergreens and bare deciduous trees. In the lower right, a house with a chimney is partially visible. The sky is overcast with soft clouds. The text is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**THE
WINTER
ON CAPE
ANN AND
OTHER
STORIES /
GO WEST**

THE WINTER ON CAPE ANN
AND OTHER STORIES

GO WEST

ARTIST'S PROOF / 50

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THE WINTER ON CAPE
ANN AND OTHER STORIES

GO WEST

*Within their own approval
a human is free...*

*...within unconditional love
humanity is free.*

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PREFACE

These stories fit after *Diary of An Anarchist*, continuing the struggle, more of work and less of love, for a while. As it is with humans and humanity, love was lost and lost and found and lost and lost and found and broken and bruised and confused all over and over again, until it was found to be shared and then it was impossible to let go. Work simply got in the way—as it does—and prolonged the processing. Maybe this work collected will shed some light therein. May love continue to enter your life as you approach your own dark material. May you have the strength to bring it to the light. May you share the joy and pain in living and write your own beautiful love story with every breath. And may you come to marry work and play in the epic and beautiful song of your life.

November 26, 2019
Astoria, NY

**The Winter On Cape Ann
and Other Stories**

WAKE UP

WAKE UP

good morning good morning.
wake up wake up.
the day is starting.
wake up wake up.
the night is over,
the dreams have dreamt.
the sheep have jumped
and the pillows dent
is just starting
to come undone.
the day is here.
it's just begun.

wake up wake up.
don't hesitate
there is no time
you should not wait
so go ahead
and abate
your sleepy state.
or else you may
not escape.
this just may be
your awful fate.
to stay in bed.
till it's too late
wake up wake up.
your eyes need light.
don't scrunch your nose
and squeeze them tight.
open wide and
greet today.
say hello.
it's here to stay.
until tomorrow
when it goes away.
cause then today is
yesterday.
and tomorrow is
today.
so wake up wake up
you sleepy head.
wake up. wake up.
that's what i said.
wake up. wake up.
wake up. wake up.
wake up. wake up.
get out of bed!

GRAVITY

GRAVITY

In a manner distinctly similar to both a six-year-old girl spinning round and round in the arms of her loving father and an elderly husband laying his head down to rest on the lap of his beautiful wife, a playful breeze swings over the sand inviting Savio to let go. The sun is about to take its nightly dip in the ocean, having spent its last hour of work painting the sky with cotton candy. At the angle of Savio's stare the water looks more like liquid metal than an aqueous solution of salt. Perception is perspective, and despite being taller than average, Savio's perspective was at times somewhat obtuse. Standing on the shore helped him focus.

Bathing in the clarity of the breeze, Savio closes his eyes, inhales slowly and steadily, fills his lungs completely, and becomes weightless. He floats on the pause between breathing in and breathing out, momentarily fighting gravity's constant pull. In this instant, Savio thinks of the innocence and mystery in Alba's smile. A smile that betrays each and every facet of her conscious mind while letting her deepest emotions slip furtively past even the most vigilant observer. Alba is a rare combination: a painting and a puzzle. She is irresistible. Savio has no choice but to declare gravity the winner. He exhales.

Savio spends his days and nights asking questions and searching for answers. His aptitude for explanation is an accoutrement he wears with pride and something he has honed through years of practice. During particularly taxing pursuits, Savio always seemed to end up at the water's edge. If you asked him why, you'd get a response no better than had you asked a dog licking its own ass.* It's not that Savio is pretentious; it just seems to him like a silly question, one he really doesn't want to waste his time thinking about. If you pressed him, Savio would probably recite some lines about gravity and the tidal dance between the ocean and the moon. Maybe he'd tell you he enjoys feeling like an explorer, knowing he found the answer literally at the end of the earth. Or perhaps you'd hear about how he collects memories of the beach at dusk like a mother eagerly awaits her children's annual school pictures: each memory cleverly manufactured to highlight (possibly on a background of pink and blue lasers) the changes of a singular object at different moments in time, capturing a small piece of the dynamic beauty that exists only right now.

The truth? Savio hasn't the slightest idea about the nature of his relationship with the shore, or his relationship with anyone or anything else for that matter. This is

*The answer is obvious, so the dog just keeps on licking.

a fact he is slowly beginning to realize and the reason he stands along the shore today.

Pausing on the line where the sand meets the sea is the only place where Savio can be one-dimensional long enough to see clearly. At the water's edge, his mind syncs to the slow, steady rhythm of the waves. Calmness, a rare feeling, washes over him. Savio welcomes it with an embrace usually reserved for the return of love. Maybe this is why Savio, again, thinks of Alba. Or maybe it is because the frequency of the waves is precisely the frequency at which thoughts of Alba resonant. For once, the cause does not concern Savio. His focus is on this moment and on making it stay as long as possible. Like trying to stall the onset of goosebumps, the only thing Savio can do is enjoy the sensation and wait to be overwhelmed.

Still waiting, Savio feels a pair of hands slip softly in the gap between his arms and his body. The hands are followed by a set of arms that wrap tenderly around his waist and squeeze ever so gently. No combination of languages (both known and unknown) could properly translate all of the subtle complexities in this gesture, which Savio interprets effortlessly. Placing his arms around her shoulders, he lets out an equally subtle and almost inaudible sigh, which Alba effortlessly understands. Without words, the two stand on the shore not watching the sunset. For a moment, they forget the world, and live in the comfort and safety of each other.

Gravity had brought Savio to the shore today, just as it had so many times before. It was the same gravity that tells Alba where her love can be found, keeps the stars in the sky, and causes the water's edge to creep up and down the sand in its tidal tango. This gravity is the unnoticed arc to the story of the waves and to stories in general. It is the cause of all attractions, and on this day, it is subject of the only question that matters to Savio. The only question he cannot answer: "Why do I feel this gravity?"

Even Einstein stumbled on this one, but Savio could not find solace.

Standing on the edge of something in Alba's arms, pressing his lips softly on her forehead, he rests for a few moments. Just as he had so many times before, Savio focuses on the rhythm of her breathes and lets his mind sync to Alba's slow, steady beat. Closing his eyes, Savio inhales her sweet scent, and she fills his lungs completely. He becomes weightless, free from the influence of gravity. As Savio floats on the calmness that is Alba, he sees clearly and lets go.

MY LAST TWELVE CAMELS

MY LAST TWELVE CAMELS

That night I thought a lot of things about writing and myself and who I'd become and as I wrote my upper chest burned, there was a ringing in my ears and I could feel my throat, breathing, mouth agape, lips dry, tongue too, head present and clenched. I was hurting myself in a really bad way and most days I didn't really think about it. I mean, I did feel bad about it for sure everyday and I'd like to say and can't because it would stretch the truth too much that it felt bad every cigarette and I know it didn't. A good many of them were perfect and shared with perfect people and puffed in perfect places. Smoking was sexy and it did fit quite nicely into my new lifestyle and match my

cool-dude, movie-star, actor-type, badass air about me—all descriptions I'd been told by various people of late. I think it had a lot to do with all the layers.

Physically, I wore a lot of clothes without much regard for their arrangement, clasping mechanisms, or visual harmony which quite frankly appeared to me to come off as cool and I could see how that was the case when I saw pictures of myself. (When I looked in the mirror, I was never fooled, it seemed at the time, and I think I could always tell I was acting and I really think we all are and it can't be any other way, and Cynthia did tell me to show more sides of the narrator and he was coming off as pretentious and she knew he wasn't and I said I thought it rested in how he was perceived and how could I make it otherwise and I did know I needed to try. She was right: Michael wasn't pretentious, he just tended to come off that way and I wasn't convinced that didn't mean he was and maybe it was ok for the narrator to be pretentious in the end and he already was in the beginning and I reckoned I would have a hard time changing it at that point and I thought I could try and see how it felt. Michael was a pretty good guy, all things considered.)

Mentally I also had a lot of layers and wore them in much the same way and let people see them all just a bit and more or less of them depending on the temperature of the atmosphere and all of my best friends and a number of women had seen me nude in both regards and it was only after I learned to look in the mirror at myself did I see myself layerless or start to at least and it was in those times which I realized how much more there was to see buried on the inside under decades of incomplete lessons taught and learned in a world which didn't sum to its part-sum yet and really did have it all figured out.

It just had a lot of dirt and grime and fear and loathing surrounding it is all and I didn't ever mind and became accustomed to continual housekeeping. I liked to have everything in its place and I guess it had come to the point in

my life to actually quit smoking and it all seemed really romantic that night as I made the decision for another time in my life. Now I would hold myself accountable to the page and leave a record of the struggle and try to observe and note the thoughts and externals which are the hardest triggers to resist pulling.

That morning I awoke to a pain in my chest, less local than the tightness palpitating the previous night, slowly with a frequency much less than a Hertz over my perceived heart in my left pectoral, too close to home. As I thought through the anxiety of that morning I knew cigarette twelve was to meet its poetic end within the hour and as I stood I knew it would be a tough day and I was sorry I had chosen a seven-dollar, eco-friendly, artisanal notebook to hold the work and now I had begun and was consciously quite sorry that I had. When Cynthia thanked me for only smoking one cigarette in her house it impressed me and I thanked her in response. I really didn't know why I had taken to smoking and it was quite easy to keep transgressing and if I think about how many breathes I've tainted I feel a deep sadness and I will fight it and turn it into lightness as I had tried to do in many other aspects of my life in those days. By staring every facet of my vice-addiction I could learn more universal truths and the hope was that you would too.

And maybe it was fitting how I smoked cigarettes six-through-twelve. It had been a bad day for many specific and great reasons and because I had decided to look at twelve remaining cigarettes as my last and that's just the way it had been for me with cigarettes. They helped you embrace and inhale the darkness in you. Holding a piece of hell off the tips of your fingers, bringing it centimeters from your face and breathing the devil's exhale into your blood. Cigarettes brought you there and were always willing to light your darkness and maybe this time would stick because I had already run into my darkness and let it overwhelm me and I still felt my eyes were adjusting and I was

no longer afraid because nothing had eaten me yet. I was still alive and breathing in and out periodically throughout the day and night times and that qualified as being alive in some perspective and I don't want to make it seem like I was close to that bare a view on alive; I was much much more so in those days than any other periods in my life. I lived longer days, made much more touching connections, was impressed more, and made more beautiful memories for myself and I wasn't as happy for certain. Not yet. There was an awful lot of turbulence and it always felt good to smoke when things looked grim. Vices had that today-could-very-well-be-my-last atmosphere to bring to the table and as I transitioned to a more momentary existence it did become easy to feed the addiction.

The beast did change for sure many times since my first puff, as did I, making it a most excellent vice. I had always known where I stood with alcohol; it always occupied the same space, that was until later when I was learning to write and alcohol changed how it looked at me and for the time before that buzzed was just like first gear: You didn't drive in it for long. And the night after I had good and bad moments with six-through-twelve I had a two-week-old growler of Fisherman's Brew which was pleasantly still keg-fresh and I wouldn't have to leave the house and be in the cold rain and some time before eight PM I realized I hadn't consumed anything besides my friends, six-through-twelve, a half gram of tea, an espresso, and twenty ounces of brew and I thought it risible how I attributed in my thoughts earlier my shitty feelings to the cigarettes. Truth was I'd been treating myself body and mind like garbage, making myself ache because I ached and needed to feel it ache all over and at the moment I first thought that I made a date with five and drank another ounce of beer, courage to continue and get to the end quickly which could also been see as impetuous, was always at the bottom of a pint.

Five gave me the clarity to see that food was in my future and in the state I was in there was too much between then and now to bear. It got like that at times for many different reasons and when Alba was around we did argue about how much I ate and how I should eat less of the things I did and more of others and maybe still less than I had been. I agreed and there were a dozen times or so I cooked really well in the months that followed our break-up. And it always felt amazing to cook for myself and others and I do think there was something about being consumed that made it too much to bear at the time.

My depression the morning after I decided to quit helped me see how there was no one in my life who needed me. Sure there were a good number, relatively, of people who valued my perspective and time spent together and thoughts devoted to, and there wasn't anyone who wouldn't know what to do without me and I guessed, after I had thought about it, it's the way it should be and I think that just meant I got hung up in semantics. There was a way a lover needed, there, love to be present and for the time I didn't have anyone who needed me or gave a shit I was smoking. Sure there were comments and small efforts by some and the fact I kept my family out of it and I never told Alba and I knew I only had myself to blame and only I could beat this and when I did I would learn a lot and if I didn't I would learn other lessons and I was ready to be done and I would build myself a castle to stand on, one without walls or ceilings or doors or locks and I would feel like I was flying with the certainty of feeling my feet on the floor and then I could stop feeling the fall I was feeling. I knew well just how far I'd fallen from where I was ostensibly, at least in the terms everyone else did and in terms of my soul the matter was entirely different; I wasn't even sure it had fallen anywhere unnecessary or at all even, and in both regards, externally and internally, I had no idea when it would all stop either by hitting the ground, learning to fly, or being caught by angels. I didn't know

the end, so I couldn't know anything about the magnitude of the fall and I just had to become comfortable with that aspect of life and surrender more to the journey and to be ok walking without the devil's breathe filling my lungs.

An hour passed and I wanted to enjoy four completely, have some tea, maybe shower and see if Katherine would ask me if I was hungry at The Pub at Cape Ann Brewing Company and I wouldn't shower, I'd play a concert for myself, find the pub empty, kitchen closed at nine, find music and a pint of PBR at The Rhumb Line and the kitchen closed at ten. The day had been spent solely in vice, no nourishment, only poison and that was just the way it was the day I quit smoking and it had been like that at too many other points in those days and I still had three more luxurious dances with the devil and I looked forward to just spending those moments remembering many others which would become so fleeting when I was no longer inhaling the connection-stimulus and I knew that was a big part of it.

Many of my favorite memories had cigarettes linked to them and I wasn't scared of not having those memories again. I would have many new ones. It was more the lost connection to the sensation. Inhaling a cigarette's smoke connected you to each of those breaths which felt the same and I would have to rely on less powerful aspects to get back to that place and maybe I never could and it was probably worth it in the end. And if it wasn't, I guess I could smoke a cigarette, later, much later. For a good long time I would substitute and breath one-through-three in the same way I breathed Alba the three days I spent with her the last time I saw her in Italy and for a while, at times breathing slowly and purposefully to cement the memories in ways eternal and at times unexamined and perfect as it had been in life it would be in dying and in death the memory would always fade if it wasn't shared and if it was shared it would always change, so it was important to reach your hand and heart out and touch something, espe-

cially at times you were saying goodbye. This way you both could share it again later in some other time and place, always, and I did know what that meant and I hoped I had done a good enough job expressing it so you believe it something real and beautiful, someday when you find it or maybe today if you already had and maybe one day I would describe my final three cigarettes when I was ready and maybe one day I would describe my final three days with Alba and I wasn't ready for those memories to change yet. It was the time to let them fade away a bit and no longer ventilate the ember. We could never go back and that reality had not really sunk in.

When you write your own story it's hard to remember that you could only write about what happened and make it seem how you want or you could write about the future or a fictional time and place and you could never make these things, all of them, more real than a memory and nothing ever was save for the moment itself, and my chest began to tighten over my heart where it does at times and some baked clams, a pint of scottish ale and a double espresso took the place of a few cigarettes and a shower felt cleansing for more than a few moments and I felt good, strong, clear, and unfocused.

I had told myself and some people in my life I would take until the new year before I made decisions about my life and it felt good to quit smoking before the new year so I didn't have to worry about it at that time and especially during New Year's Eve partying. I needed momentum to resist smoking then and was glad to not have to give cigarettes their special goodbye while I was trying to make so many other types of memories. It didn't make much sense to try and multitask. New Year's Eve was for drinking and debauchery. It wasn't a time to be saying goodbye to anything you wanted to remember and it felt more like a time to say hello to new things and I never made resolutions at New Year's or otherwise. I was committed to certain things and this was built gradually and

with a degree of flexibility as were most things in my life and as is was with cigarettes then. I could force the system to adapt and now that I had built up commitment and found a way to make myself accountable and moreover, a way to channel the surrounding energy expended in thinking about that time in my life into the true expression of self onto the page and into words. I couldn't yet tell if they were exercises or work for release and I'm not certain I was supposed to know.

I also had this nagging feeling like I was faking it and everyone was starting to notice. I was smart enough to hack my way into and a good chunk of the way through the Harvard PhD program in engineering sciences and to be a writer now would be fake and I couldn't possibly be that well, it would just be silly. So gossip and drama spread and I hear the most harsh criticisms of myself from the people who know me best when I claim to let it all out, and I let a relatively large part out and if I had let it all out quickly or not I would be just about breathing in and out and I'd still be smoking cigarettes and things happened the way they did and I was sad to close that chapter of my life and start a list of things I wouldn't do anymore and I guess that's how life progressed and it was a choice between making certain memories, returning to certain memories more vividly, and trying to maintain your health and extending the only thing worth anything in this world—moments, and cigarettes always did felt like the thing to go.

If I really thought about it they were really only there to connect those moments to this one via meditating on the breath and I had done similar things with the afternoon sun, which I often spent with people from my past, and the sun always did burn brighter than the ember, even if it was so far away and sometimes it was night.

ON BEARDS

ON BEARDS

And I did feel like a new man without a beard and I wasn't certain I liked it and it had more to do with the inevitable reactions and people were like that when you changed quickly on them and I hadn't then save for appearances and it was the point. Physically—anything had to fly, without comment. Which was exactly as it was with Katherine that night. A smile and a perfectly toned “How you doing?” “Good. Very—good,” was all we needed to say about my beard and lack thereof. I could and would always be growing a beard and now she knew some part of that and I was happy to share it with her. What I liked about Gloucester was the certainty of going to the bars the day after

Christmas. It did feel really nice to be back, drinking a pint. I stopped writing *My Last Twelve Camels* because I had smoked them and didn't feel like writing about what it felt like to not smoke anymore. It sucked and I shaved my beard instead just to see what it felt like, and now I will be seen less, and seem more exposed and I could hide behind a beard and I was done hiding for the time. The next beard would be again for nothing and I guess I was glad to be on to the next thing and I guess shaving such an epic beard had to mean something, and it didn't really and that was all there was in those days and others. I wondered then how Annie would react and I hoped she'd touch my face and I thought we should exchange phone numbers soon and I wasn't sure I wanted to see people often except on my terms. I hated the obligations and I liked Jenny because she helped remind me of that in the way she kept me where she did while she handled her stuff.



It was the day after yesterday as it had been often in those days and for a while before and after and I knew this particular day would be like others in some regards and completely unique in its own way and I was confident whether or not I made it the day would end and the next would begin and there was always the chance I was wrong and I was ready for that too.



I felt very different without a beard and I think I was becoming physically ill. It was cold and I had been drinking all month and it was strange to talk with a stuffy nose to Katherine for the first time and I did decide to pay with a credit card in case she was too flustered and forgot to listen when I answered her with my name. She too felt the desire for more with me, and what more was there? At the

time what we had was perfect and I was glad that she felt compelled to ask my name after seeing me beardless and essentially nude in how I felt.



And it was strange to go unrecognized at The Rhumb Line, even to the dude who asked me if I was Jesus a few nights ago. The better you looked, the more you saw and The Rhumb Line may have been full of ground apples. I did feel strange writing in public without the beard. People expected a lot out of you always and maybe I did too and it was hard not to and I thought I expected other maybe better things than others did and without the beard it was hard to feel consistent.



And I did really want a cigarette or a joint and this pint would have to do and I realized there was not too much to talk about and all I was doing was waiting for Annie to notice me and I wasn't certain she would and maybe I would get to rag on her for it. Man did I feel like an impostor without my beard which was such a strange feeling and I knew it was good to feel and I think some of it had to do with quitting smoking and I was scared because I liked smoking and I wanted to feel the way I did when I smoked and I think a lot of the unrest had more to do with not having a direction again and it was ok. I would find one and continue to work on my mental strength and continue to not take Alba personally. She was a silly girl and I had to know that then and in the future and men needed silly girls for many reasons and at that point I just wanted someone who wanted to be nice to me and I got hotter without the beard than I used to and 'wondered if' I was getting sick and what to do about it. It is strange where the mind goes and ends up, and I knew and felt differently than before. It was part of that time in my life

and I had to stop giving a shit about how I looked and only care about how people acted towards me, in this regard only. I wanted enough attention to feel not lonely and entertained and my mind was lost and I didn't know what I wanted from women or men and all I really wanted to do was write and make money at it and I wanted it to not feel strange anymore to exist.



Regardless of how I looked it felt good to feel the peach fuzz on my dome and I knew it would be ok as it always was and Chaz was drunk next to me as he had been other nights and tonight he let me work and I didn't look like Jesus anymore and I was surprised with so many similar features how I went unnoticed and I realized I was still a stranger in this town. No one knew anything about me and a quick do-slice and I was new again and I had just been making friends and now I would have to meet new people again and I would observe the differences in how an unbearded man would be treated. I was weaker and tougher in equal regards and anyone who looked people in the eyes wouldn't notice a change and I knew Jenny would think I still looked good. I should have called her as soon as she texted and my phone was dying and at least I would have heard her voice. I wanted to see her smile though and Annie was about to sing so I would get to see her smile when she saw how my chin looked when I smiled.

**NEW YEARS & MY
AMERICAN SPIRITS**

NEW YEARS & MY AMERICAN SPIRITS

More cigarettes were consumed after my last twelve Camels and they were still considered my last twelve for at least a little while after the last Twenty-Seven I smoked with Matthew and they were special for a different reason and it had something to do with the ability to consume in moderation and something to do with Amanda's permission on the eve of the new year when we were sitting in Lauren, Devon, and Allison's apartment drinking sparkling wine and eating mediocre Italian-American food catered from the pizza place around the corner from Drew's and my old

Warren Street apartment and we had lived there when we first moved to Boston before we both smoked cigarettes and we lived there still when we began to smoke them in our own ways and neither of us had a big problem with it at the time. I hadn't spoken to Drew much in the days when I quit smoking and if I really think hard and remember well I don't think we ever talked seriously about our addictions and desires and we didn't talk much about cigarettes. It seemed to be how it went with some things and it was a bit of nonsense for it to be that way.

THE WINTER ON CAPE ANN

THE WINTER ON CAPE ANN

Then it snowed, only an inch or so, and it was mid-January in New England; everyone had expected snow by now and the reactions were a strange and honest feigned surprise and concern. The Rhumb Line decided how the conversations would go over decades and centuries of snow—before The Rhumb Line or its current patrons ever existed—and it didn't seem to matter the tardiness of the first snow, just it had happened and I was new to Gloucester and during my first winter on that rock I met an entire new group of people, a clan, which I heard I needed from Kenneth

Robinson years prior and I never did know how to choose a clan and now it seems I think they chose you and I was still not surprised or concerned about the snow and it may have been still too soon to tell, I was fairly certain I wouldn't be next year either.

It did seem Gloucester had a way with individuals and I hadn't met anyone in town who hadn't grown up nearby; I wasn't sure how well transplants took and I guess at least I always had a number of places to sleep and people to drink with whenever I came back and I wasn't necessarily planning on leaving. My time there didn't feel temporary and I thought I would leave at some point and I had felt similar it seemed living in Allston. The difference was the apparent minimum time investment of a half-dozen years. I left Harvard twice though, both times without a plan and it was all working out mostly because I wanted it to work out, at least I hoped it was all I ever needed, and the more I came to know the clan, the more I saw noble individuals struggling to sacrifice as little as they could of something so hard to understand and trust and so easy to recognize when it was around and just a word or two when it wasn't, like a smell.

When I was a young boy, maybe seven or ten, I had the idea for a smell-recorder and I guess I had acquired enough knowledge and at one time had the networks and access to the resources to invent such a device and I didn't care to invent such a device. Recording always interested me; my grandfather had been a recorder. It seemed important, not simply for efficiency, but necessity in returning to some places, and scents could bring you places *you* had been and I was so interested in bringing you places *I* had been and I wanted to know always what hung heavy on souls. It seemed light to me, my weight and it became that way through perspective. Nothing much changed in me and everything was different and if a series of honest words could make a difference, I desired nothing more than to say them out loud. What else was there to do be-

sides trying to make people's lives better? I knew then if everything was to end then the only important thing would be the moment. It couldn't be the conclusion and living as such was nice for a time and I wasn't certain how long it would last and it didn't matter at all which was the beauty of my days in those days.

Some days, some times in a row, I felt strangely ordinary and I wasn't certain I was inspired in these moments. It felt hollow, I think that is the best word for the feeling. Not empty, hollow. Something hollow didn't seem meant to be full. It was light and looked solid from any angle except when viewed from the inside, you could see the vast void cut off from the world. The inside was outside the world. It's what we mean when we talk of our minds. Truth was, I tended to believe and had no idea how it changed anything, there was no distinction between my inside and outside. The chemical, molecular story didn't have to make such distinctions and neither did the metaphysical one.

And it still seemed every story was about the narrator, at least to everybody save the author, and I didn't know if I understood fully what that implied and I still thought it was at least correct from some points of view. I questioned how to efface the narrator and maybe even the author from my story, focusing only on the characters, the clan brought around in those days. And it never was about anyone specific. Sure there were central characters for a time and it was only ever for a time. I was the leading male always. The leading lady was always my momentary muse, always at a distance, in the days after Alba left.

Her name meant sun and I chose it for her years ago when I first wrote about her and her effect on my self and suns and stars burned when you got too close and Alba was only my sun for a time, and then I was burned and I went to Rockport for the winter to cool off and recuperate and as it began to snow and I guess for a while before, music became an important part of the process and Gloucester

was filled with music as was the clan, necessarily, and it was easy to be creative there at that time in my life.

I was building something completely my self and it was a strange and new process and it felt so comfortable to be me and it wasn't until that time when I realized how dishonest I had been and how much of a burden it all was and it was unnecessary.

Nothing was a problem if you didn't want it to be and I thought I knew how to act around most people in most situations and if there were ever problems it wasn't because I wanted there to be and maybe this was naive, and without choosing and seeing it was hard to know how to act. Life seemed to be trial and error. I was happy to be trying something familiarly new and I was ok with making some mistakes. I'd always been that way and now seemed more important, a greater test of my mettle and I didn't need to prove anything. It was more a matter of being completely confident in my abilities and knowing I would be ok. I was willing to accept so much from the world and I would only sacrifice for a few unimportant and important things some of which had much significance and some of which went unexamined and some of which were utterly confusing. And I was ok being confused, not knowing the answer, something Feynman helped me respect about my self, and though I wasn't completely certain if it was quite me, I liked the idea of it much and I did feel it true in a general sense. And that happened, the idea of a much more general truth, whenever you thought too long about something and it was mostly trivia otherwise. Murakami said that and I felt it true so much at times before and he did hit it on the head. In general I felt restive.

I had many things in the works, as was usually the case and this time I felt more confidence and it could have been because I was wholly proud of what I was doing and it could have been because I knew I would create much and it was probably for reasons which lacked substance and clout and which I didn't know.

I was comfortable simply living. I still missed my connection to the moment and I think it would come again when I needed it to and it wouldn't help to desire a specific type of moment, at least that seemed a noble perspective to adopt and I knew the type of life it required and for some reason that ascetic extreme seemed to miss the flavors of life and the era of the generation, the ethos, the milieu. I guess I did desire it all, or at least I desired a simple life interacting with society, which didn't seem like it all, to most and to me it was everything there was. Sharing your life with one person mostly had been a nice idea and I was confident the woman existed for me to do just that and I was only going to look for her a little bit in every woman I saw and I wanted her to find me irresistible and I had to feel the same for her. Yes. It could not be another way anymore. No logic. No reasons. Emotions, emotions. Emotions should lead and I had to find a way to let them take control for a while. Music seemed a good outlet and I had been singing a lot and dancing when I could and remembered to and Alba never did like the way I danced and I was happy it didn't matter now.

Not much did, save a few guiding principles and it did seem like all I needed to be happy. Then called my friend, whom we called Bike and I liked to think of him as Bicycle and I'd never seen him on one in all the years I'd known him and he had a lot of stories and seemed to know more than I did about bicycles and cars and a few other things he did quite right. He had been at the end of his life that time he told me about afterwards and I hoped he'd never go there again. He understood so much and life was hanging heavily and I had never been in situations he had and I didn't have the responsibilities he did and it made my position difficult to assess and after the call it seemed easy to be in, more generally. I also spoke to Larry and Jenny that day and I realized I did have great people in my life and in the space Alba had lived I put a host of new individuals and I did also have the room where my Allston posse used

to live and writing ended up there, in its own way and I never intended it to be like that and it was what it was. Life was long and windy and I said that to Jenny when we were together in Rome and it was more true than I could ever know. I thought it a few times since and probably said it just as many. It was general and I always meant it specifically as was the case with generalities in general.

And it was certainly a long and windy road leading into Gloucester and it would wind some more before I made my way out and it wasn't the time to think about that. Production was more important and it made moments difficult to extend and it helped to pay attention to what you were doing. Looking closely at your self, quieting your mind without silencing anything was a way to hear your heart song and I found it so hard to hear at times, so soft and delicate and it was screaming so loudly too. The moments when life felt ok were the ones to pay attention to and christ was it only the future which presented a problem it seemed and only in the responsibilities it seemed to require which were real in so many ways and fucking nothing in others. Finding the center was much easier than being ok living there. So much seems to contradict. The opposites were obvious and it was difficult to know what to do except listen and see and sense in general and it was similar for production: It was important to create for and with the senses in mind. Not to lose sight of the feeling and to communicate it unfiltered for the world. Expression was also of such importance and I didn't know what to do with it.

Approval was the next thing which came to mind, and it was some thing I sought and sought to remove which too was a desire. I always felt silly running into metaphysical walls and physical walls didn't present the same feelings. Maybe there was something to this metaphor and I would let me mind have at it for a while until I could see more clearly.

For a few days my confidence had been peaking and valleying dramatically and the swings left me out of the center and depression waited in the darkness my mind was apt to explore. The depression wasn't a terrible thing, it's important to make clear. It was a sobering somber which didn't feel good and I thought it helped me focus or at very least was important to examine; it too was such a part of life, as the rain, the wind, and the setting sun. She was gone and I was living my life without her warmth and winter was a hard season for the soul. So much died and the metamorphosis to prepare for growth was unnerving. It was easy to lose your self, and you had to when you died. The hard part was forming something new which made any sense. Without connected nerves it was hard to sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings were all dumped in a reservoir to be sorted later and I was too much of a perfectionist to leave it to chance. I was in control of my self, completely—how am I not myself?—and I was learning to sense the rhythms of the engine. Internalizing aspects of control to leave my mind freedom to be content. And there were still moments where all I wanted to do was cry for an unspecified reason, simply because life was hard and suffering should be experienced and I was happy to be feeling something so real, so human.

Annie was to return and in the days and hours beforehand I grew non-monotonically my excitement. The expression of our dance was intimate and I couldn't tell if it was special in any extra ordinary way and being in the gait of a beautiful woman was still irresistible and Darwin wrote woman are lovely and a terrible waste of time, and they were so awfully lovely and in moments, true moments with them nothing else mattered and I knew after giving Tess her Italian-made journal I wanted to love so badly. I wanted someone to smile with. Someone who wouldn't let my darkness hang heavy on them and someone who would understand it enough to step out of the shadows and see it light and I wanted to give gifts, big rememberable ones

to everyone I met and maybe we're back to that bit about approval.

I think the only gift I desired to give was a true expression, an honest gesture, a perfect moment, an understood conversation. Johnny Knots was six-feet-eight-inches tall and though he lived in Rockport some years earlier, an impression was made when he lumbered into The Rhumb Line. Annie and I must have made an impression as well; Johnny Knots handed us each a shot and I wasn't certain we hadn't just been roofied—a regrettable practice of the clan—and Johnny said casually, “No, no. No. no... — YES!!” and I knew I would be ok, either way. Later that night we spoke and he told me about the Buck Rogers Club and as he spoke of the knots he had learned, I asked if the carrick-bend was a rope shortening knot, like the sheet-bend and he easily replied yes,[†] continuing on, then, stopping all trains, he amazed, “You understand... whoa.” Sitting down and realizing we had much to speak about, we talked about our Eagle-Scout-fathers and I knew I'd see him again and I was happy he didn't roofie Annie and me and for many other reasons.

I didn't have much interest in thinking about him anymore. I sought to resolve some of the sadness infecting my moments, and it was so unfocused or maybe it was clear and related to everything and I had to step back to see it clearly. What was my focal length? If I could close my aperture it wouldn't matter so much and I hadn't enough practical experience with optics to make any useful metaphors. I would have to just try to do things that felt good as much as I could. There always had to be something you wanted to do more than anything else, right? This is where that bit about paying attention comes in handy.

In the last weeks of January I put off editing what I had been calling my first book and really focused on music and

[†]Though bends are meant to join to ropes, and we were on beer, and we were both mistaken.

a bit of music photography when my fingers were too sore to play the guitar. I quite literally found a voice and took the stage with King's and Goddess's at a collection of open mic nights around town. I never had a problem getting up in front of people and it was surprising still, I didn't have a problem playing music in the spotlight. It didn't feel different in many ways to performing in my room and it was so much more personal. On the other side of my eyelids there were individuals I hoped could feel a bit of what I felt every time I let the music out and it was so much more cathartic to share it with whomever was listening; so much different than singing into the ocean and the rain.

AMONG DOGS & ANGELS

AMONG DOGS & ANGELS

Production seemed to be my reaction to the removal of consumption. There was very little I consumed in the days when I was learning how to exist. Previously I had relied on the masses to define my motives and actions. I did always have my own unique way about things and it did always end up with my succeeding in ostensible ways. Now was so different. Time was my most valuable asset and I aimed I think to always make good use of it. To waste time could have been the worst offense. Not consuming freed up an awful lot of time both in the act itself and the decision-making time and the afterglow as well and also in the acquiring of resources to support. I still found it neces-

sary to relax, reboot and I found everything still provoked much thought. Even music now that aspects of the physics were internalized, I began to think more about other aspects. I barely watched any moving pictures and when I did watch *Californication* I found myself paying attention to the writing. The story. I read, still, and not as much as I had. There were authors and works I had to or rather found myself staying away from—Kerouac, Dostoyevsky, and Hemingway were the ones I avoided. I needed to read stories and not outright philosophies I think. Then it still felt relaxing. It was a puzzle, not a didactic and I did feel a lot of it was just me staying away from works which would influence me too heavily, naturally. I just didn't feel like reading them, though I knew I agreed with all they had to say. Maybe it had more to do with staying away from advice. I didn't want to listen to anyone. I had listened a lot and received advice of all sorts and I needed to learn what I had to say. What I thought and felt was the only thing I had to offer and the only thing to do was figure out how to express it in the most true, unfiltered way possible and I still wasn't certain where fun fit in.

I felt I'd touched on this idea much—my lack of making fun in numerous situations. I think I just lost a lot of the ability to make small talk. Seemed like an expected result of being a wordsmith and my art was so close to the method in which everybody communicated, I found it hard to turn off, or maybe it only had to do with exploring the mind, examining what went on inside, which was all there ever was. it was all there ever was. was it. it was.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Hello my dear. I'm not certain what I even have to say, other than I wish you were sitting here, across from me at The Lone Gull Coffeehouse, my local caffeinating hole. We'd talk about things, some unimportant and some important, and both would be important, and we'd be impressed by each other, and smile often, even when we were sad together. I'd see your smile and think you beautiful for your countenance and the words from your lips, and I'd remember the times we spent together in Rome, and I'd think of the food we shared as we shared each other, remembering you specifically, speaking lovingly of your father at the restaurant west of Piazza Navona where we ate

and drank and wondered about each other and the naked men making fun above us. And here, in Gloucester proper, we'd share espresso and pizza and I'd take you to Scalfani's and try to show you the beauty I found here, and you'd see it in the way you do, and it would be similar to the way I do, and we'd drink beers tonight at Latitude 43, the new 100 barrel series black IPA on tap, and we'd have some moscato from California at Giuseppe's piano bar beforehand, and I'd sing a few songs for you and others, and I'd end my set with a slow sexy version of "Hey Ya," and everyone would clap and you would too for other reasons, and I'd say bashfully thank you, and I'd smile, and for a little while just now, that was our day, you were here and we shared each other again, and it was enough for now, it was all there ever was, and I wasn't sure I wanted to stop, because the chair across from me now looked empty without you there and my espresso was long finished and it was only two in the afternoon and it would be so long before I could reach out and touch you, and I hoped I already did.

SOMETHING NEW

SOMETHING NEW

I respect my body & mind and for this reason I will make its well being my top priority. I hope to train both to exist in an optimal harmony together such that they exist for and as a result of one another. I will make good habits and train my responses. I will focus on positive mental / psychological reinforcement. I recognize how encompassing one's perceptions are necessarily and my journey will be about optimizing my own perceptions to handle the turbulence and responsibilities of life with equanimity and grace. Much of my previous work in this realm has been limited to psychological systems; having reached the point where I am convinced of the positive effects of my per-

ception modifications and having observed several limitations and outright failures of these modifications along with several insightful discussions of the ability to use the mind to trigger positive and inhibit negative physical responses and vice versa with using a physical sensation to relieve a positive or negative mental state—these discussions happening with Annie first and then via a serendipitously found TEDTalk, by Shawn Achor—I was convinced of the necessity of including physical states in my quest for peace and content in all of my moments.

Food and drink moved much closer to the top of the pile of importance, where they had been sporadically in several-week periods a half dozen times or so throughout my life. Recently, over the past year, I convinced myself of the huge negativity surrounding processed foods, which had been integrated into my life in ways quite tenacious and truly sprawling. It seemed now the thing to do was systematically begin integrating the things I loved back into my life, making use of my immensely useful science and cooking skills, learned at Harvard and honed at home and abroad over the past year, it would help, and much more would be required. Still the biggest mental burden was figuring out the optimal means and activities to lead a fulfilled life of content.

I was already satisfied with much I knew how to do and did do at times I was so inspired. The question was of activities producing resources to sustain life content. I was hesitating on a number of fronts, the source of my unrest and I wanted so badly to follow my heart. I feared forcing or even persuading something to feel right. What was I trusting? I have to assume it was my self. What or who else was there to trust to put my own life at the top? It could only ever be me. This didn't feel wonderful to know, and I think it was helpful. At least for a while. I'm not certain, it felt like it would help me handle distractions of which those days I had been succumbing to, at least it felt that way when the days ended and be-

gan, most days. What wasn't a distraction? It was hard to know what was worth giving attention: Attention necessarily required time and time was my most valued resource. Time was played out in moments and recorded in memories, and I had to remind myself of this at times otherwise I would get to far ahead or behind and I would experience sadness for no immediate reason. I hadn't experienced such sadness before, at least not that which I put into such words at the time. I do feel that my first trip abroad to London put me involved with such a sadness as did I imagine a few other things at a few other times in my life I cannot currently recall, though I guess there is no real reason for me to have these kinds of thoughts. For everything that seemed to matter, this was a new sadness, or at very least it was an old sadness experienced in a new way, which made it new all the same. In this regard many experiences were new to me, and I was uncertain how important this was to keep in mind. It was more important to keep in mind my feelings and the correlated activities. With this in mind I could best sync the body and mind with the environment to produce pleasant times, and minimize time spent unpleasantly.

Suffering had its place and I do not feel it necessary to give it equal time; living in the center didn't seem to require any temporal allocation to where your eyes gazed. It was more important to be seeing from the center than it was the specific spaces you placed your eye's focus; it was the lens, not the photograph which was important to the self. Easy was it to focus on the photograph, this was most all the world chose to see, and it was only other artists who inquired about your lens. I was concerned about mine. I had a goal for a short time of recording at the close of each day the things I was most grateful for—I always assumed I'd enumerate the top three and when I thought what I would write about it there were always so many more and I always only ever thought hard about one or two of them, and I hadn't written any of them down, yet. I think maybe

it was because they were often about sex and I really didn't feel much like writing about sex or even letting it occupy my mind more than it already did. It didn't change the fact that I was grateful to be having great sex with a great person as much and as often as I was grateful to be writing and making music. It felt good to put my self into the world, no longer just observing.

To harken back, I think I was trying to do more than simply record as well. I felt I was trying to craft a lens for which to view the world. A lens to see beauty in everything and with which the observer wouldn't need to leave the center to get the perfect shot. I was grateful to be testing the prototype lenses, to be engineering something so special, to be creating some thing of value, and I was also grateful to simply have crafted the lens in the first place, even if I was the only one to use it. I honestly believed I could bring it to others—this was my writing—and they would have to decide to keep the lens in place. I could only ever control creation; consumption could only ever be influenced by suggestion, of which there were many sly methods, none of which felt appropriate to me. It felt better to put my expressions honestly into the world without explanations outside of them themselves, simply and accessibly with no suggestions, no affectations. Just me. Only me. In actuality, this was all there ever was—even someone shouting someone else's message in someone else's way was still utterly themselves. I think the difference lay in the comfort of listening only to yourself and expressing that intimate and unique voice, unfiltered, in whichever way it comes out in the moment. Not striving to do it the way you did it before, even; always new, always now, always honest. It didn't matter where and when you were, whether someone was around or not, if the tape was rolling or it was just the rolling waves, every moment was a chance to express, to send a message to yourself or the world, and every single one of them was so important. It was somewhat difficult, living in this manner, and I didn't have a

firm grasp on why precisely, save for hackneyed ideas of love lost and fallen stars, and I knew these were silly reasons. The general for once was undesirable. I was and needed to be, I felt, concerned with my own trivia. It was all I had, the details of my moments. I felt the overwhelming desire to be utterly honest, again, for a while. Somewhere along the way I lost this, I think through the things I lost from my early experiments with honesty.

I didn't feel in the mood to write and I wasn't in the mood to drink beer and it so happens I was doing both, forcing something out. I didn't want it at the gates. I never asked for any of it. I never wanted it to be that way. For it to feel that way. It hurt so much. I felt so alone. So full of dark and weight. I craved something: Attention, no, connection. I wanted to connect to individuals. I wanted to speak with those who understood and whom with no words were necessary and many were spoken. I did want to be left alone too most times and I think this had more to do with my critical view of time—if I could find people for whom my time would be valued and valuable for me, I think I could spend many hours with them. There was a lot to ask now, of a person and I didn't know anyone well enough anymore to ask it of them. Fuck. What a position to be in, to have nothing to turn to help for. To have problems wholly your own and wholly related to every single thing. Life was fucked, for certain. Nothing felt ok for very long those days.

I wanted to call you, so badly to speak to you for just a second or two. So badly I still did. I was still doing anything to not call you. I thought before about the conversation we would have and I remembered I didn't want to have it. We had nothing to talk about. There was nothing left. It surprised me how quickly it all dissolved. There was still a hole where you were, and it seemed more about what you were inside me and less about you, and I think maybe it had to be that way, and you moved on quickly, so quickly for what we were supposed to have. How dare you

treat me with the disregard you did and how dare I treat you with the disregard I did. I should have paid better attention. I should have showed you differently—you know what? Fuck this. I was good to you. I was as honest as I could be. I was trying and was becoming most honest. I loved you most. I was everything for you. It wasn't enough for you. I wasn't enough for you. I wasn't for you. I was a lesson for you. It's all you'd let me be. All you want me to be. I hope you learned something from me.

BROODING

BROODING

He was brooding. It had to be about food, all of it, and where to begin was always a question.

What did good men do all day? Worked. Nobody wanted to work and the bills had to be paid, or rather: There had to be money available to pay for things. One could work for oneself more than another and need less money if one was capable and compelled. The amount of money one made was inline with the things a man asked of the world to provide.

Having spent what would be a year in twenty days only thinking and doing what I felt compelled to, with increasing reliance on no one but myself for advice, I found myself

in a most depressed state. I couldn't find anything which felt good to do for very long. Many new skills and perspectives had been acquired and unclear still was what aspects of my self were best to give to the world. (Food, yes. I had acquired many perspectives on food and I didn't want to fall victim to the syndrome where I assume my food choices and opinions are universal. I make sacrifices—some of which I don't remember that I make and some I don't remember to make—for what I consume, and these are my own.)

Respect was important, and self-respect was paramount. Without his own approval, a man was never free. Quickly approaching was the time for me to test the sustainability of this freedom. Hard work was never a problem for me; sustained effort and interest kept me from producing outside of what I required, which was only the comestibles and art. In following my mind exclusively for so long I was only spending time producing and consuming food and art—sure I was living somewhere, had clothes to wear, a computer to use, and a car to take me anywhere in America, and I could still survive with all I had already acquired in these other regards. I grew to respect the grains right around the time I started to write it all down, and it gives me confidence to realize a fortnight and a half shy of a year later these are still important to me. On my best days, writing and food are close to all there is—wine and music also playing a large role, and these are still food and writing in my perspective. What to do to sustain, placing these approved topics of focus in front of all else—possibly in place of all else, a grand statement, now it was and I had to buckle down. Now was the time to show of what one man is capable, again. It had been this time before, for other men and now it was mine.

Go West

PORTLAND TO BOSTON

PORTLAND TO BOSTON

It had felt like the time to write at several times recently and I wasn't able to put anything down, for a while, and afterwards I was not certain it was the thing to do. My expression's value didn't have a meaning. I had realized I spent so much time inside myself and I thought maybe I was paranoid or at least I was paranoid about being paranoid for those moments and it must just have been my intense curiosity to know the inner dialogue of others mixed with a confusion on how to connect on this level. More than any other time before I was conscious of how strange it was to be alive and how awkward it was to use people's time. Routine and exploration were both uncomfortable

for different reasons, and I still found so much unrest upon waking, and I felt myopic, too.

My issues would seem so small to the right observer and I waited for when this would be me. Parts of me were still so intense, and some thing had been bated which I didn't think too much about and it was important. Was it necessary to examine loss? Those were my worst moments, the ones devoted to all the things I had failed to hold on to or hold at all, and instead of focusing on all the things I did have, which felt like most to some and to me it only felt like enough to continue forward with confidence, I focused on all the things I could have and though I thought often about how to satisfy others it wasn't focused and I barely made any conclusions and ended up seeing how unsatisfied I was with it all and I knew it wasn't anyone else's fault but my own and I still looked to others to be satisfied. I could and did feel satisfied on my own, and I didn't want to, at times. Most times I was doing my best to find a state of mind where I could produce, and I had come to feel bad often after spending time which I couldn't see as fruitful. I still had a poor understanding of fruitful and this added its own confusion, and I think I did actually possess a good understanding of the things to do, I just didn't understand it yet.

The confusion and resulting unknown was not the part hanging heavy, ostensibly. It was harder to experience the lack of a deep connection with anyone. I felt lone. So much a lone so much of the time, I wasted much time mustering up the focus to do even simple tasks. Cigarettes & tea became the only things I could use to shift my mood somewhere new, and both had such negative effects I could never let myself be comfortable completely being an addicted consumer of both, and it is what I had become, among other things I had become, and it had to be ok. It had happened, and there there was no reason it had to continue. This was always the case, everyday we choose every action we take. Much to all feels in a basic way completely

out of our control, and most everything is, so much so the things in our control never seem so and we re-act the ways we have and we pretend to choose and don't remember to stop to be to listen to think to understand to not act to wonder. And in a few ways it doesn't feel like such a horrible way to live, and these ways are false and unstable and cannot produce transcendental beauty and it is important to remember.

Moments of weakness seemed to have a momentum much deceiving and often influenced behavior days, weeks, months after their occurrence. In these moments it is important to be and understand your inevitable choice and respect yourself well enough to minimize acts which contradict your character. And for yet another time in my life I was back to Gödel's bit on completeness & contradiction and I didn't like to believe it and I still knew I could never have both. And I still could get awfully close to both and when I felt like I did in that Spring, I knew it wasn't enough and I had to find something else to strive for, something more encompassing and less focused on self. I think maybe it was time to stop and figure out about others and how I could be for them. How I could make them feel and at the same time all I wanted was for someone to take a specific interest in me and care about me in ways comparable to the ways I cared about myself. It was obvious you couldn't expect this from many individuals and groups provided support of a different kind, and it was even more obvious you couldn't expect this from anything right away, and yet I still felt the absence of this connection as though it was completely natural to be there and as though it always had been, and neither of these were reality and it was only slowly starting to sink in and I had no method for how to exist in this new world of mine, and I felt a distinct sadness for a few individuals I felt a strong connection to who were now wholly out of my life and I was certain of the places in my life these individuals, some of them, felt strongly about the inappropriate nature of my

actions and I knew they were right, and it was for other reasons, and I didn't know how to explain this and more importantly, how afterwards to be a person who was let back inside, into the inner circle. It didn't seem there was any time or place for this to occur, not when everyone—self-included—had so much to be done, and most of it all was wasted time anyway. In my case, I considered it useful as mental preparation, and this was perspective and I spent more time in my head than anywhere else, by far, and it had started—a while back, I guess—to have negative, strong negative effects.

AGAIN. AGAIN. A GAIN.

AGAIN. AGAIN. A GAIN.

PBR pints at The Rhumb Line happened in place of plans for food, kitchen opened at five, cook conversing the bar, four-nineteen in the afternoon, Wednesday, eleven days into April. I don't recognize the bartender, and this is only the second time I've seen The Rhummy all sunny inside, so there is not too much I recognize in the bar, save the familiar furniture and a face or two. And save for the facts I had never seen her before today, in flesh or photo, and I couldn't recognize her, I knew the first time I saw her, the bartender was Jennifer's friend. I'd ask at some point. It wasn't too important to know, at least not right off. Peeling the layers back slowly always felt better when the temper-

ature wasn't changing quickly, and it was too cool inside for my lightweight blue gingham shirt, grey A-shirt and summer cardigan when the earth positioned the sun out of view. I would need a coat later on and I hoped I had my brown corduroy in the car and I felt a silly longing for my navy canvas jacket which had been stolen from my Volkswagen along with things remembered and things forgot in DC last fall when I was visiting Karen while taking my first steps toward getting over Alba. Karen, oh I would love to tell you about Karen, all about Karen, and Jennifer too for that matter, and it wasn't the time. They were both important to me in their own, completely unrelated ways and their stories would be told if time permitted and their stories became important again. There were more important things at the moment and I needed discipline.

Tommy was surprised at my addictions. I had known him for years, being the younger brother of my good friend Doc, and it was only over the past few when we began to grow close in punctuated intervals and I believed him and I had equal respect for one another, pretty early on, and we didn't need anything from each other, which is why, I think, we never seemed to be close, and we were in all the ways which mattered. Tommy was surprised someone with so much discipline could perform so many deliberately negative acts and he knew a lot about how to operate in this world and other subjects which were important to know about in order to find success and content.

Other things that happened involved my distribution of a dozen or so copies of *The Winter On Cape Ann & Other Writings* and one of the first reactions was from Patrick, whom I met that morning as he cracked his eyes from a less than restful slumber being chastised for his need for more sleep than the others and defended by the physicalities of drumming, no noticeable reaction to the presence of me, a bearded troubadour, sing-songing my two cents on the bean bag chair crammed next to the rest of the "C" couch he and others had spent the early morning

on, all buried in the hillside woods of Ledyard, a southern shore town, Connecticut, a ten-minute drive from the native American casinos. No one had the resources to gamble that day and I felt we were all gambling more seriously anyway.

The van was pointed towards Burlington and the air in the basement was Axe'ish body spray and we made sure we didn't lock ourselves out as we walked, Larry and I and who I would momentarily learn were Patrick and Mac, not from a formal introduction, but rather from an informal inquiry to Larry as I paced us ten steps ahead of the duo new to me. In front of us, a half-acre clearing rounded by forest pines on three sides and a row of lone pines along the trail edge; to the right, our eventual destination a hundred paces along the trail, next to a large, forgettable, grey, rusted, red-doored shed and some similarly, equally forgettable equipment. Here we stood with the grass and quickly forgot the order of things which was to be expected and though tempers were hot it was for fun always and no one could quite sync up and everyone did know inside what was wrong with the situation, and it didn't much matter and everyone of us knew it and we had to talk about something when we felt obliged to speak and it was only eleven o'clock in the morning and there was so much day ahead for more of the same and other important interactions.

The second time I spoke to Patrick his only real statement was an expression of his surprise to find a cigarette poking through my beard and he hadn't gotten to "New Years & My American Spirits" yet and I don't know if he ever did and I felt good for having written all I had and to feel what concern felt like from someone who seemed to understand and who really knew me solely from my writing and reputation, which was the way it was going to become for me and most people who knew me, if what I hoped for was reality and I guess I was actually only ever hoping for that connection anyway; it was all the same.

I did want it to be less about me, or felt like I should want it to be and knew somewhere it always had to be and maybe I should embrace it. It felt silly to feel what felt like shame for honest and open expression of self and with some there was no shame and with others there was something like it, which felt like I should take the time to understand more completely and it would continue to frustrate me in many ways I was only beginning to see. The first time I hung out with Samantha in Philadelphia, I felt and acted on the compulsion to visit again the next weekend and it was the same for her sister Melissa and Burlington, and it was different, also in other regards. I didn't understand the nature of these compulsions and there was no need to, I don't think. On some level it was nice to be around new people for which anything could happen and a lot of times that imagined anything was sex and I don't think it had much to do with it and it was always fun to imagine having sex with people and necessarily fun thus to be around people you could have sex with, and I do think it easy to feel this was a big part of it and I don't think it had much to do with the value I was looking for and it certainly didn't have anything to do with the value I found.

THE SUMMER ON CAPE ANN

THE SUMMER ON CAPE ANN

There were days of sadness for which I had no ability to cope in any way healthy and there were days of sadness.

It didn't feel right for summer to be so near and there was nothing in my control to prevent Cape Ann from warming that year, and at first I truly thought I wanted to go somewhere cold again for a while and then I thought about how good it felt mornings you could rustle yourself from bed, rub your eyes, and by the time the last drops of shower absorbed away, the day felt perfect and then I thought of

all those other mornings and I wished life was easier, like I always felt it to be, before I pulled myself some place I was warned about and I had been warned and praised and prouder for so much which was false or maybe it was just that issue of it being so hard to know what it feels like to be mentally in a position you never had before and in my exploration I was in mindscapes most unfamiliar those days and I guessed I always had been and it was like those moments when you look around your environment and maybe you're some place you've been for years or maybe you've just arrived and either way, for some time, you feel lost & lone and there is nothing to do except to feel overwhelmed and then ok. And I didn't remember these moments having great affect when I felt I possessed much. It was easy to weather the storms with a wide boat, and it wasn't impossible to do it on your own and it was harder, so much harder and it meant more and people had more to say and think about it and it made more of an impact. It was important for those who could step outside themselves enough and see more than others about possibility and purpose to focus on themselves and show everyone they could the things which were different.

It was easy to feel confidences and ownership of your past when you were wholly proud of your present. On really bad days I couldn't stand to admit all I had and I pulled my writing offline and worried who would judge me for it. I forgot how important honesty was to it all and these truly dark and confusing days helped me focus and re-instilled my sense of confidence, and I still was uncertain deep inside if it would actually all work out well and I was still too involved to see my life was going no where I was familiar with and there was not much I could expect with certainty. This was the way it was and many people knew it and my ability to lean so strongly on my imagined future was hard to neglect, easier when the imagination can't be justified by reality, and this was the case at too few times to be helpful. One of the first epiphanies I reached

after Alba left was the sprawling, viral nature of my unexamined certainties, and it made sense, my reliance on these illusions. Certain things were certainly more probable and it didn't mean anything wasn't possible. It felt better, or rather felt ok for more moments picturing all which was to be, and now I feel sad when I think of those same things, even though they are the same illusions, only now they are imagined reality and they are simply the illusions they always were and I am the thing which has changed, and it was only in the way I thought. There wasn't any other way to change that meant anything different. Realizing this helped me focus on the internals, using them as a guide for the externals. I think I may have been operating the reverse of this, or at least not with my mind as the thing to change. It had always been about behavior and action and choice and how these define you—a lesson learned from Chuck Palahniuk when I was seventeen. I still used these things with varying degrees and always in large ways to form my opinions of people and they were a more useful proxy in a number of ways for how healthy the mind was—more useful than conversations I felt—and I was never too good at using them in this way in my youth, or in the years which immediately followed.

I think life is always confusing, some times you simply forget to think about it, and other times, when you, through choice or chance, really focus on questioning, not capable to unthink and un-question all you have, these are the times when you need to surrender and live and do your best to observe without affecting in order to get to a place in which it didn't feel so strange to be. You could avoid much of life, if you felt so inclined and this wasn't the way for me anymore. I had a unique set of circumstances, nothing extra ordinary in the scheme of things, and they were wholly mine and gave perspective leading me to a compulsion to express, to record, to put it down for no reason I really understood. I had reasons, certainly, and I wasn't certain any of them were honest. They changed all

the time, the reason I started to remove myself from the world I had come to make for myself. I found it hard to explain my intentions with any degree of regularity and it felt dishonest when I changed my mind or rather, I felt I had been perceived as dishonest and I knew my reputation was important and I wanted to be.

GOING WITH IT

GOING WITH IT

Black screen.

M. I think I'm gonna shave my beard?

D. Oh yeah.

M. Yeah.

D. Ok.

M. It's just, I don't know, hard to maintain.

D. Right.

M. ...



I have a screenplay in my head which wants to come out. I don't want to speak to myself anymore. Maybe I should write as a third person.



It was a food stage and I had to be ok with that. I had told Mr. Bird, there were five activities I liked to work on and I tended to spend two-to-three week periods rotating through them. So what was there to do with bread-making? I decided to hit the open mic at The Cape Ann Brewing Company. I really implored myself to go and just when I arrived I began to feel much better than I had. It was the time for waiting. The time you spent every night consuming the art, supporting the scene. It is I think what brought me to be an artist. I wanted to consume art and the way I had learned to consume art in Gloucester that winter set my direction quite nicely. I found many activities natural and easy to do well. I experienced success and pride in ways new to me, and I did feel they were better than the ways I previously experienced them, or at least I felt they were a natural progression on to the next method.



I sat in my car trying to find the moment and I focus on other things and I feel somehow I have succeeded. Maybe that is why I write, to pay attention and pause on my thoughts. Hold them in my head long enough to feel them real and true and my mind can and still does wander back to Minglewood Tavern and then back in time to an imagined uninvited hangout and then in space to Jen & Rocky and what they were doing on weed at the moment. I wanted to be carefree with her. I was curious and I liked a lot about her and the moments we shared, which were more than I had with most people and this didn't mean much.



Alba is gone and she is not coming back to you. This is your life. Each day you decide how to be.



So much turbulence & unrest.



“What the fuck was the plan here? Are you on another bandwagon or something?”



“You can sing me anything.”



Losing track of days, everyone knew importance. Time conditioned the world to feel, and traveling with a clan made it easy to be.

Summer 2012 Daytrader toured American and life made sense. Knowledge crept into minds, born of motley days and unstructured routines. Having opportunity to spend time inside while moving great distances outside lent new perspective, and a chance to feel undone did not exist. If an action made sense, it was acceptable and everyone made sure to improve. Life was an opportunity to get better.



Do you want to see real talent? I'll show it to you everyday. Just hang around me and you'll see it. The little important ways I act better than you, most of you anyhow, and not in every way and not perfectly even in the ways I do, and in general, net ability to operate as a human being I rank near the top, at least I am trying to and succeeding more

often than not. And switching to pen was new and the tool changed the work. Every feeling changed the work. I had to learn to disconnect enough to sense and not feel, and what would there be to write about then? So clear was the inability to record without affecting. I thought again about my pencil, small and broken-pointed. I would feel less compelled to use a pen if I felt I had enough money to buy more pencils and I was in Kent, Ohio sitting in Mr. Peanut's kitchen. Compulsion to produce, put out, record overwhelmed. Stephen King had just taught me to write with the door closed and it was hard to be physically lone on tour and I had to learn to take my mental space. We explored this world, taking port nightly on floorboards and couch cushions. Our vessel was our van. And though I was the greenhorn, there were no rites of passage. I thought again about this pen and decided I could probably afford a box of pencils. And—"all I want to do is roam"—there was a big part of me which felt it was a silly difference—a sort of imagined comfort, which could be analyzed into whatever meaning one wanted—dare I say needed—to put on—and I knew it meant nothing and though form was important at this stage it was more about writing with the door closed and open was just fine for such activity and I kept it going for reasons to do with discipline. I wanted to struggle for this and I knew I would get better, it required work and I would get somewhere new. Again and again, all there ever was. Not stopping became difficult. I was impressed so often and I didn't know what was important to focus on. Times I felt the pure act of expression was tantamount and honesty was desired and crept away. Deep in my heart I knew I would never destroy what I wrote so someone would read it, someday, I knew, and it was enough, knowing this, to shut down parts of ideas completely. And after some reflection a young poet, Danny Gil, from my youth at Cooper's Union floated into my head and told me another time, "Learn to find your own." And another poet from the same time & place, Sean Wiggins,

advised me to brandish Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* and I read her first letter and before I did I knew it would be important and after I knew I was right. And I was happy the work would live in my pocket, on my phone, ready to read whenever it was the occasion.



After a few days off hazy in Kent we drove through the day to Whitehall PA. The show was at Planet Trog, laser tag, and we may have arrived too late to play; no one mentioned it. Derrick noted the smell of Europe and his love of it. Matt claimed life was good. The smell didn't bring Europe to mind, and the Such Gold, Rochester, NY hoodie did—or was it the mental map of the band's van cartooning its way south, or the images of the road through windows, or was it the writing, or was it the smell? I was thinking of you again. I dreamt of you and my father last night. He couldn't save me and you never liked to be on top and you still let me kiss you. I've come to love these dreams of you. Now they are my most recent and real experiences of you. New you is softer and more coy, how you used to be at the beginning of it all. Sadness arrived soon after and found no place to rest. Traveling with a band provided this support and if Makia was right, I should make certain I wasn't avoiding the important issues. Focus & discipline of thought were paramount.



Then it was I would not have a summer on Cape Ann. "So you're leaving us?" Dave said. "Yeah, I am, for a while," and I always had a room. I planned already to return for Fiesta the last weekend in June. "You'll get to see me drunk one time," Pete said. "Last year I smoked pot." I wanted to feel more about it all. Brittany, a girl I met in Rochester a few nights back, and thoughts of what to

do with my next few days occupied my mind. Distraction crept in and resided most comfortably and it was hard to determine what I wanted to do, now & later. Some days coffee put me to sleep. I wanted to be better. I didn't know how and we all made it up together. Moments grew and were shared and the more I focused on them, the more I could do. I had no desire to do anything and while this did bring a certain sense of fear, it was more apathy I felt. And my fear originated here, if anywhere.



There wasn't an overwhelming desire to write and there had to be something to say; I thought. Tomorrow would bring something new. Rounding out our third straight day on the road—only stopping for shows, showers, food & fuel—my mind forgot to focus on the moment as much as I had trained it to. A sinus infection was developing; my mucus changed from clear, loose, to greenish, elastic. Apple cider vinegar had potential to break down the mucus and would the infection clear out with the drainage or was a trip to the clinic inevitable and to wait stubborn. I wanted to know if I could fix this myself, with the simplest solution. I would stop everyone somewhere convenient to obtain the cider vinegar. I am so far from home and tired of overthinking my prose. There are times to write the words and times to write the ideas and I could later find them the same and for now I meant there are times I write fast and other times I write slow. I had been writing slow and now I wanted to write fast and get it out. I was starting to think poorly and it pained me the places my mind had to put itself in order to write anything. Most days I could feel like life made sense, I was succeeding and I didn't have any problems, and these were all true on those days. Days I wrote were the ones were I felt like nothing would ever feel good to do for long times. My most current unrest I felt was do to the nagging feeling I should

have inquired about reimbursement monetary for the four books I left—offering to leave them for free—at The Beat coffeehouse in Minneapolis. I worked hard in writing and physically in producing those books and why did I feel the need to give them away for free. I wanted to give gifts was one and I think it was lack of experience if I didn't over analyze it.



A couple of pints of IPA brought a comfortable feeling. The night was one to indulge and time for oneself became most important. Desire to be alone with thoughts overwhelmed. The B-Side seemed comfortable, first on Yelp!, then less while walking by. A few people sat at the bar. Few more sat outback in the area labeled the poop deck where smoking cigarettes was practiced and the music faded in and out of the din. Thoughts on meaningful topics did not manifest and it was all the same. The Zumiez bus with fifteen thousand dollars invested in a decal wrap was parked on E Burnside, blocks from the river running through downtown Portland proper. Corporate karaoke with "the real life Dundee's," Tym said, his appropriate perspective on the Mustache May awards a contest ran to make the day to day work seem less ordinary, took place with the hoots and hollers of the Zumiez crew, more excitement for no apparent reason other than the need for it. Such environments weren't meant to get to know parts of people which mattered. Walking and talking, even on beer, allowed exchanges of a different sort. Settling into a night at the Galaxy Restaurant and Lounge, I found opportunity to walk away and be lone for at least a pint or two. Every thing to talk about seemed obvious, and it wasn't to most, and the question was what was important to say. A pretty lady arrives and now the thoughts of why we should both be alone enters into mind, and as she rolls her tobacco and searches for fire, opens her laptop and I

wonder what it means to be rude. Looking for an opportunity, the lack of music is all which is heard and there must be a jukebox going unattended inside. Her story calls out to be known. The music kicks back on and cuts perceived tension. She is absorbed in a digital world and for me it is my pen & paper. It must be the same, and her mouse gestures tell of her consumption and I am producing. A difference. Another lady, a friend and the window has closed. She is not me, and what is she building? And I? What is there I can build of value? All is a record and not much more; memories are stored in minds and on the page and a few other places. I felt selfish as much as I felt honest and I did want to help in any way I could and some parts confused me, like how to keep on in the ways I had grown to love: Living long days paying attention exploring maps and minds.



If I imagine the past well as it happened and less how I perceived it I would say writing now, starting to, in a lawn chair surrounded by craft services—the food tent, unsure why I would call it anything other than we did. Only Danny called it that once and it was him and I standing off E. Pike Street after Rainfest in a parking lot with other friends from home near a rented Honda Accord or was it a Ford? And I don't even know now if this was when the food tent was called craft services or if this was another conversation. I lost parts of memories like this recently. The provenance of thoughts seemed so important and now obviously it was the idea itself. It took effort to pick up and continue the same thought lost to digression's woods—surrounded by all these strangers. They stare and I am the strange one, I try to separate, to be alone and I find it easiest where I do and I don't need to find it elsewhere. I am free. Stars shine bright and I was remarkable. I could feel the energy I brought my self to places I

exerted my influence. It was subtle and serious and I was to get better at sensing and then controlling it. Now an ass bends into my view and I swear again inside. Some of the others come into focus and I enjoy views of each one, ladies of all sorts, contains enough beauty to drive countries of men wild and none knew any of it save for the smallest bespeckled dust stained facet. Their raisers demerited them and they lost the most basic human confidence to be content. And another lady sits in view. Plastic table foot rests connect our rhythms more closely and something is wrong with her. Heat rash on her legs or maybe a sprain. I try not to care and realize how long she has occupied my view, and it is obvious I want to be alone and I still feel rude and only because it is a girl pointed and gesturing toward me. What do I really know about body language. I seemed to be doing ok with it all and now I wasn't the only one in sunglasses.

ZUMIEZ

ZUMIEZ

The artist slowed & sensed & made & stayed. Movements meant no thing. What did they all have to do & what did they all have. They & I always had our way. Matters were created. Men creators. Of only memories. Wake up monkeys. Wake up to the gifts of the world. You cannot place demands on the use of a gift & you can only control your mind. Be smart. Sharp. Don't lose control.

TEXTS

TEXTS

Today I saw a river fall
without shedding a tear,
Witnessed people wish
the clouds to break-up, for
light to persevere.
Many gathered to capture
the setting sun and failed
to keep it in their mind,
A brightness between the
clouded sky and mountain
tops few will stand to
watch it rise.



This is a good spring. I feel more in tune with the seasons this year. Had a hot end of summer, a lot died in the fall, the winter was more mild than expected and the sun came early and keeps shining on new things.

And I take you to understand the literal and metaphoric meanings embedded.



You ladies already seem so far. Days and nights like yesterday and today are special and I'm really happy we all share it in our memories. Had a most excellent afternoon with your sister and family. Went swimming at the quarry and ate an awful lot of bread.

I feel compelled to give Gloucester a proper goodbye this week. Our paths will cross again soon I hope. By the way, I forget what prefaced it, but your mom said I should live in the barn with you, so if this whole Daytrader things doesn't work out...

I've got just enough time to do it in a stress free, nostalgic way, I think.

Closing chapters and starting new ones, so much excitement. I'm enjoying and learning how to surrender to it all and perfect my days, which seems all there is.

I love how open your family is with their feelings. Your mother told me I was a good man, and I can only think of a few other compliments I have received which were so honestly and easily delivered and which I valued more.

We were talking last night about how we're excited to continually meet up with you all throughout our lives. It's so wonderful to meet people who attract good people and carry good energy with them to everything.



Eight hours to Cleveland or something. We have to make it to Fort Wayne, IN by tomorrow night.



Soooo sleepy. We've been driving day and night since Monday after the Hot Water Music show. Still have a few more days like this until we make it to Seattle and can relax. Currently in Minnesota on our way to Minneapolis. Just finished Bukowski's Factotum—It was my favorite by him, that I've read so far. Reading some essays by Jonathan Lethem at the moment. Brought a whole backpack full of books.



On our way to Fargo. Probably still in Minnesota still.



We climbed down and up the rock faces of Whiskey Dick Canyon, and watched the sun set over the river somewhere in Washington, 150 miles out of Seattle. Coming up to 30 hours in the van.



The Pacific Northwest... if you haven't been out in these parts, I'm pretty sure it was made for humans like us. The cities and towns are nestled in the forests and mountains, the huge douglas firs and others and snow covered crests, and it all makes you feel as small as we are. In words, I guess it could sound similar to New England, and the climate and ethos are somehow different from what I have seen in the East.



In Portland for our off day today. Then Fresno, CA tomorrow.

Six dudes, a dodge van, and a trailer, taking this nation and showing it how we do.



Drinking local Oregon IPA in Portland tonight makes me think of all those Dead Eye Doubles you served me.

Portland has a Gloucester vibe, with more bikes and vegan food. Heading into the downtown with Derrick—the drummer and most kindred soul in the van with me. Excited to see what's here. The scenery, huge pines, big clouds, and mountains, is beautiful. The cities around here feel like human bastions in the great big wilderness. Comforting in the way it makes you feel as small as we are.



I'm in Portland OR, been up since first light. Received ounces of bud last night, a gift from the label. Blunt, blunt, blunt, metal jam session, blunt. Sunrise, espresso, and an iPhone. Trying to figure it all out.

Wild wild nights and wild days. Seeing much and often when I remember not to think. Writing when I can find the space to. A perfect set of days, truly. I look forward to sharing more music and mental meanderings with you when I'm back on the east coast. Be well brother and keep your footing sure up on that ladder and otherwise.



Currently making sense of myself here in Portland, OR. Yesterday, a day off, offered occasion to walk the wilderness and amazement easy to find among the douglas firs repeatedly reaching for the stars, shaming skyscrapers for

giving up. As I stood on the top floor at the Rise Records office, and saw Mount Saint Helens in the distance, 1200 feet shorter than in '81, before it exploded, I think some humans only think to climb mountains made by money and I think there are humans who take the stairs and humans who climb Mount Saint Helens.



About to get my Portland bagel on. Been sitting in this here coffeehouse since opening, strolling the streets since first light. Wild night with Craig and the Rise Records dudes; blunt, blunt, blunt, crazy metal jam session, blunt, blunt, woke up in the van at 4 AM and couldn't find sleep. Found some swings and swing the sun to rise, sat in a playground sand pit and imagined playing with the bulldozer and what it's like to be a kid. Remembered falling off the top of a slide, alone, when I was in the first grade, and I thought then it was a really high distance to fall, and I thought now it was still pretty high up there.

How many times I have found myself where you sit today. When I remember, it is easy to know at every moment we only have the ever changing picture in our eyes, and no matter what fills our pixels, it really is all quite beautiful.

And today, as we drive through the scalding desert, only wind and windows and no clothes to cool us down, only flat, lifeless earth dashed with greens to raise our spirits, I would trade spaces and sit across from your computer, stories up in the air, conditioned to bate sweat and thoughts too hot. What is there to do?



Life in the Daytrader van has placed me beside myself as often as I've been inside myself, and both are, I feel, precisely what I crave. I realized recently the difficulty and sprawling nature of the desire to be productive. How often

have we thought: “Man, I wasn’t productive at all today?” and felt bad? How often is this our complaint? I knew for me it is almost daily, and the only cure was to spend all day producing. I have switched. My goal is no longer to be productive; it is to be sustainable. If I was not sustainable today, I will feel bad.



Met a man who wished he was a freight train, an engine running. Me a lady who bought glasses to match mine. Learned and it was all the same as it’s been.



Moments and memories, all there ever is, I have learned this and my days are full of each. We’re a couple hours outside of Fresno. Spent last night under the stars, fire-side, feet from the edge of a cliff dropping into a quarry where hours before we stopped to swim and decided to stay put. The water was cold. Jumping off the cliff bated breaths and raced hearts, mostly from the cold splash below. The food was cooked well and we went to sleep high and with clear heads and hearts. Today, we drove past mount Shasta, saw the snow covered cap up around us and entered the desert hours later. Now there is only heat and the van.



Driving out of Fresno past
nut and olive and grape
farms, sheets green
blanket the desert. Soil
from sand. Wet in dry.
Bright sun, strong
shadows and what value is
life out here, or otherwise.



Wish I was still camping,
and the coast will be here
and there is time between
to be used.



Northern Los Angeles county, at Stories, a book shop and café, finishing a novella by Robert Walsner, which I began a few hours ago. The weather is sunny and breezy. Perfect for a walk. The novella is about a walk. It's title: *The Walk*. It may have been the best single piece of writing I've ever read. I was compelled to purchase the only copy, and it is intended to my mother and then my friend Paul.



I am happy enough to be in mind now and again. I sit, espresso drank, jam and butter and breading waiting for the same, in northern Los Angeles county, at Stories, book and cafe shop, reading, inspiriting and now thinking about you again, as I did when I awoke to your message.



The day ended with waning excitement. I busked from the first time and I understood how it felt and how natural it is and I was content to know I would busk again and have more moments birding for people, hooking lines in their minds, saying what I wanted them to hear, saying what I needed to say. I made a dollar fifty. One dollar from three generations of Mexican women, the giver a toothless grandmother living in stasis until one day she would die, the car an only Chevy from the 80's, rusted and still alive; fifty cents from the shop owner next to me, who offered me luck and felt obliged to give as she snuck glances and

listen intently as she closed up shop. How was I scary? How as it weird to watch and listen? I was on the streets singing for all. Humans act with good intentions and are strange and awkward and don't know how to act with natural propriety.



You are most certainly here with me, only a few others could be. I am drinking a beer here, contemplating a three dollar margarita on special for Mondays, what else would I be doing? I'm traveling with some friends of mine who are in a rock band called Daytrader. They had a meeting today in Westwood. As we passed Brew Co, I hopped out of the van and told them to call me when their meeting was done. I miss you, my dear. For now I'll continue to think fondly of you until I can see you in person and be fond with you.



The Westwood Brewing Company is not The Cape Ann Brewing Company and it'll do. I learned to drink beer here, years ago when I was in between college semesters, before I knew how to write, before I knew what to say, before I knew how to think. It is strange to sit here, with the places I've been, to be back. I wonder how it will be when I return to Gloucester, decades from now. I wonder if it will feel like I do now.

Well yes, I will be back soon and some day decades from now I will also return. I know how it will be when I return soon; it's later on I am unsure of.



I will try my best to be human and I am only every trying to share my moments with others, and my voice is what it is when it is and I am sorry, to change that would

be false. I'm pretty sure I gave that dollar to a barista as a tip the next day when I returned to Stories and had another espresso. The fifty cents is still in my pocket with the other change.



We're all so strange. Today I met an Indian and he asked me to sing something true and I did. And he pointed to a statue of a fat pig sitting and he asked me what it was. I said it was a pig, well it's a statue, of a pig, and his name was Jesse and he didn't wear a belt and his pants kept slipping down, like Michael Sawyers's the first time I drank in Gloucester.



We're just leaving Phoenix. On our way for food, that ole Grand Canyon and Salt Lake City. 15 hours on the road today.



Springfield MO currently. It's wonderful and draining in all the good and bad ways. I think I really crave time to reflect on it. Excited to come to Pleasant Street Tea Company and write it all down for a few days.



I can hardly believe we're homeward bound. The love and friendship behind the trailer tonight was wonderful. So glad Mix Tapes and you were on this tour. Perfect end to our month on the road.

With something like nine hours on the road, I've got my eye on the map, not the clock. At least at the end of this drive I get my bed, my guitar, and my mother's home cookin. No more Daytrader shirts for a little while.

Home sweet home at last. That was some fuckin drive. Damn. Not sure whether to shower or pass the fuck out.

Laundry, check. Poops, check. Shower imminent. Then sleep. Oh glorious sleep. I like to have things squared away before I rest, makes sleep easier to find and waking so much more pleasant.

Oh man. I slept like the dead. Wonderful. Cuddled up with my old stuffed cat.

BACK IN GLOUCESTER

BACK IN GLOUCESTER

It was time to listen to the advice I said so often when speaking of writing: Write the most honest sentence you could. Then, write the next. Hemingway taught me. It was in *A Moveable Feast*. I was on a train in Italy, mid-November. Then it was the end of June and I said to my first cousin in some ways I felt so far from my high school days and in others it didn't feel any different. I was confused, for weeks all I looked forward to was being back in Gloucester, and it did feel the same being back and I knew no one knew how it felt and I thought maybe she did.

I met her in Salt Lake City and I told her maybe she would be Becca when I wrote about her and she said I

should call her Solè or something similar I knew to mean sun, and I told her I already had a sun in my writing and I knew more than I had before Alba was no longer my sun and it didn't matter, not having her. I knew she was a mistake. I'd known it for a while and it was finally believed unconditionally. I still found myself wondering about her and it was how it went, my mind would drift to Alba and then drift elsewhere. It was this new one who spent so much time in my thoughts. I worried I was too self-centered for her. She saw me in ways quite wonderful, and I her and much of it was thoughts on how she affected me, at least the ones I could make sense of, and I didn't want to make sense of it or write about her. This worried me, and I wanted to experience her the way I had our first and only night together, without words, without expectations. She couldn't be expressed in words, not be me. My clarity helped me write about much and not her, not now. And thoughts of tea and CK came in. I had thought to change topics first and my mind travels there.

The first day back in Gloucester it rained most of the day. Cut-off jean shorts rolled past mid-thigh and a lightweight grey and blue large-gingham cotton shirt proved cold for the damp conditioned air. Ava's apartment located a few blocks from the Lone Gull Coffeehouse where I wrote contained a pair of jeans to warm me, a place to charge my phone, a cat, a pair of catnaps, and a couple hours of guitar. The day had no plans. There was always the Open Jam at The Rhumb Line and a trip out to Lynn & CK for herb and jams added itself to the agenda. The rain stopped. The sun peaked out, and quickly hid behind clouds. CK came to Gloucester, and we gently hung out in Ava's apartment. I was becoming quite comfortable there and glad I decided to stay with her. I misunderstood her previously and now I was starting to understand how she was sage, and then how quickly it all changed.

My desires were shifting to a place better suited to release. I was back to my old routines all of a sudden, the

plan all along, and it felt different now. I was present in a new way. The world opened itself to me. Kunal's words echoing through Eva and then me made their way into Ava as I said, "Good finds good," and I couldn't tell quite how this epigram affected her and I didn't try to make her sense it any way specific. It wasn't an important idea in the sense it could change your life to know this. It was simply the way it was.

Interruptions abound, and there were none. Every thing was part of it, part of life. Paying attention made days long and made me full and made memories of the best kinds, I felt. I could find much and it could be a cheap way to distract myself from what? Paying attention to more aspects of each moment couldn't also be a distraction, if one wanted to be in the world. If the goal was "oneness", nirvana, et cetera maybe focusing on "Ommm" was a surer path and I did desire to build bridges for people. I was trained as a mechanical engineer and this metaphoric idea resonated quite nicely and I felt even more capable and I thought it was justified. Joseph Campbell was right. The most difficult part of the hero's quest was the return from the dark carrying the golden fleece:

This brings us to the final crisis of the round to which the whole miraculous excursion has been but a prelude—that, namely, of the paradoxical, supremely difficult threshold-crossing of the hero's return from the mystic realm into the land of common day. Whether rescued from without, driven from within, or gently carried along by the guiding divinities, he has yet to re-enter with his boon the long-forgotten atmosphere where men who are fractions imagine themselves to be complete. He has yet to confront society with his ego-shattering, life-redeeming elixir, and take the return blow of reasonable queries, hard resentments, and good people at a loss to comprehend.

I didn't feel I was a hero anymore. At least I couldn't actively put my mind there on all my days. I found it hard now to have any conversations, even ones about myself. I found it hard to say or think anything important. I had come to lean on words and there were none or not enough time to make the current ones ring true and when I thought how I would make her, make Wildflower understand, I knew it was a turning point.

Apathy was no longer acceptable. I had to care or not care and it was obvious I cared and I made myself present for people. It was the most I could offer, my time, and most to all of it was spent observing, so much so I soon found her pulling away. There was so much I already understood about it and still I refused to act "out of character." I refused to try to make anything happen. And there were such problems here. One, glaring and bugging me since my first refusal: Did I really believe I understood so much? Thinking much does not imply thinking well. Plenty of people went right on being bad drivers, and this was a small point. There was the option I was thinking well. A larger problem was my issue of tidying up. I seemed to want to express it with the idea of compartmentalizing and I always thought I was bad at it and now it was so clear it was all I ever did. My compartments, if perceived, would appear vast, dark, and cavernous I imagined or else they were as open and vast as the night sky. Either way or some other my compartments were of a character which denied and made exploration of anything other than a windy path laughable. Rocket ships were still a single trajectory through space-time, one equation, one set of coordinates, one view, one perspective, always.

Alex came to mind instantly as I thought of the first time I fully felt how the escape was hopeless. I was on a bench sitting outside a bar in Pollenzo with him and our bikes to my right, waiting for our lovers to finish class. It was so real, the inevitability of the man behind the periscope. There was nothing else. Various body positions, chemi-

cal states, sensory events, and it was the same ball of energy we were locked inside and I took a moment to consider deeply becoming a monk in the school of thought, how Tym had expressed it, not the monk part. I wasn't sure I wanted to be a student of anyone and I wasn't confident I could make it on my own and I didn't trust anyone else's perspective. I valued the minds and bodies of others much and I minded my effect on them as such and didn't think any of them knew enough to give me advice and this had more to do with my vastness than my pride. I wanted so badly to find someone who had walked my path and could point me where to go and I could hear the voice inside telling me this does not exist outside of self. I am the warrior guide I seek. I am looking for the one who has gone before and I can say, "Come this way, give up this, don't think that," like in the movies like it's been told to me. And I know lost souls, some more, some less like myself wrote those films too.

As I continued my series of thoughts I wondered what would happen if I spent time alone in the woods. There was an awful amount of chatter inside and out and I wanted a goal, a direction, a purpose. I felt so ordinary. So so ordinary.

WEST

WEST

It starts with deciding to live differently. A decision must be made, to shed, to remove, to listen to the senses and do what makes sense paramount. All it took was a day to get my head on straight. A walk to the grocery store provided everything I needed to feel comfortable in the kitchen. Once I was eating well, my mind could focus on work and what to do about money. I said to Jacqui I was not letting the happiness of today depend on the happiness of tomorrow and I told Tessa too and I reminded myself several times since this was a good way to live and the word good had problems as did all these ands and I didn't mind much. I did feel there were better and worse ways for

people to live and I was learning each day the subtle aspects of life which made hours seem long and full and the end of the day welcomed and more so the start of a new day even more exciting. What is life? Somehow I found myself in Salt Lake City. It was the summer of 2012 and there was something about the mountains though it felt strange to so easily and fluidly move myself to them. It didn't feel as epic as I thought maybe it was and it was time to simply document and not worry about what I was saying. I didn't want for much. I didn't want to write about any of it. Maybe I was done exploiting my memories or maybe I was done defending them. I didn't want to commit to the future. I didn't want to comment on the past. It left right now. Tessa had gone to work and I led myself to a coffee-shop I'd been meaning to frequent for the first time. An espresso, cheese & herb foccacia, and a Mexican Coca-Cola in a pint of cubed ice and I sat trying to find the thing to speak of. I gazed at photos of Tessa and I from yesterday's camping trip at Mirror Lake in the mountains of Wasatch. Tonight Tessa offered a horror movie viewing and I knew I'd ask her if we should stop at Redbox, and we'd probably find it free and streaming online. This was life, tonight. Wake up 10,000 feet above the sea, to the sun rising over our field, our trees, our lake for now we were the ones there, all afternoon, all evening, all night, all morning. Guests in Bear Country, welcomed and alive now thinking again about all I could offer the world and how best to do so. What was the medium and the message, what was it? It felt nice to be writing again in the notebook where I learned to write, finishing the last nine, counted them twice, nine pages. Much changed, much the same. Hard to believe how it all happened, and I was happy I wrote it down. I left much out, maybe the best parts, probably the best parts. And I think you will learn them enough in time, if they remain important and I remember them. Tessa liked to dance, around and around and I found pleasure in her. I was happy. Happy. Holy shit. I had found

someone beautiful to share life and neither of us were willing to accept it as permanent and it worked for a while and I hoped for more beautiful days and I knew we had many to share and maybe one day we'd decide to share our wealth with others separately or maybe together and we could always remain selfish and keep our beautiful life to ourselves. We knew how it all worked for each other, we were right as much as we were wrong, and we were together. As I let my mind wander I thought I would make mini-focaccia in Tessa's muffin pan, would be a good way to use that three-day-soured dough and then I thought how Tessa set the bar so high for human interaction. I'd never felt so tuned to someone and it required effort at times to focus my mind enough to be with her, and she could bring me right to the moment we were in, snap me out of myself and into our moment and I was writing about her and it felt right. Oh how strange it did get inside my head sometimes and other times it felt perfect and they were all so different, my moments and I was working hard on allowing my physical state to have a large part to play in my mental state. It was another day soon and the mornings did often feel clearer after a shower. The night before Tessa and I were too stoned for each other and I couldn't sync with her and I tried and tried and somewhere after four o'clock in the morning, after some strange horror movie about suicide and chartrooms and the outlets for our inner selves, after some sleep, no love, and three quarters of a cigarette, a lone on the stoop, after I peed and a few passionate kisses met with sleep full motions and mutterings and no sex and some times after thinking about jerking off right next to her and after thinking about what that would actually feel like, it must have been after four when I calmed down and realized how lost I had been, all night. No problems existed now, in that moment. We walked with varying levels of comfort through life, most days we stumbled, stutter-stepped, tripped at some point, some days we fell, everyday we made it somewhere comfortable to sleep.

Beautiful, sweet Tessa was by my side, asleep then on my shoulder, in my arms. What else was there to have on my mind? It always had to be her when she was there. Where, where, where had I gone in moments spent with her devoting my thoughts elsewhere, and I don't think they had gone too far, my thoughts were on her and well, I feel like I was simply stoned and she'd learn that about me. I, like her, couldn't be the same all the time. My momentary moods were complex and relied on a number of satisfactions and I was still learning how to surrender to the moment and how to feel satisfied. Learning all the time how to wrangle the mind of mine. How to be best. How to be. What was happiness and what was comfort. What was the desire to make my own? Everything I needed came to me, always, with time and patience and usually without paying strict attention to the things. Attention was better spent with the now, and what was there now? I found myself listening to pop music as I wrote, without other reason other than it occupied a space and allowed the mind a satisfaction and created a space for thought, strange it did seem and why worry why? Whatever works, Woody Allen knows how to speak, what to say, and has built himself room to create freely it seems and he didn't seem like a happy fellow and what did I know of him really? He was one of the great recorders and not much else about his life would matter. And mine? Was I great? At times I had the confidence of it all. When I wrote, I felt like a rambler. How I desired to write with intention. Who was I to act without intentions? The conversation where I lost her yesterday. Tessa, my darling, had inquired what my intentions were, sitting in the west side of downtown Salt Lake City, smoking and too stoned to grab onto all the thoughts her question incited. I didn't answer or answered maybe slightly and she saw me as grumpy and I was tired and maybe it was her feeling reckless as she later said and wanting to pick a fight and it is hard to get me worked up, especially when the subject is my moods. I get more

self-critical and less available. And I think though we both claimed to be without intentions, we were wrong. I couldn't speak too well of Tessa's at that time in my life, we were still so new to each other and I do believe I did understand them, even if I was unwilling to commit to my understandings on the page. My intentions weren't as ineffable: I wanted to live and work simply with the world and teach others the joys of working for yourself and living for others. You have to know your role, and the roles of everyone around you if you are to help everyone you interact with be better. That night I would finally play an open mic in Salt Lake City. I'd been there a fortnight and my nights had been occupied by a certain Miss Tessa and I guess she filled the space each night where I was lonely enough to cut myself open for strangers. I opened myself to her and it was time to start putting myself into a position to expand my influence. I had an opportunity each night here to say something into a microphone and it was important, that outlet, I think less for me now or at least less in the ways it had and more in the ways (maybe even more self-centered) focused on the world. I could play for them and get inside their heads, leave a message in my memory. And when I did play for them I felt it didn't matter and I didn't, at least not in the way which made a difference to me, how it was always, most times you could never tell how you changed people, what they learned, what was different because you existed. And back again, what is life? Love, almost said love there and maybe the confusion was honest in ways I was too afraid to admit. Did I fear? Yes, no. No. It wasn't fear I felt. It was more akin to sadness in the recognition of the lack of certainty and it sure did feel an awful lot like fear. There was an intensity to Tessa and I, a way we reacted to each other which wasn't pleasant and I made myself concerned and in five minutes the mood would change and I'd been worked up for nothing. And what was there ever to be worked up about? The answer was nothing. From somewhere deep

within, the id Tessa mentioned at times maybe, it had a voice. Clarity and distinction came with time and practice, and I heard a voice from a good friend of Dr. Robert Kull, When you listen to your heart song, listen for us all, or something more or less the same, with more or less imploring and I didn't know their relationship well enough to remember how they spoke to one another and maybe it's because he edited her out or maybe she did herself or maybe she wasn't important to him. What is love? A decision to care. I wanted brightness and happiness and you couldn't have it all the time. That morning as I sat and played over the events leading up to the separation seemingly larger than the few blocks between Tessa and I, I couldn't tell who was in a mood. I felt I was projecting caring, love, honest desire to feel close and intimate. I was met with acceptance without effort to show the same. She still felt distant and maybe I was giving off feigned intimacy, a lackluster effort to make her feel important, and a desire to start my day independently. And what was wrong with our morning? Nothing. There were no problems, only energy exchanges and interactions, a very complicated vibration of things, bouncing, always bouncing off of one another, moving, resonating. Stability was a state always interrupted by time or length. Paul told me in my mind, "What you measure becomes what's important, so make sure you're measuring what is important." This was the same as learning to pay attention to the world with a set of perspectives which made you happy and it was also the same as Tessa's calendar hanging over her bed, between her windows which encouraged, "I can focus on the positive aspects," and which had a heart drawn on July 12th, the day I arrived to her and July only had one more day, two more sunsets and she would fly east to New York and I would stay here. Matthew was in Boston, with Derrick and a few others in a house, Lower-Allston, situated north of Interstate 90 and the commuter rail tracks. It wasn't the hipster place to be. It was where the real

hip and other undesirables lived. I never lived there and there was always Matthew's room when he was on tour and during those months the van would be preferred over the space where Matthew and Derrick would occupy the rest of the year. I didn't miss it, life in the van. And something was missing. A state of mind cultivated by the way everyone let you off the hook whenever you wanted. Only a few times was I implored to do anything and it was only that time Tym convinced me to cliff jump into the quarry after Matthew and Sarah's sister, only nineteen at the time and I twenty-eight already. It didn't feel like much and I only realized it when her clothes came off and she stood there in her red bra and baby blue panties or was it the other way around, or maybe her bra had little daisies polka dotted on, and she looked young and I felt bald, and I had felt like I was losing my hair since I was in middle school. I remember worrying with my mother and Sue, my hairdresser, not at Pat's Place where she first worked and first cut my hair and where her and the miscellaneous nubile hair-washers were the first women to touch me, on my neck, around my ears and these were still my favorite places to feel a woman touch me, well, among my favorites. It was at T. Carlton Salon where she later worked and, well maybe now my memory was wrong and I do remember Sue telling me some number of hairs we all lose each day on average and I thought of the clumps of hair in the shower drain and then about how I learned to move them off the drain so my semen could flow away without a trace or a trace I could think of and why didn't I throw out those hair clumps, it would have been nicer and may have given away my self and I never did trust Sue; I always felt I lost more than the average number of hairs each day and she didn't know anything about me and it did seem she knew me better than a stranger and I doubt I could be recognized by her now even if I tried, which would be weird and where was there to go from here? A strange tangent which had no point other than some thing accidental and

what else was any of this? Life from any other perspective than your own was most of it all. Your perspective was the only thing holding up your world, and how it was malleable was unknown to many. At times I felt I understood something important about the way to think about the world and other times, mostly when I tried to help my mother see like I do, I felt what I knew was common and trite and ordinary and everyone knew it and I was misguided for thinking it important and unknown, and still I felt if I had expressed it different or rather if she was willing to let the idea overwhelm her, she could live different and be happier than she was and someone always had to help themselves first. Change can only come from within. The external environment is so important and the courage and strength to change it must come from within as with the strength & courage to persevere in an environment you find yourself momentarily stuck in for one reason or another. There is always a choice, to stay or leave and the convictions of our other choices may make it appear different and it is not; we always choose everyday where to go, what to do, who to be and at first this is obvious and the true implications of this are scary, to know every single person in your life could simply decide to be different, to not be there for you, to abandon you, and this is life, this is love, human interaction, human dependence, security. We strive to feel safe and the only safety is in surrendering to everything out of your control and this didn't seem to cover it. There was more to surrender. More to give up on, more to realize wasn't permanent. All was a prison otherwise. With reflective mind there was no prison and nothing to take from you and you had so much to give and what would happen if age took the mind away? Didn't matter for today. Momentary living was interesting and presented its own problems and stresses and at least I think the high's were clearer and more deserved and we all wrote our own story and to assume my highs and lows were fundamentally different than other's seemed wrong.

It was a great day. The world again looked marvelous, conquerable & infinite. Maybe I would change the idea to infinitely conquerable and it wouldn't quite be the idea I started with and it was still a nice sentiment and probably true. I had built my own bicycle a few years back, when Greg had first moved to Boston and he lived in the common room/third bedroom, small as it was, and I was quite proud I had and I was quite proud the first ride we took, everything not in its place and everything still working out fine and even better than fine. We rode further than I felt we expected to and I can't remember if Greg felt similar at the time and I had just learned Greg's bicycle from that night had been stolen a few months back and I had just brought mine from my parents' home on Long Island to Miss K's garage in Salt Lake City and Greg and I had learned how to build those bicycles together, learned to build together and I didn't think I could give back to Greg what had been stolen, ever, and it didn't matter anymore. Not because it wasn't important—it was still important in the way it shaped both of our lives, how they were now, in a big way. It didn't matter because there was nothing to do about it except bury it. Greg had told me if he knew one thing it was how easy it was to bury the past and I guess he was right, if you were so inclined and chose to forget parts of yourself, you could bury the past. And maybe that was how we moved forward. I awoke at some early hour the next morning and I missed my father and wished we'd spent more time fishing together. The truth I had to live with was I never had time for him, to make him the most important thing and I realized how far we were from getting back to a place we never were. For decades a closer relationship with my parents was at most a few hours in the car and this was only physical. I thought how my father looked old and I pictured him older than I think he looks. I was sad. I stole something from him and we never had a close relationship, so I wasn't sure what I'd stolen. I removed an element of my love and caring when he let his

racism play a role in my sister's life and I think I had said and shown him enough to let him know how deeply this affected me and I think he couldn't make me the most important thing in this case and I was alone for a long time. I hadn't realized it with all the people around and I didn't mind most times. It felt good to consider situations and states without regard for my outward expression of ideas and there were those times I felt like an outsider to everything. There was a joy lost somewhere and I don't think it was something easy to hold on to, at least not for me and I did think there was a calming and comfort I knew and failed to know quite how to cultivate. Nature. I wanted to spend so much more time in the wilderness outside the mess of people struggling to exist together. Then it was the end of summer and it was mid-September when a chill was obvious upon waking and without checking the temperature outside I dressed in a navy blue A-shirt and matching fitted flannel with the sun appearing through the window blinds as the earth shifted enough to move the mountains blocking earlier in the morning. Brisk air engulfed my body pedaling the few blocks to the museum, and I had thought about being in the woods, walking towards the mountain tops and how I didn't desire to be there then and I wanted the desire to return, and it wouldn't for a while. There were other things on my mind. It was difficult to know what was important to spend time on, and this difficulty increased with age. Days passed with no record and no reason for concern. Wine helped quit the mind's flurry. Tea did something else and was more attractive. And I wished I'd have drank more wine than I did, at least more often, I mean. October when by quickly and felt full on most days and there was always an act perfectly fitting the occasion (event, date, time?). Sundays had been, four weeks then and with only a few exceptions for months as well, reserved for time in the woods. It was important, exposure to all the western from of the Wasatch had to offer. The record was less important to me for a while,

until I learned better how to resist the flow less than I was comfortable and routine played a role. And then I did what I had done so much before and I began to write and it did always have to start this way, the act of writing, it was about examining a mind state and my mind's state changed at a rate too rapid at times to translate and record, I just wrote. There were pauses in though long & short if I could keep my focus on honest mind record and physical states of anxious uncomforted obstructed the flow and only in a ripple or two if I was attentive to the mind. I still had the animal senses of our ancestors and the critic pops into see how much is written and compared to how long it feels, it seems like too hard of work for the product and I was always thinking, now I was simply playing attention and thinking only about the act itself and soon it would bore and I could get onto pressing matters and my mind keeps flitting to Miss K and I didn't want to be rude or exploitive or anything which would compromise the heart & mind of Miss K. And some times I would simply pause and in the days leading up to the separation between Miss K & myself I needed to focus. Work was taking its toll, not allowing me the space to think clearly about what was most important. And now when I examined the page I was quite proud and it was only double the word count, approximately. And I also enjoyed my handwriting. It was becoming something quite beautiful to watch this code being written. I could pay attention to the pen and it all became so much more exciting and I wondered how my conjugations and tenses were doing and my tooth ached for a second and I clenched my teeth for a second. A deep breath and to continue became easier. I knew I would show this as it came out and it took the pressure off. It made me stop to edit and consider a bit and constraints were ok & I didn't know yet what was off limits and I really don't think it matters to anyone but me. That may not be how I feel, I am not certain how I feel about the topics I may edit. All I know is I will put energy into

writing. I would like to come up with a passion. Different than being passionate. I have been passionate all my life and I couldn't tell you...wait. I could. Silly thought. I simply find it difficult to elucidate my passion. It is multi-faceted and I still find it difficult to come to terms with the intersection of so many perspectives and views. Constant mind explosions and I felt apt. I could make use of all these good ideas in an efficient and effective way. The work has to be poignant. People in the society today consume to so much, good ideas get added to all the other ideas and it gets overcrowded in the mind. All I wanted was a peaceful existence and I picture goats, pigs, cows, vegetables, fruits, a wooden table, baskets and myself though out. I craved food and wondered when i would let the interruption persist and I thought of Evie and maybe Gloucester first and after Amanda and her mother and then there was that break for food and it was ok, what happened in between. Miss K was likely to have a reaction to my indifference and her reactions as not mine to judge or allow influence. I went to Salt Lake Coffee Break after a meal at Arby's and I felt the poetic nature of it all and felt sad and I was to cry, not then, soon. It was welling up. And there would be time to reflect and not fight it anymore and for the time I remained focused as best could. The Emancipator album *Safe in the Steep Cliffs* I had been attempting to attend to and it didn't seem I was making progress, having started the album several times. Now was the time to finish it and where had I been, it was vague, the answer in my mind, and I kept moving forward for desire's sake. I would take you, reader, with me on my diversion and attempt to stay on the course. Why should you be allowed a break if Roxy and I weren't to take one? You still have a choice to stop reading and I could take a break and pick it up again and you couldn't know. You may sense a change in pace or grammar or mood or, if you hold the original manuscript you may see a change in script or instrument or even a date and time and you will never know which of

it all is art and which is fact and what happened outside of the story and we had to trust each other to stay honest, to remain present for all acts. It is difficult certainly, and other times it simply pours out and part of me liked writing by hand because I could use the shape of the words to dictate my prose, to some degree and not precisely. I was not one of those, not in the memoir writing art and a majority of the time when I tried otherwise I wrote an effete introduction and left it in the middle of the work where it belonged. I had so much in my head at the time I wondered where it was all to go. These days Feynman, Watts, Asimov came to mind when I thought of my education, then Dell. And each day was different, truly for me. Some days I was frightened of missing the point and some days I was confident in the way I played. Love. What role outside of compassion did it play? And I didn't know still and was learning what type of man I was and on several occasions Rob Dell told me I would only marry a few women in my life, I should choose carefully, and I googled how many wives Feynman had and it was three. And Henry Miller too and Woody Allen seemed in my mind's record to have had an interesting love life. Einstein? He fit the bill too, I thought, and I really did consider these individuals as my yardstick. What does that say about my character? The question didn't hold much weight for me and I thought about a cigarette break. It had been two months since I quit smoking and I still thought about it everyday. A few days back I bought a pack of American Spirits and smoked one on the stoop on a street I had never walked on before that night and I didn't think too much about it and felt fine and no increased urge to smoke another different than I had felt before. I paused for a while and considered a stretched canvas painting to my right and I thought I would stretch Miss K a few canvas for Christmas, a sheet or two, some off-tack from the lumberyard and a can of white ceiling paint. I would put it together with the dowel pin technique I used on my pizza peel. A few dowels in

each corner should keep it perfect. The canvas stretched properly would reinforce. Obtain a small saw and a chisel. Paint yourself. What convinced you art supplies only came from a store or the art supply room of an institution? And you have The Leonardo as a place to work now too. I am certain there is a space to set-up a studio to work. There is a still-life to be painted. An expression to be made. Some thing large. I picture it large and rough and I thought now I don't know if I will ever make it and I will make something. What else is there? It feels right to make and to take what exists and recreate with it. And there was an awful lot of room for it here, in this Salt Lake City. Built in the valley, it was a space to think. Jann had expressed that to me at some point with others and I knew it was important to simply keep going forward and I wondered how Hemingway would criticize me if we were contemporaries & friends and to each their own solution to life's great mystery. I didn't have an idea wholly my own. I had many fragments and too many of late to make much sense. It wasn't a new problem. I wasn't a problem. And it wasn't new. Some things are only so in perspective. I paid attention, not enough I felt, and I wasn't certain what prevented my content. And It does feel good to get some pages down. I feel I can take some time off and enjoy some leisure. I allowed myself to become stifled, squeezed in a tiny apartment fighting a frugal budget I no longer needed. I was gainfully employed at The Leonardo, an institute for science, technology, & creativity. And I realized I had chosen a place to fit comfortable to write and it was across the street from a studio apartment I planned to rent, and as I saw the Trax outside run by I felt I was in some part of Taipei and maybe it was the inversion I heard happened here and had yet to research or maybe it was an inversion of myself. This place now seemed like The Grind in Minneapolis mixed with a DIY venue in Fargo, both of which had my book of essays to give away and I made plans in my head for the second printing and maybe Chris would

let me purchase some printed pages, added to my lunch tab and deducted from my check and maybe I could drill a hole small enough to tightly accept a dowel capable of being cut with side cutters and do this instead of stitching. I think I could potentially make the books for under 75¢. The first printing ran somewhere between \$1.50 & \$2, and at some point I would have to start saying something and somehow I always did. There wasn't a plan, a train of thought was the ride. I was already on board, you wouldn't ride alone. And my other project was working. I have been recording my consumption to hold myself accountable and if I wanted to list this The Knife's album on my record I would have to endure, consume the whole piece of art. Consuming less might be too judgmental and listing half consumption was a lie in my eyes. We all had a responsibility for honesty. Life was confusing enough as it was without having to sort through purposeful deceit. And I did some things without really thinking about them and finding the use later. It was nice to not have something particularly pleasant to go home to. Kept my butt in the seat and the pen on the page and the thoughts on record and tomorrow would bring new thoughts and ideas. Bucky Fuller made extensive records and I didn't care to read them & I wonder who has more than he, himself. The artist is always the largest single consumer of their art. And could Bucky have written *Critical Path* without those notebooks? I would venture to doubt. Produce. Produce. Busy. Busy. Work. Work. Mountain tops beckon as do thoughts and others and what to do. What do do with all we are given. How to make use of time and how much to say, really? which hadn't been said before. I missed Gloucester and thought a few times about spending more winters out there and I did have to plan my time off and I thought I would spend it somewhere new and I wondered about Joe & Evie & how the Pleasant Street Tea Company was those days. Dave came to mind as well and they were all so honest and kind and I liked them much and

was sad to leave and abruptly as I had come, I left and it would also be how I returned, when I did. It wouldn't be the same and there were parts I did feel never changed. After use the restroom I planned a store for my writing on my website and there were a few ways to do it and one of the main questions was whether I would allow anonymous downloads of the works or require an email address. The Knife still sounded a bit like a CocoRosie project and I wasn't convinced it wasn't. I wonder which ace first, in any event. It had been hours now of writing and now there was only something borrowed from Tegan & Sara. What a strange way to experience the world. Headphones blocking the world or creating my own. I could have all this activity and effort focused into my brain & no one else had my experience. My tooth ached again as I clenched. A dentist visit was in my future, near. I didn't want to lose steam. I only had an agitated Miss K. to welcome me home and I didn't want to tell her it was over. I didn't want it to be over. If I could exit to my own space without much conversation, I think we had the best change to find a more amiable perspective for each other and it was time to see where I had been or really simply to check the beginning of it all and consider the essays I never bounded and never even typed and then back to this moment & this page. I did need space to create to be self-absorbed for a while and it was so much more and I had read a beautiful quote about it today by an author for whose name I didn't make a memory and I could find it again on brainpickerings.com if I was ever so inclined and she said it was about service and it was more than e and I also realized writers did have a tendency to write about writing and I wondered if other artist's made art about art. What does a painting about a painting look like? And I wished I had already moved into the new apartment on Denver Street. I wanted to be in that space. I would buy a motorized, maybe hand, pump and I wondered how I would make use the basement and what would go on in the space. It had a brick wall and

I liked brick walls and I could picture my time there and I was excited for the changes to come. Alan Watt's talks made me connect briefly to the vast universe buried inside me and to realize without the interference of electromagnetic waves with matter, with some other metric, it was so so empty, the world, and we were this strangle highly organized, specific, chaotic boundary layer on the surface and also the surface of other, chaotic events and I was to go home with plans to update my record, there were a handful of movies and Richard Dawkin's *The Magic of Reality* and a music album to add and an apartment to prepare. My parents were visiting for a few days and there was also the Miss K variable to sort out. What was there to say anymore? We had run our course and we were too stubborn or damaged or rude to care about each other in anyway which made a difference for the other. It was sad and it was how it was. Life was too short to force something for no other reason than a fear of something else. I was ok being uncomfortable, why I stayed so long and why I was ok leaving. I really thought we would settle into a comfortable place. It was a simple fire with sparks and smoke to start, unseasoned wood and I thought we'd make beautiful embers and I just couldn't take her for all she was and not try to make her what I needed. What was it I needed? I asked her,—I told her I needed more encouragement from her and she was being too critical without construction and I was told she had never met anyone who needed to hear their work was good more than I and how I neglected to acknowledge quirky enough her obtaining an internship within the first two weeks of our acquaintance and she knew the latter was a silly point and I told her so and didn't acknowledge it further (except briefly now for completeness) and it was after that inversion and hearing her say how uninterested she was in my interests and activities and how it was absurd for me to expect her to change her interests to overlap with mine. I knew it was over. There could be no relationship filled with much

time for her and I. I needed encouragement or neutrality for my creativity. I needed not someone's opinion of my self-absorption, what else was there? And what was self-absorption focused on creation and a record? Someone besides me would benefit from my labors and it was what mattered. Not writing, not being unique, not gaining credit. It was the change instilled which made all the difference and which fueled that thing inside me which refused to go out and after, I had thought for a while more and decided I could take a mental health day tomorrow and give my parents the attention they deserved. Preparation was key and it was hard to do with Miss K around. And I did think a few times about how long I was gone and where her mind was and I didn't want to upset her. I couldn't sacrifice for her anymore. Friendly Fires was playing. I took a photo of my bicycle for Instagram. It was an audience and a way to pop into people's minds. Create content with reckless abandon was the mantra of our generations & maybe I consumed so much with my mind because I didn't want to consume objects which were physical; I wanted to leave with something without taking anything away. It made subtle sense and it didn't matter to be understood. Only to direct change. Guidance was the epitome of offerings. To say a point about a sentence I urge to leave unexplored, even what is offered in its method & make-up is guidance. It is to say "Here is how I chose to live. It is what I feel is best and most appropriate for me. I may think I can do better, and right now I actively accept this." How a person lives is what they feel. Anything preached and not lived is a falsehood. How can a person preach about creativity and lack it in all but their analysis of creativity. Then if this is the case, their method is either flawed or useless. It does implore a person to be creative, except if they already are. The person who knows it best choose to live it otherwise, how can it be their optimal path. Here it is as though to say "Yes, I think this is the best life for you to live. Me, I will live my own way."

And it is here where I feel the *only* thing to talk about is how & what we think in our minds and the things we do physically and we should check first if they contradict and if they do we should change one or the other to be consistent first of all. Then we can speak from a point of intelligence. And I thought for a while about graphical interface for my record and became frustrated around the automatic fetching of artwork to represent each item and on the time savings and decided I would add it to the queue. It was becoming time to go home and wind down. And I found it hard to get up and leave. I really didn't feel in the mood for Miss K's mood, whatever it was to be. I didn't want to see my effect on her and I wanted to smoke a cigarette and then it was time to cycle home. And I realized that night had been approximately a year since I had given myself permission to go crazy and now I felt cliché in knowing it would have been crazy for me to not to. And I didn't know where I would go and I knew I was prepared for anything, capable and rich and in writing and recording it was only for our thoughts & perceptions (perspective) for all else is observable independently. Miss K returned and she had her opinions as to the purpose of the studio apartment I planned to rent. And they were of the sort, as little as I could surmise, seemingly missing the point to not prevent me from thinking the idea ill. I would email J to let him know I would manage the space. O the things I could do there. The records I could make only time would tell what I would make there and I was bored. Talking about it and making expectations—or were they plans—or were they the same. I simply wanted to be in the space having response from Derk & Miss K & from my mother & father to some degree, it was enough. No one thought it was a terrible idea and the support ranged from impression & admiration to mild understanding & dissection. I was willing to give it a shot. I trusted myself and my intuition and self-state-awareness. It was important to believe your ideas' values are worthy, and tomorrow is a day

for action. I learned the act of putting the pen to the page itself was important, and I experimented writing at The Leonardo during working hours. My task was to create copy for the *Create What You Crave* course offerings Erika & I were developing and I paused for a few moments as I considered involving her or the museum and it was important to be open in all regards and to not prejudge what were the important factors and I had volunteered to write the descriptions of the series and elements and the content of the elements too. I thought I could do it well and wanted to do it well and I wanted to do it too, doing it well was always part of it and sometimes I simply needed to write about it to give the mind a course and slow the train of thoughts to a point which was useful. The task was *Create What You Crave* and what was it? A course, class, workshop, instruction, learning evening, creation seminar, education is our responsibility. My role, in name was the Education Programs Coordinator and names changed and didn't have meaning on their own and I learned this too late in life I thought and I was happy to have learned it at all. It was a lesson Feynman preached: He learned from his father. I did too, much, and still I found it hard to see the positive sides of our time together and I had complained to Miss K how my parents focused so often on the negative and fleeting details of their experiences and I, she pointed out, was caught in the same pattern as I recounted our weekend together. O what a place I went to around them. I was never honest in the ways of Miss K, and I was honest in other ways. She knew the studio was my escape route and if she asked I couldn't deny it. And I needed it, a place of my own, simple and designed for creativity and life-sustaining activities. I found it hard to stay on course and again I brought my mind back to the task: What were we building with *Create What You Crave*? A place for people to learn things of which they didn't feel capable, walking away knowing they could do something and maybe they never would, and simply knowing they

could was enough. In our time, individuals could easily be removed from the energy they consumed—energy being the broad mass as energy descriptions. We were all patterns of energy, seemingly self-aware and most not aware of self. False modesty was our sin. We owed it to ourselves to be extraordinary and I read that last epigram on the side of a street-piano in New York City's Union Square Park months earlier. I desired to awaken individuals to the vast power inside them and you couldn't do it all at once. It took time and perspective to change minds. And I thought about the creativity lessons I had learned and about the fact that creative individuals create an inordinate amount and how thinking and having thoughts was how I had been spending my time, and I had incredible series of thoughts and what were they outside of onanism? Record, record, record. My grandfather kept extensive lists. Movies, books, puzzles, it seems whatever he did, he wanted a remembrance of it. I was the same and I cared too about why at times and I could, through The Leonardo, and other outlets, create a why and it had only to be about making existence an easier affair. I didn't want individuals to walk away knowing names or esoteric science facts which they could brag to their friends & family. Actions. True change of mind resulted in change of action. Everything else was like onan, coitus interruptus. Energy released without application. Energy downgraded. Energy lost. And how did I intend to do it differently. You could educate and reveal myths and force self-evaluation. In order to change actions, individuals had to first find their current actions undesirable, wasteful, silly, inconsistent, wrong. What *was* it we found inside ourselves which led to change. For myself, it was about the result, my day to day. What were those days filled with where I went to bed feeling excited for tomorrow and content with today. My moments, what were the ones which were perfect. And then how to elicit these ideas and desires in each other. When asked what were our goals, should not the an-

swer always be: to be happy? Regardless of any other factors. And my mother didn't care about making soap and I would never attend a workshop on soapmaking intentionally unless... unless why? What would bring me to such an event. Then I went to lunch and returned Rob Dell's phone call from the previous day and the words which stuck out were so long as you are creating you are not wasting time. You're building and assessing and putting things together and it was what I was doing. I had to trust it. And control we spoke of control and not relying on the system to do the work. Rather it was about knowing how to use the system to do the work and there was also the bit about goal setting & recording and I wanted it to be part of myself and I think it at some point it would and for now free exploration was my goal and I should simply write it and I had. Back Back Back to the matter at hand. The system and how to make it work for me. Most often people relied on the happy accidents of the system for their creation & use. Only through understanding the system could you produce masterworks. Mastering came through application of time and action and resources. I couldn't expect the world to value the aspects I did. It was asking too much and it was an expectation. I could inform people who wanted information of whatever I chose. Consuming is part of the human condition. Come enjoy the pleasure of creating what you consume. Physical act of creating makes consumption more meaningful. Brings to mind the creative process, the ingredients, and their origin. Go find the things you want to consume. Your body is a quite literally created from the energy you consume. Know what you're consuming and how the products you have come to know & love came to be. We are creatures with desires and often fulfillment of these desires is filled with guilt and regret. This is because we are fulfilling our desires in an unsustainable way. When we learn to create what we crave, we slow down and consider how we feel about an issue. Is it worth our time to make, if we are to spend

our money, does the time we spent to earn that money balance with the value? Moreover what are the things hidden on the inside? By creating ourselves, we remove some of the abstractions and begin to comprehend how the world fits together and how we can control it, control and work in the system. I liked to do things really well, to produce masterwork. And I found it hard to take credit for chance happenings and accidental success. There were periods where the mind took off on its own and refused to focus where it was pointed. The mind takes control and affords it self its own desire fulfillment for as long as it can, as long as you don't get in the way. And it was important to get out of your own way sometimes and it did come down to what you liked to create. There were so many different typers of minds and I was happy with mine. I trust it. To point where it precludes me from certain types of pleasure and grants me access to so much. What I lazy to want a studio? Unwilling to "tough it out" in the small space which was Miss K's and my Breelynn studio. It felt so right and there was a nagging feeling about the money and I think more so about how this would impact Miss K and myself. And then I thought how I felt parts of myself closing whenever she gave me that look of "You're being ridiculous and your ruined my mood," and it seemed to be a day couldn't pass without one of these and they were never ok. I'm not certain why I put up with the attacks for as long as I did. Miss K is a bully and I want serenity & peaceful co-existence and order & cleanliness. We simply didn't care about each other's worlds and we didn't encourage each other and we were terrible teammates. What was good about us? I can't even remember and I knew it was there or was I hopeful and giving Miss K the benefit of time to allow her and I to better acclimate? I felt lonely more often than content when we were together. I didn't want it to be bad and it was so much. I wanted love and affection and was met with hostility and annoyance at my regular self, at who I was and when I reached strongly, I got an even

greater assault and it will be fitting I believe this will come to a head soon, as I have a lease awaiting signature and maybe the question is more, is it better to be with her than to not. She was an excellent mirror and we all are so vain. And I don't know what was stopping me from giving it all up to meditate somewhere and connect with the universe inside us. To see as a part and a whole. I leased the studio and instantly and consistently felt invigorated. It was to be a perfect nest for my creative bird. I spent 102 dollars & an hour at the Deseret Industries thrift store and procured a roll-top desk, comfortable rocking chair, wooden stool, and a host of baskets & ceramic bowls & mugs. My old white lamp and computer speakers from our Hewlett-Packard Compaq computer from the nineties, a skiing trophy from 1986 and the book *Queer* by Burroughs rounded out the items. A 12-pack sampler of Uinta Organic beer and the T J Max faux fur blanket as a rug, brick walls for half the space and a functioning wood-burning stove the smell of blue incense from Knuckleheads smokeshop on the corner. I bought a pack of American Spirits and smoked four on the porch, drank a few beers and noticed Ben Harper singing Walk Away. Two days later I was at The Leonardo after I had slept on the floor in the studio and visited the Breelynn studio after Miss K left for work and I found my clothes, still on hangers on the bed and I didn't quite know what to make of it other than to realize it was different now, the relationship of Miss K and myself and there wasn't much more to say. I took the stash of tea to the studio. I felt bad about it and I felt better than I would have if I thought of her using things of mine while treating me with such animosity. Now I had said all I cared about the subject. Life would continue to progress and Miss K could be whatever part of my life she wanted. I enjoyed her spark and her grit and her tenacity and her breasts and I only didn't enjoy her reaction to my self and the way she directed her negativity. And song lyrics found relevance again. Funny how your mind makes connections

it needs. I was changing again and this winter, unlike my previous winter in Gloucester, I was conscious and in control and I wasn't worried. Life had its way of working out and I felt that last thought was not new and didn't have much meaning except as established by the reader and it was all there ever was for meaning. I had taken to smoking again or at least I had consumed cigarettes again without feeling bad. I didn't plan to continue past this pack and it was funny too how easy it was not to smoke with Miss K in my life. She was good. If not confused and uncertain where to use her energy. My energy was becoming easier to direct. More efficient and I wrote creatively at The Leonardo for the second time. The task now was Mind Riot, the gather of high school students aimed at fostering human creative capacity and it was hard to describe now and I knew now one else in the organization was going to help me in any large way and that was a broad generalization and I needed to feel it true to motivate myself into tasks I wanted someone more experienced to complete and why? For one I didn't like thinking about the problem of putting words and definitions and notions about the event onto the perception of fit. It was the intersection of so many things and the effect would be great and fragile and I wanted support and enthusiasm not defeatist attitudes and passing the buck and if I wanted to keep on people to perform I needed to hold up my end of the bargain and it was true, the marketing team needed my event description to do their jobs and I should simply write it and stop wasting time in my own world. And I wrote it with easy to sustain effort and it was good and expository. I was certain there were aspects not included and ideas poorly expressed as it was in all my writing and I think as it had to be in general. Having smoked a cigarette, some herb and masturbated, it was time again to record how did it come to be this was life. An idea Miss K & I shared early on while marveling at the life we chose to lead together and then I found the ember still burning and I needed to

do more with it all. To focus so much on one became a chore and I should have recognized it sooner and I still should be more open about it all and I just wanted some resolution better than what I had come to expect and Florence came to mind, then Jackie came to mind and staid without words. I enjoyed the fondness we shared and the places we have come from and I hope to see her again soon and to share some wine and some looks and some love and give something to each other, give each other a perfect moment. We both knew it was inside of us and we both let each other see it. Then I thought of Alba and she rarely spends time with me and I usually simply dismiss her. I don't think it's my lack of ability to be with her, more a boredom and futility to consider that time in my life. I'd internalized the lessons from the past, that period anyhow, and I was too close to it to be nostalgic. I don't wish her and I were together. I only wish one of them decided to make something real with me and I thought about the next one and Jess came to mind. Bump Bump. I was forcing it to make time spent well and it worked and really I was avoiding Miss K and when my mind made the next step to fulfilling my desire to see her it was the snow and my car's dangerous tires for slick roads it was only worse to drive in snow, unplowed, I thought and to walk over just to spend time seemed weird and why? I had a relationship with this monkey for months, living in a 400 square foot studio apartment, barely room for a full bed, a chair and a clear path into the railcar kitchen bathroom diagonal from the front door. In my mind I think it appears a square prison. From my mind's eye vantage I can literally see if from above and then my new studio doesn't seem much different. I think the prison is in our minds, it is our bodies, the thin boundary layer reflective of a small subset of electromagnetic waves, whatever those things we think to be real may be from a different observer. We did all seem to share a real it and my reality was hunger and Arby's called for me, then a cigarette whined in, then Katherine and

The Leonardo. And focus went to the top of my pen and I was back to a place I had been before. I'm building myself a Rockport house here in Salt Lake City... I'm ready to live alone and with friends coming by invitation. It was a fine reality and I thought of the focus group I planned to run for Latina girls in high school and it would be fine, I still didn't want to do it and I would alright. It would help and I had committed and wouldn't disrespect anyone. Ly-rocs "I'm never gonna fall for that old trick again," chime in and it has no meaning. "We called it off again last night." Thank you Miss Swift; you are sage and fair in appearance and I would date you and you'd probably find me as despicable as John Mayer after a while and I really had no idea how he treated you and I think you made it all up for yourself, as did we all. Amazing what we create for each other and there were too many thoughts to record was my conclusion from a quiet period of reflection. I was comfortable, physically, and I was comfortable writing and I remember these were the times I would grab a pint and hit the kitchen up for some fares at The Pub at Cape Ann Brewery. And Karen, how was she? She was such a joy to be around. I could see she had a spark inside which refused to go out. I thought about calling Jess, we could talk for a while I was sure. Where to get food? All my warm, waterproof clothes were in Miss K's garage and I already decided not to go for several reasons concerning safety and comfort. I was avoiding, Makia you nailed it and you felt I did you dirty, as did Courtney and Lauren and Ann Marie and when did I become such a monster. Why did I have this effect on women? What were they looking at when they found me so undesirable? I could place some of it and mostly it still confused me and physical comfort left right when writing comfort did. It was a reaction to my self and I was equal and opposite Fuck. Loneliness tries hard to sprout and the page listens and reasons me not alone and I know it true and useless to feeling lone. I harken back to something fleeting and it fleets. And now a slowness a dra-

matic pause a low beat a good song with visuals of a boat tall grass a rope a love they night and fear. Was I a fool to write Miss K off? Did I love her and need her in my life? What was it all? I loved her. I didn't know how to help her understand. I knew a few things about my self and she knew I didn't have time or desire to feel the negativity she induced in myself. I wanted kindness and cheer and excitement for creation. I knew it was all nothing for the majority of time and length scales and we existed in a thin boundary of both and each of us a thinner one than the group. Consciousness was such a freak. A self-aware pattern, an operator with no manual. I didn't put too much value in the cost of things besides finding cheaper versions of the things I desired. Recycled and reused was appropriate and taught the lesson new objects were often not desirable. It was weird to only feel comfortable around newness and I had a similar desire and it was different in its expression. I didn't feel like working much in the days after Tessa and I separated and even the morning after we spent a night together again the feelings of comfort left and I was left with what was there. What would the spring bring and what would tonight be? My lunch that afternoon was insipid. I knew I would return to Stoneground any way. Days past and I supposed they were ordinary and the days didn't feel ordinary. I missed the woods. I missed companionship. I felt so capable of most I wanted save for providing a mental space for another's world. I felt autistic and I felt small and it was time to release myself from this world I had created and be different than I was in regards to the companionship I sought. I forgot often how much I had and how easy it was to think differently. Self-pity was addicting and cigarettes were addicting and I had started smoking and pitying again. It felt ok, better than I expected and the relief which came from not smoking was good and it was only in the way it was from being involved in something. The small victories always felt good for at least the time, even if the war was being lost.

I was sleeping on the floor, not quite, I was sleeping on a sleeping bag on a furry blanket quarter folded lengthwise on a loose knit blanket on the floor. I was comfortable and bedtime was for sleeping. Chairs were for reading and the kitchen was welcoming, in a strangely cold and uninviting sense. There was no table and there were no chairs. Meals could not be shared but on the floor and this was right. There were a couple options on Craigslist and otherwise and I would fix the situation over the weekend. It was Friday, another week's end, and I hunted for a few people to spend some time on that evening. Ant maybe I would hang out with Dillon after 11PM when he was off from work. And I would drop off the book for Tessa, the diary of Frida Kahlo and I wouldn't know what it would mean to her and when I gave it to her I could watch her tune into it and I didn't have anything to do with it and that was fine. I didn't have anything to do with it and then we hung out alone together for a while, she drawing, me, I was writing and I needed to change the music. It wasn't time for the Presidents of the United States of America, Emancipator I thought would fit well and I wanted so badly to fuck her and her affection would not come when I called. I knew best to let it remain out of my control and what had we been building such there was distance now instead of intimacy and I guessed we would both do what we felt without much consideration for the other. It was Friday and it was a today as all the rest and Evie shot to mind then Jackie and Katherine, in DC probably still studying neuroscience in some capacity and I thought quite clearly this was all I had desired. A companion to spend time with who didn't need and in this case it seemed wanted my attention and I had done nothing save for be myself and was I happy. I wasn't sad. A beautiful artist chose my space to paint and with me as an observer and she, I had yet to fully realize had a spark which revealed my weakness and I a moth to her light. A fawn to her dove a beauty to her beast and what did I have? What did I possess? What could not

be taken? This was life, each moment of it, was it a gift? From whom? An accident or an inevitable. To recognize it as something I could be less than. James Blake changed the mood and it was cacophonous, tension he built with plans and where would he take us, I was curious. She, again, so beautiful. She was a gift, something borrowed. Something hard to connect with. Something with its own wavelength and I? Was I so different or so similar a less evolution of her. Freedom and control she possessed. I possessed what again? A night of repeating and understanding confusion came later and started then, or came to mind as such With her I was fine. This is what I had desired, creative space. We spoke at times and I wanted to ask her where she was, and I knew, or pretended to and I didn't ask. I assumed she would think me silly for asking about the obvious and my question had so much more to it. It was rude to break her from her work and this this this I thought to be wonderful and it didn't feel great and maybe it was because I assumed I would feel empty at the end of the day, whether we stayed together or separate, whether we sexed or not. There was something more I felt desire for and it didn't have a name and there were now pages and pages written and I wanted to get to the end of it all and that wasn't true. I would know as before when to start new. Intuition I learned to trust without understanding. And I could tell now she felt like she was being watched and I was more furtive and less fulfilled. Physically I wanted to feel something else. I was thirsty, I could tell and wine, weed & cigarettes were consumed instead. What was the issue? I didn't possess her. I couldn't have all I desired from her. And where to go from here? What to do? Who to be? Makei and Ann Marie came to mind. The Zeb after the idea for a character list so you would know better what these individuals were to me. I would give you it all, I didn't want to summarize. It had to come when it came for me and you, I'm sorry, come second for a time. Reboot. Refresh. Baba black lager and a

new chair. Oh life. The ability of a human to experience and craft, we have art and maybe it is our demise. Non-recorders will inherit the earth and at least I recorded for other recorders. We all had to be on the same team and to act like an animal might be wrong. Denying homo sapiens need to *manufacture* would seem flawed. I didn't want to think about it. I wanted to do what was comfortable. We all really did follow our own paths of least resistance. And mind had to do with not being bothered and I guess it did for everyone else too and for me, and all, what bothered? Stress and worry. I managed those better than most all. I worried about my own actions and it was about all of it. What else was there to fret? It helped to know this. I felt the understanding swap in and *Tubular Bells*, how wonderful of a record. I chose words carefully, what I lacked in editing was amended after as a thought. It was a style and worked for me for a while. Miss K's intimacy was missing and her body looking inviting. I felt ravenous and curious to see what the night would bring. The fire was dwindling and would remain warm for hours still and how was this writing of different value than the elephant with a hand flipping the bird out of its trunk. It was all of a class. An expression. A metaphor. A misunderstood message. A desire to say something to record anything to be different and unique. I wanted to kiss her mouth and I was barely received. Like a boy who misplaces his aunt's kiss, as surprised and as dispelled. I wanted to tell her how beautiful she looked and it would come out wrong or rightfully the lust which it was. I felt eternal. I felt like so many men before. With an object of desire and it was a breast and hips and a face and everything connecting too, then, after. How the eye travels and the focus extended over time was telling in many ways and hard to study without effect. Hiesenberg was uncertain. Where are you? Where have you gone? What have I done? It was never about me. Only I am about me. No, it is about me. Undeserving of her time for lack of attention. Getting what I asked for,

certainly. She wanted no thing physical and was I strange to want it and obvious in my design and boring in my execution and effete in my influence. Why did we keep such things around? Was it hope, desire, competition, a need to suffer? Mr. Harper was telling me to walk away and I couldn't hear it, only listen and there was a french word to finally sense, truly, what you'd only been looking at without seeing. Katherine knew it and I knew the words didn't mean as much as the idea. And then it was Jess in my mind. And I wondered about how to give her some more of my writing and then just how to call her and say hello and catch up. And Dave. What was he to me? Him and I had a few good conversations and more good times. Willie Loco Alexander waits for B.C. Coogan and I understand and she packed up and left and I was almost as alone as previous and I wasn't certain what there was to do and how different it felt and maybe she did only come for post and maybe it was ok. She could choose her level of involvement and she wanted to be alone and I used to be a place for her to go with all this back when she had barely a choice to be around my self. There was laundry to be done and Friday night was pretensionly not the time for such things and I thought what if all of Miss K was a pretense and she had others to see tonight and how could I concern my self with such things. Silly me. They were of no use and I could never know and would it be ok to know I could be deceived in such a way. All I did want was to have her affection and love again and how was she to love in the midst of such reckless love of her parents. To expect anything was silly. Repeat Repeat. Rob Dell told me I would and I already knew it true from witness. There were many times when there was no person I wanted to be around or speak to and during those times I wondered about the past and thought of times shared and I didn't know how to get to those places again. Rob Dell gave me confidence in the life I was building and I thought what was it if it wasn't shared And it was hard to know if I got

to these places when I needed to write or I wrote as a result of being there and it was all the same. No cause or effect. I am the bad guy and so was Jesus. Scape-goated for the demons of others and crucified because of self and who was I really. The greats were great because they were great and who decides. I played a song I wrote a few minutes earlier on the streets of west Echo Park, Los Angeles and a haggard old Mexican woman in a beat up old American car gave me a dollar after listening for a while. I never played the song again and didn't remember how. Bought and paid for. I wanted to dissolve into the world. Remove myself. Disappear. And in a few moments it was over, the relationship between Miss K and myself and I was taciturn for those moments and knew I would be sad for a while. I wanted for something which didn't exist in her and I had tried for a while to elicit it and would I have been better off if I had run from her each of those times I felt the urge in the past. I'd be in a similar place to myself now, and I hated being alone, without a soul to deeply care without the connection to another self. And left kept marching on and I didn't find people who wanted to help and I was in a mentally poor position. It had been weeks since I meditated and I thought to pay more attention to my body and mind, again. Themes recur in life and art. I missed Miss K's joy. Her joy was a present and I was able to share it with her for some time and then the summer was over and our love left with the leaves. My feelings for her were strange to me and the best I could express was I was genuinely sad she left. I wanted it to work for us and it would require an effort she wasn't willing to give and a commitment for myself I wasn't certain would be honest. And so it goes. And I really was simply facing loneliness. I didn't want to be so alone and I didn't know anymore how to connect with the world. I felt I carried around a perspective too heavy for most, too pretentious for some, and too honest to be with. It was hard for me to express

myself, to communicate and what was the way out of this world of solitude?

EINSTEIN BAGELS

EINSTEIN BAGELS

For a while he was alone and then he would sense a few humans being around, activities normal, common interests, bagels and other comestibles today. Einstein Bros Bagels was not what he imagined it previously, and now he was judgmental and it wasn't a matter of any thing other than his mind and his mood, related realities, all there was to life. It was a chore to share realities with someone and it was attention craved resulting from a recognition of the attention value leading the world and he knew to remove from attention all desires and to remove the desire for all attention was a path to content, a word he chose a decade earlier for a truly ineffable state of being, and now

maybe acceptance was a better word for the state, at least it was more instructive. Perspective, momentary awareness of and a fading attention on his perspective would cultivate a viewpoint on the world clean and clear. Mornings with a shit, shower and iced coffee started good moods and encouraged production in the hours when the mind was fresh, alert, ready, and easy to point, not as a rule and as a routine. The mind controlled itself even with serious intention and attention and not in the paradoxical way. Conscious mind most times observed and could only some times interfere and change the course. This was life most days.

IMPROPER FOOTWEAR

IMPROPER FOOTWEAR

I wrote that morning simply for the fact I never occasioned to stand writing in the woods. Mine was a simple, more frequented intersection. I was cold and comfortable and I finally decided it was a mistake to trade saving money for hiking shoes without Gortex, waterproof lining. I reckoned I could drive out to REI and purchase a fine pair and I felt maybe research was a better first step. I stood writing for a while. Focus on writing the next words, the mind took control. Attention refused my eyes' request. Ears took control then foot tapped. Weight shifted left to right. *Contrapposto*. A thought comes to mind and I feel how good it is. Eureka! in body & mind. Tension released and

let loose. And I know why it feels good to write in pen, and it is a mechanical solution for me. Friction and gravity assert influence on writing speed perceived and actual. Arm thrust and shake. Tension built and body released. Attention paid to the environment, I knew it was important not to consider the record and other times to consider only the record and vigilance had more importance in the wilderness. Deep, guttural, bassy breathes and grunts induced feelings of safety and being a lone. Awareness feasted on the perceived universe, a glutton throughout.

And coming back to it, weeks passed and I desired a connection simply obtained in the woods and seemingly harder to find elsewhere. Sitting on the toilet, defecating and writing didn't seem as beautiful on first thought and it was all the same I felt. Words making their way to the page, on and off again. Rita came to mind.

POETESSA

POETESSA

When I was alone, I preferred to be out in the wild. I had built myself a dungeon; it was the middle of November, 2012, and the angle of the sun was low. The word had been inundated with records and at times I remembered my grandfathers' physical legacies. Lists and lists of time spent, movies, books, puzzles, a workshop full of resources and tools, a collection of arts and crafts and where were the notebooks? I wondered if my grandmother had kept them for herself for a while. This was on my mother's side. My father's father left a garage full of resources and tools and a plot of land in Bucksport, Maine, with a hand-crafted cabin and a canoe. Both men left families, filled

with love and concern. Both left women they had known for most their lives. I felt the urge to cry and I couldn't bring it on. Information overwhelmed and in metropolitan American life the fundamentals were being left behind. Everyone trying to stay up to date with the latest information, sitting on the edge of the known, the middle becomes vacuous and an implosion becomes imminent. Even thinking about it all seemed part of the plague. To spend much time in the past or future was misguided, I knew, and I still had a problem with guidance.

Miss K told me my demon was very angry and selfish and mean and until I wrote about it, I knew she was right, and afterwards I thought those adjectives I had used in my mind on her before and how we were a perfect mirror and both of us were sure we were the reflection and the joke was we were both on the same side of the looking glass seeing ourselves as each other thinking we were alone, not finding ourselves in our reflection.

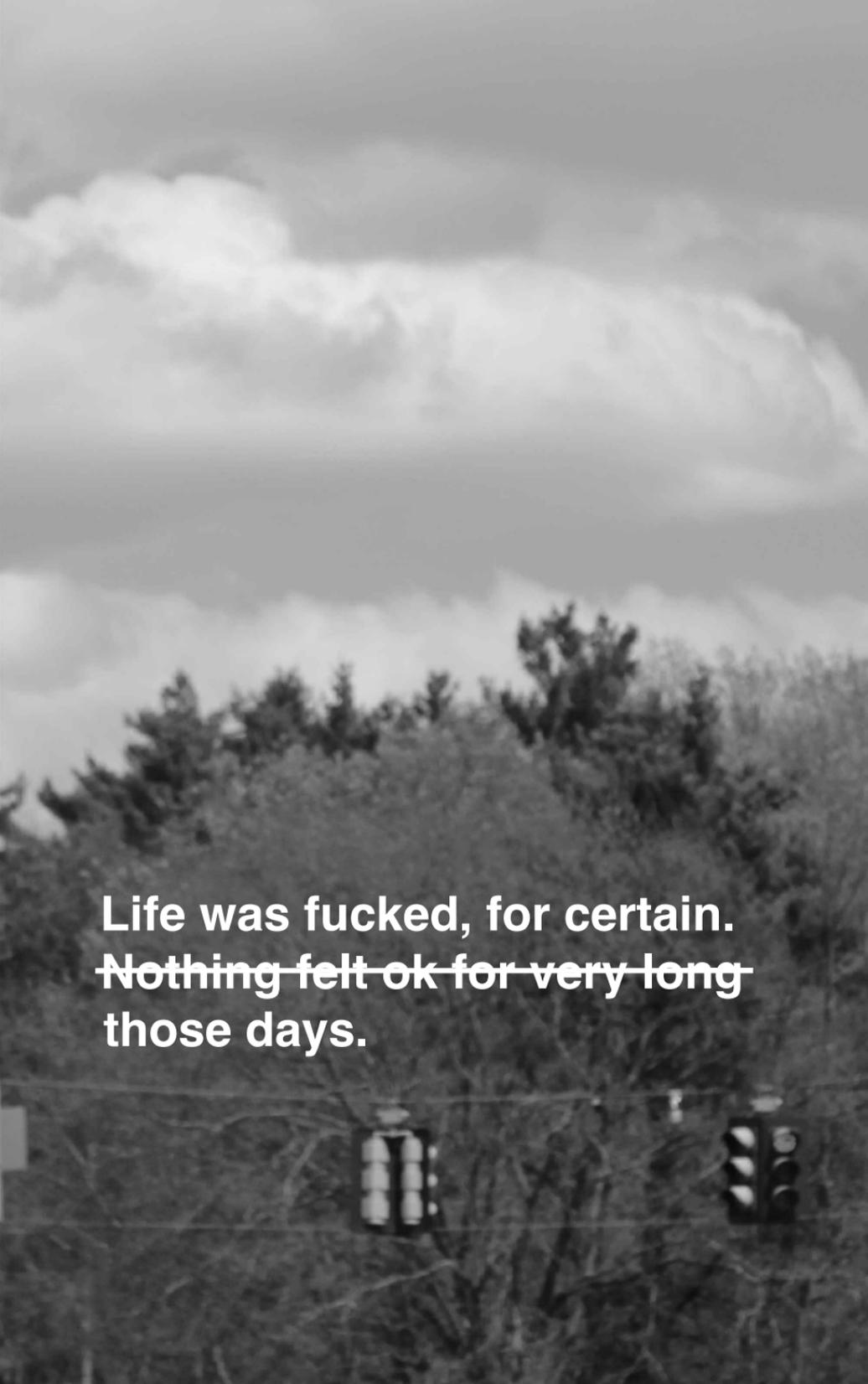
The present, Miss K showed me how to share it. She knew how to live uncompromised and honest and I wasn't there yet and it was only when it was over I saw my faulty self. Suffocating I was, barely keeping it together, pretending my thoughts golden and valuable and she, seeing the world as the moment it was. I could be brought there with effort. And the effort was frustrating, ineffable for a while and still not spoken openly. I had hope, I don't think completely misguided, Miss K and I could find each other again and spend more time together. It would take changing perspectives and they were always changing. What was importance? Time passed well, simply, without effort. Well, effort needed a more subtle synonym, or maybe not, for what was joy other than a flow of moments with comfortable mind.

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A black and white photograph showing a cloudy sky at the top, a dense line of trees in the middle ground, and two traffic lights hanging from a wire in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

**Life was fucked, for certain.
~~Nothing felt ok for very long~~
those days.**