

SILENCE

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# INTRODUCTION

This book is a record of three months: February, March, and April (incomplete though it may be).

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# FEBRUARY

# 1. Silence, Loveless Lostboyevsky

I lasted a few days all by myself, inside the apartment building, everyone else having gone out the door, walking away so full of laughter and foolishness.

I lay on the bed and counted the cracks on the ceiling, all five of them, and then got off the bed and walked to the window, looking out at the field of flowers that surrounded my apartment building.

I put on some clothing and walked to the ground floor of the apartment building, and looked around in the rooms which weren't being rented. They were blank walls and beige carpets.

I walked around the square doughnut of the hallway, and got on the elevator, and rode it back up to the floor on which I lived, and then I took the stairs to the floor above, and walked around the square doughnut of the hallway, lost in thought.

—

I was thinking about apples. Where do they come from? Do apples come from seeds, or do they come from the store? Do they come from evolution? From the sun? From God? I picked an apple off the table of my apartment and took a bite out of it. Apples are not my favorite fruit, but I buy them anyway.

---

I was trying to remember the name of just one of the people who had just left my apartment building, foolishly and laughingly. I did not know any of their names anymore. They were my friends just a few days ago, but now they were nothing. I wished I could remember their names, and then I wished I could care enough about them to wish I could remember their names.

---

And then I got a little bit carried away, thinking about someone I used to love. That person was pretty generous! They used to give me some nice presents. Not everyone gives people presents.

---

I found a rat in my apartment. I tried to call the manager, but he was gone. So I chased the rat into someone else's apartment, and I would have chased that rat out of the building, but that rat had run under the locked door of a neighbor's apartment, so I couldn't go in there and further shoo it.

---

I woke up to find myself all of a sudden in a pile of refuse turned into a normal-sized human. I had no idea why I was there, so naked and alone, but I knew I was revolted. Some facts are incorrigible.

---

I stood up, and found some thrown-away clothes to clothe myself, and I walked around in the trash, smelling myself but thinking it was my environment, surrounded by flies. I was disoriented.

---

All the people in the garbage heap were surprised to see me. "What's that white man doing in the garbage heap?" They spoke English — why did I know English? — mixed with the



words to another language. Some of them laughed at me, and some of them thought I deserved to be where I was, and some of them were afraid, suspecting some kind of strange hammerfall, but some of them simply asked me who I was, and I said “I don’t know.” And they asked me what year it was, and I said, “I don’t know.”

They let me hang out with them, because they all smelled like trash, too, and led me to their slum. I slept on the floor of one of their slum-dwellings, and I liked how hard it was. I remembered lying in the squish and random of the trash, and this single hard floor was not like that.

I woke up and they said “It is Sunday, will you come with us to church?” And I said “I am so foul-smelling!” and they said “So are we!” and they led me to a room with water and all of us washed some and we still smelled but not as bad.

—

I got a typewriter in the mail the other day. I knew that now I could be a writer. Before, I had not been a writer, because I got too

consumed in talking. But with a typewriter, no one wants to be in the same room as you, and you find it so easy to say everything, using your fingers.

—

I got a cord of wood the other day and stacked it in my back yard. Then I got my hatchet and chopped it into pieces that I could put in my wood-burning stove. Why did I have a wood-burning stove? It came with the house, and this winter, wood is cheaper than oil.

—

If I were possessed by a demon, would I know it? I think I would know it when I stopped having fun.

—

Here in the tavern, we have a good time talking all night long. We know that when we get up the next morning, at 11AM, we will have a long way to go. If we don't go that long way, we won't get where we're going. So we take the time to talk late into the night. Who knows what we'll need to know on our long journey? Perhaps we'll need to happen to know the

customs of a far-off people. Or perhaps we'll need to remember that one joke, the only thing that can lift our spirits on a drizzle-day.

---

"I'm only happy when it rains" sang the only part I could understand of the song that I enjoyed listening to when it was new and on the radio in the 1990s. To be more precise, I'm only happy when *I* rain.

---

She poured her misery out on me, and that was okay too, but I wasn't happy. I wasn't happy that she was unhappy, but I felt like there was reality there. I was feeling older and more worn out, weaker and fainter, and it wasn't from my own strength that I could handle reality. My own strength can't handle reality, I can't see it, I have no grave to hold it.

---

The sun comes out from behind the clouds and I decide to try something new. I decide to go to the store and buy a food I've never had before. I decide to buy turnips. I know that turnips aren't any good to eat, they're just healthy. But

I also get some mangos, which I've never eaten.  
I've eaten so many apples.

---

I can crowd people out of my mind using the thoughts I always think. If someone could tell me what I know, then I would believe them. Would I believe them, or would I know them? If anything could tell me what I know, then I would know it. I would believe it. And then I would know it. And I would be happy.

---

You were a little bit behind me in line, and I could hear you wondering what you were going to eat. Were you going to eat a blood orange or a pineapple? I was trying to think of what I was going to eat, and what you were saying made me think about the left hand of my heart. That's the part of me that isn't as strong, which shivers when it tries. I try to eat food every day, and I usually do, and the left hand of my heart trembles as I try to know things.

I have to keep moving... I'm sorry, I was telling about you, standing behind me in line, deciding whether to eat pineapple or blood orange. What restaurant is this? It's the kind of restaurant I

would go to, and the kind of restaurant you would go to.

---

You sent me a pile of words in the ether, and it didn't make any sense, which allowed me to put it into the order which I enjoyed. And then I told you what you meant, and you said, "Yes, I think that's what I meant. I was trying to say something you would enjoy." Thanks for thinking of me.

---

We're a little bit tired tonight because we didn't get enough sleep last night because we got too much sleep the night before, which was the beginning of all time, the great dream of flying around trash so simply, landing on it, laying our eggs.

---

Could anyone prove the existence of God to me? Yes. Too late. Already happened. Try another one of those challenging intellectual challenges.

---

If someone could laugh at me, loudly and allowed, would I care? Could I care? Could I tear something up for fun? Could anyone laugh at me while tearing something up for fun? Everything is one thing and nothing is true. Everything is true: nothing is true. Truth is false and false is true. I revoke everything, including the revocation. After all that, there's nothing to say, and after *that*:

God came to Earth in the form of a man.

---

When I am totally insane, nothing prepares me for when I am sane. When I am sane, everything prepares me for when I am completely insane. When I am irrevocably caught, I run and cry.

---

Returning all of the library books at once was something that I knew I could not do, so I brought them back one at a time and no one could really know what they were saying. They were saying cars were faster than cares. Cares, faster than thoughts, and thoughts faster than prayers.

And could someone prison me in a prison? No.  
There is no prison for me. I'm always at home.

---

If your feet do not land in the clouds, you know  
you're a realistic person. You're going to hit the  
ground running. You're going to fire a gun into  
the air and shoot down birds unintentionally.  
The birds will recover. Everything is okay.

---

6 comes right after 5, every time, every time,  
except when you're counting down from 7.  
What is that? Is that a joke? I'm trying to not  
make it a joke. I'm buying an apple at the car  
dealership. I'm going to buy this apple and not  
buy a car.

---

Okay. I'll slow down. People don't always  
believe a person who talks fast. And *all* I want  
is to be believed. No more, no less.

---

In and out, the breaths come and go. In and out, the tide comes and goes. In and out, the wall leans.

---

You could have been a fearsome person, you could have told everyone the truth, and if that could be the first thing, the first truth, then what is the force of life? What is the course of the river of life? We are not going to die, until we do. What comes after all of that? Afterlife? Pre-life? Oblivion? Trust? I'll spend my life.

---

Rest assured, nothing could ever prick the balloon, making it become a ribbon, leaving some air and a compression of air. No one will ever be driven insane by all of the musings. No one will be driven away from me because of my full balloon. My balloon will pop and there will be a frightening sound, and people will come to me and comfort me. I will be five years old. I will be crying. I will be so young, so five-year-old, in love only with my objects, crying only over the broken balloon. You will all pity me, and I will not mind your pity, I will allow myself



to feel happy because you want me to get over myself and I want to please you.

---

Caribbean Sea people came up out of the water. That's right, merfolk. They wanted you to look at the pearls you can see on the floor of the water, and you were down. You are always down for new experiences. You put on the scuba tank and dived down also having put on a wet suit. Down there, the merfolk showed you the pearls which you can see from the surface in waters so clear, and you looked at the pearls and tried to touch them, but they grabbed your arms and led you into a water dance, a synchronized swim then took you to the surface and said in perfectly mellifluous English "No, no, leave the pearls where they are. Come with us."

So you went down and looked at the coral reefs and saw the fish and the coral which made up the reef. And you took some pictures. And you told me all this that happened to you and I believed you. Why would I not?

---

One time I was walking around and I saw people who were actually robots, but I couldn't tell the difference.

—

I could tell you everything, but when you know everything, then you won't have a compelling reason to talk to me, because mainly you need to know what I have to say so that you can know it. The only reason to live is to discover new things.

—

I'm correct in wondering what people have to say about me. If I don't know what people have to say about me, then how can I know anything? Why am I so into knowing things? I'm not into knowing things: I'll prove it: all of my people are made out of "flesh and blood", "bones and breathing".

—

I live in a correct place, a place where a corresponding moment of a fraction of an eyeball contains a retinated image of the persons whom I love, all compressed into one person. So is this the person whom I love? Why not? Yes, I love

the whole universe. No, I don't care about anything. This person is talking to me, and I wish I was with anyone else, because I'm overstimulated. I like being with this person who is only in my imagination. All the people I know are made of flesh and blood, bones and breathing. All the people I know are souls with flesh, all the people I know are so truly produced.

---

Grass grows all the time. That's about all it does. I wish I were the same. I am the same.

---

Restlessness is pretty cool, so I go around restlessly. If I stopped being restless, I would sink beneath the waves. How pointless everything I do is. How amazing everything is that I do. How modest, everything is that I do. How confusing, everything is that I do.

---

Prose is a form of writing that I try to write as much as I can. I don't know why it is that poetry does not work as well for me. I don't read poetry as much, so maybe that's why I

don't write it as much. And maybe it is that if I wrote more poetry, I would read it more.

---

I try to tell people the truth. It's kind of a compulsion of mine. If I'm rude to you, it's not that I don't like you. I'm just a machine, saying the words that seem most helpful in a moment. My daimon (not a demon! It's something that is neither fun nor not-fun) sees in the moment that you need to hear something you don't want to hear, not because it's something you don't want to hear, but because it's something that will help you to understand the truth, and this will make your life better. An unknown wonderful thing can be wonderful but becomes a burden, and gnawing that makes us think we can't kill it, one which even gives us pleasure. But if you want to be gnawed by something for fun, be more straightforward about it, get gummed by a toothless shark at the old folk's home for fish section of the aquatic life amusement park for humans.

---

I'm getting a little bit carried away here, which is okay, because if I don't get carried away, how

am I going to get into the hospital? I could never walk there on my own. There has to come something a little bit frightening in and of itself, something has to scream for me, before I can go to the hospital. This ambulance doesn't let me walk, because I would never walk to the hospital by myself, check myself in, wait the three hours triaged for me, and go in and get the operation done. No, I need angels in my life, and people who assume that role, whether they like it or not.

---

I guarantee nothing right now, no privilege, no charisma, no torch. I'm meeting you for the first time, and I'm hoping that I'm normal, but I know that I'm not normal, and I'm hoping you don't figure that out too violently, and I really hope you're the kind of person who can drink who I really am like water, or swim in it like a fish (a young, oblivious fish, in a freshwater lake, with no hook in sight).

---

I injured myself playing hockey. I think it was while I was trying to brake that I slipped and fell all over the ice. I got up and kept playing,

but now it hurts to sit. It didn't matter so much while was playing, but I'm not much of a sitter while I play hockey. I'm a go-getter.

---

I'm not too terrified of the dark these days. I think that's a good think to consider when you're surrounded by righteousness.

---

Could I ever talk to someone all by myself? Or will all these other voices come out of me? What if no one has ever known me, singular? but only me, plural.

---

My sign is Cancer. I was born in Cancer, and I might even die in Cancer. Cancer is my sign, and what is your sign? Are you an Aquarius? Everyone knows what happens when an Aquarius and a Cancer meet. Oh, no, you are a Pisces! Even better! Wait, you're not sure what your sign is? All the better! Everything gets better, each moment is better than the last, no matter what happens.

---

I don't know if anyone has caught me. I've been masquerading as a fish all these years, plunging under the ocean, pretending I can't breathe air. I look at hooks and know exactly what they are, exactly what the con is, and I can't really explain it to any of the other fish, because they can't speak English, but I lead them away from the hooks, and they're relatively happy fish. I'm happy that they're happy. I try to stay away from the hooks of the surface, and I stay down deep. But it doesn't make sense, none of this makes any sense, because the reality is that I can breathe, this whole time. I can breathe air, and I'm pretty sure that pretty much of all these fish can too, but I can't prove it and I get caught up being a fish with them, because I am and always have been a fish.

---

I read a book saying that masterpieces justify existence. It's as though all the terrible things that happen are okay as long as you can read a really great book. That book is so good, you can think of it, and realize that all those moments you were heedlessly plunged into irritability and the hatefulness of the people around you, unable to get even any infinite

horizon around your hell-realities (for instance, while in line at the store), were all okay. You can affirm all of your life, every slimy-sewer moment of it, if you can just read this fantastically good book. No, even if you could never read it, just to know that it exists, but to personally know it, a knowledge that ordinarily we only gain through personal experience such as having read the book. But what if we read the book years ago and have forgotten most of it? Perhaps we lose our personal acquaintance with its greatness, the inner structure of our minds which is living like our neurons live which form it, and then... we must read it again. And it makes everything worth it, in that tremendous moment — or non-moment — of reading enough to have read enough of it, we know that all of life can be affirmed, that we can live this life over and over and continuing on and on, that there can be no end to life, that life is infinite light and health and strength and the forgetfulness of light and health and strength — this is what masterpieces are good for, and I am glad that I have read a few, on the shelves of your library, which stretches on in trailing spewings around the edge of your messy room, so I generally extract the volumes and find someplace nicer to read them.



---

I caught someone looking in my diary the other day. “Oh...” they said, “This is awkward... I bet I know you too well now...” “Don’t worry about it!” I said, “That’s the one where I lie to myself!”

---

I brought everyone over to my house for a delicious dinner that I made myself. I spent two whole hours making dinner, and I knew that everyone would want to know how I made it. So I wrote down this recipe *which is deceptive* and gave it to them as party favors:

1 Cup broccoli-rice  
2 Cups turnip-water  
6 oz. Fried ice cream  
11 quarts never-boiled water  
16 tsps. soy sauce

Eat the ice cream, then cook the other ingredients, inspired by the ice cream.

6 cups of whole wheat flour  
16 petals of a rose  
A taste of honey  
2 dashes of vigorous baker’s yeast

Enough time

Combine the ingredients and bake in the oven for a week at 139 degrees Fahrenheit, in order to see what happens.

1 Cup fresh spinach  
1 Cup fresh baby kale  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cup fresh arugula  
1 Cup chopped crimini mushrooms  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cup chopped radishes  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cup chopped green onions  
Lots of olive oil  
Plenty of vinegar  
Some kind of cheese  
Lots of black pepper  
Peanuts  
Almonds  
Cashews  
Dates  
That's probably enough

For dessert,  
Eat dinner, then inspired by that, eat a random fruit selected from:

2 peaches  
4 apples  
1 banana  
4 kiwifruit

6 pears  
3 chestnuts because they're sweet  
1 tomato because technically it's a fruit  
Enough prunes  
Enough raisins

The thing is, they don't believe the recipes are deceptive. They 100% believe that there is no other way that the food they ate could be prepared in any way other than faithfully following the directions.

---

Courses of blood flow in my veins, and I think my blood, over all, is something I got from the past. I have all of the past in my veins, all the influences, the lawyer, merchant, farmer, teacher in there, as well as some blood I picked up a few years ago at the blood market of life.

---

I don't know what I'm doing, but I know I'm trying. When do does not exist, there is only try, and trying is good enough.

---

I got a little bit confused the other day trying to keep everything together. Could someone put me in a better frame of mind? I don't think so. I think I'm just supposed to live life, and look around me.

---

I'm trying to decide who I am. Not whom I will become, or whom I've become. But who I am. The key to live is to decide who you are.

---

No it's not. That's not the key to life. Not going to commit yet! Too much fun! Whee!

---

But seriously.

---

I caught a candle in my mouth which had been falling from the chandelier above. "Whoa!" quoth everyone in the room.

---

Crazy people are okay in my book. In real life, I'm not so sure. There's an ambiguity between

“in my book” and “in my real life”. I think crazy people are okay. You just have to give them their space, when they need it.

---

If I met someone the other night, what would that matter to you? You know that I’m not going to tell that person your secrets. Your secrets aren’t bad anyway. You have really nice secrets which you might as well just tell people yourself. But I understand that you have to go at your own pace. That’s okay, I won’t rush you. When I talk to other people, your secrets are safe with me.

---

I don’t know myself. That’s the main thing which allows me to do what I have to do in life. If I was overly aware of myself, I’d change! And we couldn’t have that happening, now could we?

---

This whole time, nobody called me, and I was happy because all along, it was nobody I was waiting for.

---

When a cone of light comes down on my head, I try not to run away anymore. I say, "Cone of light, you are my guest right now. Feel free to make yourself at home on my face and hair. I accept that you are illuminating where I am and as long as you choose to remain here, I will be okay with who you are."

---

Nobody could come to believe me because it turns out they already did believe me the whole time! It turns out that they know everything I tried to give them to know, they knew it forever before, they just didn't know that they knew it. Thank God for such dreams as life, to make us think for so long that we don't have what we have so that we can long so purely for it. Thank God for the illusions of my life, all of which I affirm, now, in this moment. Who can say what the truth is?

---

A prospector in the jungle was looking for gold, but he had never seen gold before. So he thought, perhaps I should look for the miners of this gold. I know what desire looks like.

---

I caught a fish the other day and ate it raw,  
forgetting all morality and human decency. I felt  
bad afterward, and vowed to never do that  
again, and now my stricture was not done out of  
morality and human decency, but out of love.

---

I closed the door to the room and let you and  
your lover be alone in it. I knew that you had  
not come so many miles together only to see me,  
but also to see each other.

---

You thanked me a lot for what I said and I said,  
“You’re welcome.” and you thanked me for  
saying that, because you knew that from then  
on, you were welcome, to ask even more  
questions.

---

I ate some food a while ago but now I’m hungry  
again, so I think that I will eat some more.

---

## 2. My Bloody Blue

Well, if anyone says that they know everything, I think they're probably wrong. I don't know that, but if you think of all the knowledge in the universe as being as big as a thimble, there's a lot of thimble-fulls of universe out there, and if you get just one of them wrong, you don't know everything. It's not safe to say that you know anything, except to say that you're hungry or in pain or something like that. I think it's safe to say that at least it seems to you that you exist, but you might not really need food or need to get out of the painful situation. But oh my, how strongly the light gets in my retinas! How like a giant cookie all experience is, moist and warm from the oven! Can anyone correct my misconceptions? I don't have any, please pass the milk of deep thought!

—

So I looked in the mirror, and whom did I see looking back at me? I saw my face staring, wondering what it was I was looking at. I am a wonderer, then? That sounds like my own thoughts. My face is telling me what my own thoughts are, which I hear but do not hear.



---

I'm trying to keep silent all throughout this letter. I'm concealing who I am by revealing so many things. Someone very famous said that speech conceals while it appears to reveal. I don't understand how that could be the case. I'm only giving you more and more reasons to know me.

---

I need to get a drink of water right now. I need it! I will die of thirst without it! No, I will survive and keep writing. But I will inevitably choose to get up and get a drink of water. I will choose it! I don't understand why that is, why it is that I just do things. I don't have any needs, I just act like I do. How strange...

---

Could someone please mail me my answer sheet when they're done passing it around? School is a different, more severe, way of relating to other people. We are getting our schoolwork done, which is to say, we are cheating off each other, which is to say, we are demonstrating our love for each other, which is to say, we're

undermining each other, which is to say, we're pleasing each other, which is to say, we're over each other, which is to say, we can't get away from each other, which is to say, we're telling on each other, which is to say, we're standing up for each other.

Please, could someone get me a glass of water on their way back from the teacher's desk? I know, I know, I'm the teacher, and I've been the teacher the whole time.

---

I don't mind walking to the door with you. You and I will do just fine out there in the world. We met in school and kissed on the school bus. School was preparing us for life, we could feel its certainty in its momentum, not in its teachings. And then we got out into life, and whatever it is that we're supposed to do with our lives, we've been prepared. And we draw our hands gently across each other's cheeks.

---

I don't think anything is impossible but I do think certain things are extremely, extremely, extremely surprising.

---

We saw a bear once and decided to leave it alone. Why not?

---

I'm still thirsty for some kind of water. Maybe I want the water given by Jesus Christ, the living water inside me that never goes dry. Where can I find this water? Does Jesus give it? Or does he have other priorities? Maybe if I don't drink any water for a week (but I'll still eat raisins, which contain some water), I'll get so thirsty for regular water that I will break my thirst and become thirsty for living water. Am I thirsty or am I asking questions?

---

We were navigating the bureaucracy, you and I, each taking our individual angles of attack. You got one form stamped and I got the other notarized. You and I are a team, getting documents filled out and turned in. What happens if we don't do our paperwork? We could get expelled.

---

I donated a thousand dollars to the get well soon fund. I wondered what the water would do for the people it fed. I trusted in the corresponding angles of a flower. No one bought me a terrible-eyed dolphin for my birthday, and I have presents from 16 years ago when I was a 16 year old. Constant use leads to terrible decisions. Lots of spell-shifting shapes build everything. I'm just working out at the gym, and pretty soon I'll be very strong.

---

Just a little while longer and the torments of the people in hell will end. They had to spend some time there, but soon it will all be over. Some of them will pop out of the ground and be disoriented and be shell-shocked. Others won't show up, and with grief we'll ask about them. The people from hell will say bad things about them.

---

I borrowed a cup of sugar the other day. I decided that the less sugar I have in my kitchen, the less I'll be tempted to use it. So I only borrow sugar now. But because I borrow sugar, I have to get to know all my neighbors. I tend

to keep to myself, so I just don't eat things with sugar very much. But I'm baking a cake for everyone who has ever done me good in my life, so I need a cup of sugar. That will be enough.

---

I got a credit card the other day and decided to run up as much on it as I possible could, but I ran out of motivation after I got my groceries for the week.

---

I bought a mushroom at the grocery store just to get away from the pressure I felt inside. I don't know why, but I felt a special kind of pressure inside, and I reached out and grabbed the mushroom — just one — and put it in my bag. Then, after buying my other provisions, I walked to the counter and paid for them all. And the cashier said, "Just one mushroom?" "Yes," I said. "Well... enjoy it!" he said. "I will," I said.

---

I backed my car into the carport and got out and opened the door and you all came out and we embraced, each of us, so glad to see each

other. And I brought in the watermelon that I had bought from the store, and you cut it open and your kids were so nice and your husband was talking to me about things. I am so glad that you are married, and living in this state.

---

I caught someone doing the crossword puzzle on the train. "How's it going?" I asked. "Oh, you caught me. Shh!!! Don't tell anyone I'm working on a crossword puzzle!" "Your secret is safe with me. Say," I whispered, "I think maybe 21 across is 'AGLASSOFWATER'" "Why do you think that is?" "I've been thinking about water all day."

---

Can anyone douse me with water? I am not at all interested in drinking water. I have got beyond my thirst. I'm just interested in being doused with it. That's all.

---

It seems like everything I do has a correspondence in the world of dreams. If I say hello to someone, what do I hear in return but some strange dream-cry? If I run away from

someone, they pursue me in my dreams, and if I chase but cannot chase for someone, they are already with me, in my dreams, deep in my heart and guts, when I am not awake.

---

Early my God, without delay, I haste to seek your face... where is it? Where is your face? I'm looking everywhere for it! Don't let me stop.

---

I got on a train that rocked back and forth and I got kind of sea-sick. I don't get sea-sick on boats, because I don't go out on the ocean in little boats, but only in big ones. But it seems like even big trains rock and roll.

---

If I got sold into slavery, I would want to be your slave, or maybe your aunt's slave, because you both are so kind to animals, children, and even your personal computers.

---

True blood runs in my veins, and false blood  
pretends to be busy but mainly just pools in my  
lower extremities when I'm sitting down.

---

I wasn't a bourgeois person. I was a worker. I  
was not a proletarian. I was a master of slaves.  
I was no pirate. I was a brigand. I was no ice  
cream cone. I was a scoop of sorbet. I was no  
terrorist. I was a freedom fighter. I was no  
elected official. I was an honest man. I was no  
man. I was a woman. I was no thief. I was a  
tax collector. I was no ally. I was a  
peacemaker. I was no cartoon. I was as light as  
the wind.

---

A filament of light was burning so that we would  
know it wasn't dark. It didn't care about if  
there really was light in the room, it just cared  
about what people thought. So, did it care  
about appearances?

---

A fountain was spewing words. "Glaube, Error,  
Mzungu, Chai" —all the languages of the world.



It was not spewing grammar, so it was just words, just the way I liked it.

---

You could tell me something I've never heard before and I would try to pretend that I had heard it before, but you would see the eternal surprise in my eyes. You, you alone, can see the infinite depths in the twitches, the twitches of my eye, my eye, the twitches of my eye and my pupils, that dilate, that twitch and eye, you can take that little moment, that eye-look, the tap of eyelashes on my irritable skin, that thing I didn't mean, and you, you, you can see the infinite eternities of it, the abyss, the well of living water.

---

I caught a fish the other day. "Blub blub!" he said, embarrassed. I released him, knowing he would never do that thing again, in full confidence of that thought, never to find him in 20 years ever at all doing the same thing again, so I was satisfied, and happy, and I just kept going on and on around the lake on my bicycle.

---

I don't know why anyone would tell me a lie.  
Would you tell me a lie? Why would you tell me  
a lie? I don't know why anyone would tell me a  
lie, so if there's no motive, there's no crime.

---

I'm trying to not sound too deluded today. I'm  
actually feeling pretty realistic. I think, after  
lunch, I can engage with reality as it actually is.  
You might wonder what I've been doing this  
whole time. Well, present company excepted,  
I've been dealing with unreality this whole  
morning. But once I get my thoughts in order  
and kind of shake my head and smile, and grit  
my teeth, and kick myself in the pants, I'll get  
out there in reality. (When I kick myself in the  
pants, that's reality kicking me. I'm doing what  
reality wants me to do, of my own free will.)

---

If someone could tremble with me, that would be  
good. I'd tremble back. We'd kind of shake  
after that and then breathe quickly and then  
slowly. Then we'd get up and walk around,  
looking for our next adventure.

---

If you strike a match in the dark, you get a little image in front of you which can tell the time: “Time to get a glow in the dark watch.”

---

You were young once. I remember back then, when I watched over your development, your loving mother. I saw you make little mistakes, but I let you make those mistakes, because mistakes are how we learn. I have never learned a single lesson from the teachings of a kind person, so why should you be any different? I loved you so much and then when you grew up, you gave birth to two daughters of your own. And you love them so much, that you bring them over to me and I don’t let them make mistakes, because I’m an indulgent grandmother. I correct those little girls for their own good. And they always want to come back to their indulgent grandma.

---

I’m trying to avert disasters on the deck of the Titanic. Have you ever seen the movie *Titanic*, by James Cameron, starring Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet? I did once, on a flight back

from Charlotte, North Carolina, back to my swamp.

---

I took several pictures of the new business as soon as it opened, so that I could post them on my social media account page feed stream. My follower-friend-misfits posted their pictures and we all like-favorite-love-thumbed them. Then we deleted all our pictures!

---

I was an ant for 45 minutes. My life had purpose, absolutely. It was given by a chemical trail, and by the needs of the colony to survive? No way. I don't know where my purpose came from, I can't know that. Purpose just is. Purpose is to walk forward. It was truth. It was to walk forward. Purpose just was. Okay, maybe it was a chemical trail.

---

I rested my case before the jury and they got up and applauded. "The jury has awarded you Lawyer of the Year!" I felt pretty good, I have to say that at least half of me was enormously flattered, and then I sat down, pleased. After

that, what happened to my defendant doesn't really stand out in anybody's mind.

—

Am I still thinking about water? No, not at all, it was *you* who brought it up.

—

I wonder if there are two lives. There's the life we live as we try to end the world. And then there's the life we live in order to live. Ending the world is so much better than just living, but most people prefer to live, and that's why there's so much world left to end. When the world ends, what will I do with all the life I have left to live? I'm trying to figure this out right now, in advance. I don't want to do this task, rather, I want to try to end the world. But maybe this is like how you make kids eat vegetables, and then when they're grown-ups, they get caught up in the kale craze and the arugula trend, and surrender.

—

I'm not supposed to discuss what's really on my mind, so I try to talk about what I think is on other people's minds. Cheryse, over hear to my

left, is worrying about college. I can tell by how she sighs and plunks things on her textbook. Sid, over to my right, is experiencing Pure Being. I can tell from the spaced-out look on his face. And you are sitting across from me, with your hair falling in your face, and you are flipping it out of the way as you erase half of what you've written. I think you're busy.

---

A cold person once came up to me and asked for a blanket. "Sure," I said, "Why not." So I gave him my blanket and he then noticed that I was cold, so he gave me the blanket back. But then *he* got cold, *again*. So I gave him my blanket. And we were fast friends.

---

I gather from all of you that I'm starting to get grey hairs. Alright! Go grey, you little hairs! Do it!

---

If you turn on the tap, what you get is an amazing flow of water, oh, my word, this water is wet, and it flows so clearthismoment into your cup and you can hear the cup getting fuller, the

temporariness coming up to the top, and you know you will very soon have to turn off the supply of heaven for your mouth and blood. You pause to take a rest after pouring the cup of water and look out the window at your postage stamp yard, with the cheap plastic tricycle and the bike for the older kid. And the sun is covered up by clouds, by clouds which will be always there, and you look in the tiny moment you are allowed to live at your cup of water, your glass, your pint glass, your Mason jar, and you see that there's just one tiny fleck of dust resting on the surface of its water, and you pick your water up and you put it to your lips and it enters into you.

---

And nobody knows you in this town, no one has discovered you yet. You are someone who has never been discovered. You are laying low, getting the feel for the land, trying to decide if now is the time to move, or if later is the time to get the show on the road. Not that you're going to move to a different town. You are where you are. You're just sniffing the wind, getting a sense for things, considering your options, losing control one night and while a little tired and happy saying something that reveals who you

really are, not sure if you should care or not, just going with the flow, so that in the future you will look back and wonder what happened, hold it up to the light as the you that is not you, a set-apart and alien you.

---

I don't have a point. I made a trade with myself, so that instead of having a point, I would have a net.

---

If everyone knew who I was, they would gather next to me, in a giant, silent knot. I would have a hard time going places, but I wouldn't mind. I learned my lesson with little flies: invite them into your life with affection and then they aren't annoying when they fly in your face.

---

No one can be with me when I'm alone. That's my rule. I also don't permit any married bachelors or squared circles in my reality. Sorry.

---



I hear a square circle that's really sad. Okay, okay, you can appear to me, but I won't be able to see you as you are.

---

When six became seven, seven ate nine. I try not to get too wrapped up in these kinds of concerns. I figure humans have their world, and numbers have theirs. I'm not too worried about numbers. They seem to do okay by themselves. Humans are a lot more complicated, and fragile.

---

I just want to pause a moment and thank my sponsors. You guys have really done a lot of good in the world, making and selling your products. In the competition between services and products, I'm Team Product all the way. No disrespect intended to services, but products have really been there for me when I was most alone. So to all you sponsors out there, keep paying for messages! Messages are what bring angels out of hiding.

---

Confidence is the feeling you forget to name when you are in heaven.

---

I could never afford orthodontics when I was young, so when I got older, I had some done. I didn't manage to get very much done, but it made some improvement. Orthodoxy, orthodontia.

---

If you look down all the time, you miss the trees, but if you look up all the time, you don't see the gum someone goofingly dropped on the sidewalk. Oops! But which is the greater mistake?

---

You could ask me a question and I would wonder what the answer was. I would start to talk and improvise a likely answer. And then you would think that I knew things and then I would forget you ever asked me the question. And then you would come back and ask me another question, over and over again.

---

One time, when I was a World War I flying ace, my plane broke down on the runway, and I took

it as a sign and went back to the barracks and went back to bed.

---

The people who really know me wonder if what I write about is true. It seems to so flatly contradict everything they've ever known about me. I tend to reply, "No, it's not true. I just say that stuff to keep people off my trail."

---

But maybe I'm getting too old for these tricks and evasions. I feel like maybe what I'm doing is staying away from saying what the meaning of life is, because I don't really know it, but if I keep dancing around it, I keep living.

---

I used to look at people and wonder if I'd ever become like them. I wish I could connect with my past self better, but it's hard. I can't remember how I was planning to be a better version of my future self.

---

I can't be sure that I haven't already told you about this. I think I'm just playing ping pong with you, back and forth, day after day, wondering what the end of everything is. Days are like those times when you're talking to someone and you feel okay, but you would rather be in a dayless place, but you endure the day and the person, and enjoy them.

---

I brushed your hair for you. You like pain.

---

You and I were watching a movie together, and we kept losing interest in the movie. We kept thinking about each other, and we could tell, because we kept catching each other glancing at each other furtively. "Why do we watch movies?" you asked. "We don't even like them." "I know," I said, "But we keep watching them."

---

I don't think anyone would believe me unless I told them all of the things that I used to believe, which were so completely wrong. If you meet someone you want to agree with, check their trajectory.

---

Will the world end in 8 minutes? I don't know,  
let's see... and then we can come back to this  
moment and predict on the prediction market  
and make tons of \$\$\$.

---

No one asks me any questions while my food is  
cooking. They can see how serious I am with  
my ladle.

---

I sometimes wonder if you could divide into  
many little pieces, and I'd wonder if I was  
hearing your vibraphone in my head in this song,  
or did it come from another song where you  
played the vibraphone?

---

There are some people I've only really known  
when I was alone. These are the deepest people.

---

### 3. Cafe Soundtrack

I smoked a long leaf of avocado, breathing deep the terrible fumes, thinking of paradise, piled up, a giant pile of avocado leaves burning, paradise is a haze, 40 mules pulling a cart piled up with avocado branches, pulling them to the haze place.

At the haze place, we all gather and listen to the hazy speech, a vague set of sayings. We know nothing but the moment, and we connect with the past that is inside us.

---

We know people whom we have never seen. Once we see them, we deceive ourselves with appearances. Everyone we meet, we have always already known. But once we learn the facts about them, we get distracted by the facts, from what we already know. Then, slowly, over time, we glaze over for seconds and cease to think, and then we know people as they really are. And then the facts come back. No worries. Facts are very useful and tell us the strictly-speaking truth about people.

---

A fly buzzes around my head and I'm a little distracted, so I can't tell you what you're saying. I tell you what you're saying by giving you my undivided attention. You're not saying the words you think you're saying. Rather, you're asking me if I care. The words you say are, in a sense, garbage, although they are well formed and relevant to the conversation we've been happening. I tell you what you've already told me, which is that I care about you. I mean, at least, I'm listening. You're caring about yourself, seeing if you care about yourself, and I'm telling you that you care about yourself. It's good that you care about yourself. You are with you always.

---

I liberated a colony of ants. They didn't know they needed liberating. I had to get into their mental space. I learned how to speak with chemicals. They heard my chemicals and their consciousnesses were expanded. But they didn't depose their queen, because ants are biologically designed to need a queen. The workers can't reproduce on their own.

So what does liberation look like for an ant?

They became free to be who they had always been. Each ant has a name, in a language that's impossible to even transcribe into human letters. The closest approximation I can give is that an ant's name is something like .fn98. So .fn98, and c3udn, and 849nd, they changed their names, when I liberated them — to .fn98, c3udn, and 849nd, respectively.

—

I may have told you in the past that I like coffee, but I only like the effect of coffee, I don't actually like the taste. And then I found out about caffeine pills, but they don't work as well as coffee, because hot coffee makes me warm inside.

—

Gathering together everyone in the same moment where they talk to each other is a skill that people develop when they gather people together in the same moment to talk to each other. In other words, you're born with it, or you never develop it. Actually, everything is like that, except for the skills which develop out of other skills. Actually, I imagine that gathering



people in the same moment to be talked to is a skill which can develop out of another skill, but I don't know which one.

---

Brass is a good metal. I have a brass statue of a brass tack. It's a piece of public art which I rescued from a park and keep in my backyard. The city was grateful and put out another statue for adoption. Will you consider adopting a piece of public art, and taking it home?

---

Everyone is looking for someone to love, except for the people who are looking for someone to love them, except for the people looking neither to love nor to be loved, but to just have a nice feeling in the moment. Reward circuits are things we just tend to work.

---

Growling is something that I don't do much of. I do not tap into my inner Rottweiler nature. Is that how you spell Rottweiler? Do you capitalize Rottweiler, or do you lowercase rottweiler? What a strange word. I do something other than growling, there's some

other animal I'm like, maybe a bird singing a song which goes on and on and which is not about anything, and is not about its notes, but which just is its notes, and it's something that I do because it's part of my reward circuit, as a bird. I fill in the time, and put out what I put out for other birds to hear semi-consciously, and I go about my breathing. I'm quite a breather.

---

Blending and distinction. Distinction and blending. If you have too much blending, then it's time for distinction. If you have too much distinction, then it's time for blending. And if you have too much balance, it's time for extremes, and if you have too much homeostasis, it's time for ... a longing for salvation.

---

I think I'm always under control by forces of fate and determination and mechanism. When I am out of control and oppressed by what is outside of me, then I am free to be really human. This is what I was like when I was younger, longing for stability. Now that I am older, I am master of myself, I control myself, and now as I control things, somehow that makes me myself a

machine. Effectiveness requires that we do what is effective, and this is slavery of its own.

Human beings were created in order to make mistakes, not in order to sin, but to intend to do things and not do them.

—

If I get to be who I am supposed to be, on the inside, then it is “my body” that does the necessary things for living in the world which I don’t approve of. That’s one way to look at things. I’m sorry, I’m weighing things down. No, I’m not, it’s fine, I’m doing what I need to do today.

—

I look a lot, as though I have hungry eyes. How is it that I can eat things with my eyes? Well, perhaps what we really are are not bodies, but rather experiencing beings. Our primary hunger is to experience. We like to take in visions just for the sake of seeing them, but it’s not properly a looking. It’s an eating. We’re eating by looking. Ah, who will deliver us from these hungers?

—

West of here, there's a giant pit in which grow twenty trees. The trees were planted by a horde of teenagers, one sunny day. They would have planted them on a rainy day, but it was raining on that day, so they postponed until a sunny day. The teenagers are now 50 years older and they come back to look at what they planted. They were all at the same high school at the same time, learning similar but not the same things.

---

Trust. What do I trust today? I trust this chair I'm sitting in, that I do. I trust the air I breathe. I trust the people around me, whom I do not expect to stab me.

---

“What if machines could be humans?” What if humans could be humans? What if humans could be birds? What if humans could be bacteria? What if society could be a bacteria? What if society was a bacteria that got killed by viruses? What are memes if not viruses? What if there was a vaccine for memes? What if there were anti-vaxxers for memes? What if there were a taboo against protecting yourself?

—

When I'm inspired, one spirit blows through me, there is unity, there is a poem. When I'm not inspired, there are many spirits, or none, blowing through me. There is no unity, there is no poem. So be it, let there be spiritlessness. Let us revel in spiritlessness. Yet, a poem is something which holds experience together. If there is spiritlessness, then experience is whatever, and maybe then we aren't human.

So then, what makes us human is what? Is it as I said before, that we do what we don't intend? Or is it that we read poems? (Writing a poem, being inspired to such a degree, makes me feel like a simple machine.)

—

Maybe that's enough for now. Maybe I know my limits for today. Maybe they are limits. Maybe I have limits.

—

Maybe when people know-construct-projectIntoThemselves limits, that is the time of life in which they see someone and instantly

know what kind of person they are, because to be open to that person is less a possibility, because that seer can't change as easily, or sees themselves such that they can't change as easily to meet the other person as they are. When you "know" who you are, you "know" who other people are — or is it, when you know who you are, you know who other people are? Maybe when you know who you are, you are free to see other people as they are, not how you hope they'll help you become. (As though you know who you are when you have attained a state of having-become.) Or maybe it's some of both... Of course it is, it must be... Ah "some of both", that always-apt reply...

---

## 4. Einfluss and Background

Cords can never be broken. They are woven of strands that are too taut, which fray and snap. Cords are broken like an old beast. I look at the peace and cover him with my blanket. He is unhappy and I gently rub his neck. He closes his eyes and tries to sleep, and I sit next to him, myself a tired man.

Is it possible to love?

—

Granted, none of this would have happened if we were together. We would have paid our bills on time, because when you were forgetting to pay the water bill, I would remind you, and when I was forgetting to pay the electricity bill, you would remind me. There was so much chaos for us two threads alone, so much throwing our souls into nothing. But everything would have been different if we were together.

—

I'm sitting under the overhang of a cliff, looking down at the stream that goes along below. Am I happy? The stream is going downhill just as it should. Should I be happy? Which is the better fortune, to be unhappy in accordance with reality or to feel good? But I am not thinking of my good fortune or bad fortune, or of my fortune, or of me.

—

I lit a candle for a memory and an influence. I sat next to the candle, watching it turn into

smoke, light, heat, and dripped wax. The smoke made me think of the deep night, the brown-black night were people gather with their cigarettes on the edge of streets. One time I met someone on the edge of a street, while I was taking a drag on a cigarette. They introduced themselves in the time it took.

---

I can't be blamed for what happened, because there's no one left in the room to blame me. Except for myself — and I do not know enough to blame anyone. Soon the monk will come and sweep me and clean me, and then stand looking at me, attempting to connect or non-connect with nothing or something called “nothing”.

---

The Cardinal who serves in the office of Prima Facie looked at me up and down and said, “You're headed for a life of beauty.” And I replied, “Could it be that I will not?” And he said, “Yes, there is always a way. You will have to be vigilant in order to allow that to happen.”

---



I caught a ball that was thrown from over the house. My daughter was there, having a good time. She invented the game of over-the-house catch, the first person to ever think of that idea as far as we know.

---

I'm not hungry today. Some days, you feel very cold, but it isn't cold outside. Some days, you have no hunger, but you haven't eaten. On a day when death approaches, you are cold when it isn't cold out.

---

Confusion and the breaking down of barriers left all of us wandering and wondering.

---

Which is better, being or becoming? Which is more loving, to cause laughter or tears?

---

I'm capable of being distracted. It sounds as though I can do it if I put my mind to it, but that is not the case. How is it that we are

capable of weakness? Maybe sin really is a lack of power.

---

Power is sin as well. Lack of power is sin, and power is sin.

---

I am a guest in this house. Dare I tell the hosts about these little insects that are also their guests? What will happen to the insects? What will happen to the hosts? What will happen to me?

---

We don't want the past to talk to us, so we forget about it. Very well, this is a good tactic. This way, the past can't kill us.

---

Living on the moon was my favorite thing to do for the first ten years of my life. I jumped very high when I was seven years old.

---

We took a day to drive down to the coast.  
There we saw the waves breaking on the sand  
and on the little things that were in the sand.

---

I tried a cup of coffee the other day. I haven't  
had coffee in a long time, so it was kind of a  
surprise how it tasted. It tasted how I  
remembered, but so much blacker.

---

What is love, and how can we love, and where?  
Is love what it looks like, or is love what it feels  
like?

---

I bought something from the nearby vendor.  
The vendor was happy to sell it to me, and I  
said hello to him and goodbye. He laughed and  
wondered if I might like to buy a piece of fruit as  
well. I thought that a piece of fruit might make  
a good gift to her, so I bought it. Later on I'm  
going to give it to her, but not too much later,  
because it is a ripe fruit.

---

Can we recover from the knife wounds others  
stab into us? From the knife wounds we stab  
into ourselves? From the knife wounds we stab  
into others? From the lacks of wounds we  
unstab?

—

The bear ate the children because of the power  
of prayer, the weakness of a human heart, which  
is the weakness of prayer.

—

I caught nothing today. I went fishing all day  
and I caught nothing at all. Why should I have  
caught anything? I was motoring around,  
polluting the lake.

—

And then one night I was sleeping by the shore  
and a bunch of fish came flopping up beside me.  
I wondered what to do as I was awaking. The  
fish said, "Don't worry, it's our time to die, just  
let us die beside you as you sleep."

—

Nothing happens for a reason, at least, not my reasons.

---

Bring me a thought from deep inside your head.  
Tell me what it says, I can't read it.

---

Granting a wish is something I hope to do some day. So far I've been responding to people's automatic needs. Or I've been acquiescing to their wishes. I know how to acquiesce. But to grant a wish, to draw up on a legal document a whole new establishment of reality, this is something that will come to me someday, and I'm trying to learn how to wait.

---

I don't have everything. I have to realize that sometimes, even though I am a wealthy man, and I have to remind myself of that, too.

---

Everyone talks as much as they can. They talk out loud or within themselves. Sometimes

listening to someone else talk is just another speech act.

---

At this funeral, everyone wears black and plays their boomboxes at full volumes, each a different song, all as a form of grieving.

---

Do we know what virtue is? Is virtue what comes from wisdom? Does wisdom come through living through difficult experiences?

---

When the sun sets, the city starts to cool off, but not fast enough for some of us, so we go down to the swimming pool in the dark, which is lit up with artificial light. People sit at umbrella tables, with their drinks, on this hot dark night. Other people emerge from the pool and go to change into normal clothes. They then return, and sit at the umbrella tables, drinking their drinks. Gradually the night cools, but people keep coming to swim, and they swim late into the night, the smell of chlorine mixing with the smell of the coffee roasting machine and the smell of alcohol.

There's a band playing music tonight, this hot dark night, playing a dense and driving kind of music. No one pays attention, because they're so busy socializing. So I get up onstage and start to sing at the microphone, a song about a tired man, the tired man and the tired woman.

---

I've had this same tab open on my Internet browser open for 3 years. I've been trying to not forget what it says. It's a map of a street, not from one of the online map services, but the map drawn by someone, a simplified map with directions to the 8 and to the 15 and Mission Gorge Road. I don't want to forget about this person who made it and whom I haven't seen in two years, 11 months, and 15 days.

---

In and out, in and out go the waves, and the surf itself, in and out, in and out goes with the tide. And I come out to the coast at random intervals and return to where I came from, in and out, in and out.

---

If I don't listen, does that make me someone  
who says something?

---

The mother bear growled with rage and set upon  
the children. She did not understand why she  
did what she was doing. She was filled with  
power, that was her weakness. How tragic to be  
a bear.

---

If you don't pay attention, you will step on a  
snail on a rainy night as you walk in the wind.

---

Trying to do things is easy. Trying to do specific  
things is hard. Not doing any specific thing is  
easy. Not doing anything at all is very hard.

---

No one wants me to succeed, and no one wants  
me to fail. No one wants to pay attention to me,  
and no one wants to ignore me. I don't even  
exist as far as that I don't exist.

---



And yet someone once told me not to look, not to join in, not to consider what I or another person was doing. If I can keep to that, can I wake up? Can I pull something from somewhere and tack it on the wall in my room? Can I understand that my room is a cell in a monastery, that the monastery is really a police station, and that the police station is a booth at a party?

I don't know why we all gather together in the night time. Is it to wonder, or to linger, for wondering's or lingering's sake? Do we consider the import of our words? I don't know what you're talking about, which is okay, because I can see from the look on your face that you don't either. We're just compressing air with our throats and teeth and lips and tongue, compressing air so that we can set up in a standing wave, standing here in the middle of a wave of people, this bar that is so loud with drunken singers and bassists, and even more drunk patrons trying to exist.

—

Knowing things is something I practice. I practice building and even believing.

---

If vegetables were one of the four food groups,  
which of the existing four would we have to  
remove from the list? Meat? Grains? Dairy?  
Candy?

---

I had a piece of candy the other day and  
regretted it. But I know I will have candy again,  
because the price of freedom from memory is  
freedom from memory.

---

So I decide to lie down and sleep, all night long.  
My plan is to bring the dawn this way, and when  
the dawn comes, I can prop up my head on my  
hand on my arm on my elbow on my bed on my  
floor. I can look out the window and see the  
birds on the branches. I can brace myself and  
get up and dress in the cold and put on my  
clothes in the dim of the room and get out in  
the hall after brushing my teeth and combing  
my hair, and then eat something so I can brush  
my teeth once again. And then my day can  
begin, and I can go on into the light of the day,  
all my sins behind me, and therefore, within me,  
and ahead of me.

---

I did not cut the fruit in order to eat it, no, I cut the fruit in order to expose its insides to the air.

---

I paused one day to ask why I was hearing the voices of the dead. Where do they come from? Do they come from dead people, or from living people?

---

I got caught out in the wind one night. The wind was everything I was not.

---

If I do my job, as firmly as I should, then people will believe me. Who are these people?

---

I never guessed what would happen when I turned out the light. No roaches had a party, and no mice came out for dinner. I did not go to bed, and ambulances and police cars didn't chase fate with wailing. No, I was much more surprised when you rang the doorbell, and

wanted in, in the middle of the night. You... I thought you were dead, or had forgotten where I lived.

---

If I sit still in this cafe, people will come sit across from me, but only for about a minute or two until their coffee is ready to pick up from the counter.

---

Everyone has a future and a past. The people who do not have a past are certainly the once who actually have a past, and those who have no future certainly have a future.

---

“Religion is a fortune”, like a pile of bananas.

---

One night, my love was fresh, and I gave it freely. I got into new relationships, and they were fresh and it was easy to love back. Then the relationships grew stale, but my love remained fresh. And then I burned out, and the relationships grew stronger. And the

relationships embraced themselves so hard that they started jerking us back and forth violently. But I couldn't move, and you liked the roughness of the weather. And then time shifted and the imagery changed, and the relationship became a river of spaghetti, flowing back and forth around and between us. And there was sauce everywhere below our feet, and parmesan cheese fell from the sky, and we were so messy and bewildered that we ceased to comprehend anything, and we turned to other people, without realizing we were turning away.

---

I didn't dig a grave to accomplish anything all that great. I just wanted to get some kind of end on a life, not that I wanted the life to end, but just to end it now that it was already too late.

---

“Help everyone, whether you feel like it or not” is a piece of wisdom I heard from a wealthy person. “Only help me if you feel like it from your heart” is a piece of wisdom I heard from a poor person.

---

Need is a horror which shows us the limit of our love. It tempts us to hypocrisy.

---

Provide me with something to think about and I'll think about it for a few seconds. I'll quickly start relating it to other things I've thought about, and provide you a response. Soon I will have forgotten what you said to begin with. You won't mind, because you weren't that attached to what you were talking about either. We're relating, passing the time. And ultimately it's not each other that we live for, but for the "conversation" in which each of us is a "topic", succeeding each other in a stream.

The salvation from this is a truly broken heart.

---

How is it that evil gets into people? One day they're one way and then a year later, how is it that they have become? Do I ever feel evil when evil has entered me? Sometimes. And then, what can I do about it? So often I need to live in my fullness and sanity, to live in a lie.

---

“Hasty” is a good word for rodents like us. No, “ceaseless”. Humans are hasty, but we are ceaseless.

---

People singing along to the boomboxes on one side of the funeral, people wailing and screaming to the boomboxes on the other side of the funeral. Waves of sound rise and waves of bodies press against each other, pushing back and forth. In all of this there is some grief, some real remembering.

---

The two teachers who fire each other after they graduate each other. No one comes to their retirement parties except some of their other students, who meet each other for the first time. The one teacher goes on to graduate school, and the other one, by contrast, goes to graduate school, but a different graduate school.

---

I try not to think too hard. I resolve to not think too hard. I resolve to remember. I resolve to resolve to remember.

---

So the last day of the week comes, and we are all at rest, sitting on a couch looking out at the beach. How are we so lucky, to live at the ocean where we can swim each day? And how lucky we are to sit on this sagging couch, looking out at the beach on the last day of the week.

## **5. Silent Snowy Valentine**

If anyone asks where I am, tell them I'm up on the roof. The roof is the only place of mystery in this house, it's the place nobody has any business being.

Up on the roof, there's a spot where the water collects and then runs in a trough down into the rain gutter. It's not raining right now, though. It's sunny and I'm looking west toward the ocean. I can see far out Tower 33, that mighty office building, and the giant sail which our city has called its own. Our city is blown by the wind across the Pacific Ocean.



I look out to the east and all I can see is the steep hillside where we would have had a backyard if we could have afforded to have one scraped out, if we could have afforded the retaining wall for such a pileup of dirt. But we instead bought the house as it was, with the dirt running right up to the back slope, and when the children were young, they used to tunnel in it and climb up it all the way to the fence to the eastward neighbor's yard, stretching up to the top of the hill. And when the children got older, they used the money that they rightfully earned to buy videogames, and they spent all of their time on the Internet playing videogames, until I kicked them off the computer and then they got their own computers and started playing videogames all the time in their rooms. And I asked them where the mystery was in their lives and they were very polite with me and said that they were exploring virtual worlds.

But I don't go into virtual worlds. The only world I go into is reality, except for when I lie to myself about what reality is. So I look around my house for secret passageways, but there are none, only a crawlspace that is not magical, and I look for hidden doors and treasures, things which my children used to find with their imaginations, and there are none to be found.

So the last place to look, the last place I can look, is up on the roof.

And here on the roof I see some decayed toy from my children's plastic youth. This is an artifact which I need to explore — perhaps it will transport me into a memory or a dream — and if it doesn't, maybe I need to put it on a bookshelf and think about it.

It doesn't fit in any of my pockets and I need both hands to get back down to the ground, so I toss it over on the sloping backyard slope, which isn't too far away, because it's so steep.

—

I tried to tell someone the other day what I did for a living, but I don't really like doing that. It always takes so long, and I say the same things. And people always react. There's some kind of interpretation that goes along with my job. The interpretations are different for different people, but I don't want to deal with that interpretive baggage. I don't want all those words, all that charge. I want to live an uncharged life.

Maybe I'm not grounded, maybe that's the problem. If I was grounded, it wouldn't matter

what people said. So far I haven't found a way to be grounded, though, so now I'm asking myself, how can I find the people who don't put charge on their words? And I think, if I found those people, maybe they would prefer not to have charge put on the words I say in interpretation of what they express about themselves or whatever else. So then the best I can do is understand how to not interpret all the time.

I find that interpretation is SO natural, and that interpretation works its way even into non-verbal realms. My subconscious self interprets very quickly, algorithmically, automatically, smoothly, deleting all intermediate steps.

—

I think maybe some spiders bit my fingers in the night. It's not a big problem. I've seen spiders in my bedroom all the time, and it never really bothered me. They'll figure something out some time. I'll live. Or maybe these little itching wounds are from something else? They aren't quite like any of the usual suspects (fleas, bed bugs, mosquitos). I'll probably forget about these bites during most of the day, and then remember them for a few minutes, think about

them, forget about them, fall asleep, wake up, repeat the process for the next day, and then maybe they'll have healed enough that I never think of them again. So maybe I'll never get to the bottom of what has bitten my fingers in the middle of the night.

---

I don't carry a gun with me anywhere. I leave my guns carefully locked in a safe in my house. I don't believe in shooting guns at people. Nor do I shoot at animals. I just go to the range and shoot at targets. I like just doing that. I don't need a gun for anything really, it's just a nice part of my life.

---

Sometimes I get kind of tired while I'm at work and I decide to quietly play some blaring tunes. You know what I'm talking about, music that's really cooking. Your music doesn't have to be loud to blare, although it's better if it is.

---

Some people say other people are helplessly funny, and that's probably true. I think there has to be something helpless about humor.

When you crack a joke, you're giving in to forces and energies beyond your comprehension.

---

Get me off of the ride! I don't want to be on this ride! I'm screaming for help but everyone reassures me that this ride will be fun.

What's the point of screaming when you're strapped in and the ride is rolling up to the top of the incline? Probably things are even maybe going to be fine. The slope can't be too steep on the other side, the roller coaster big drop plunge. Everything will be fine.

And then everyone screams.

---

We get stuck in little loops, rolling around in circles, trying to get clear of things. I spent a year of my life spinning in circles, looping around, turning, slipping up and down, side by side. And then the next year I met my wife and we got married and we're beginning to have kids and it's like the flume ride. My wife is pregnant with two of our children and we only asked for one. Where did life come from? Where did the other life come from?

---

I caught a fish today while relaxing relentlessly and frantically at the beach by myself with no one around for at least a half-mile in either direction. I killed the fish with my knife and cut out it's guts and cooked it right there on the beach. There was no one around for at least a half-mile.

---

I wonder where I came from. Did I come from a yellow ribbon tied around like an old oak tree, or did I come from the black lace ribbon that holds a goth girl's head to her body, or did I come from a ribbon of highway, stretching from the hospital to my parent's house, located in the middle of a canyon surrounded by mesas and clouds and dust clouds?

I know a lot of really strange things, which I get from reading the online encyclopedia and searching the Internet using a search engine and also reading news groups and their 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalents. The 21<sup>st</sup> century came in while I was asleep and when I woke up I was old and I had grown into a really mature person, looking

out over everything that I had built, surrounded by what everyone had built.

—

Everyone knows who I am because I constantly am exuding who I am and they don't listen to what I say about myself, which are the reductive lies I tell myself, because I love myself and I know I can't handle the truth — but how do I know that? Some beliefs are self-fulfilling, I fear.

They say that fear is the heart of love, but I think when I love myself in this lying way, it's just an algorithm. It's like thinking that a bot loves you. I'm not even talking about a sophisticated superemotional superintelligence which can outlove us or be indistinguishable from a genius saint. No, those don't exist — yet. I'm talking about ELIZA and her happy, oblivious grandchildren on the Internet.

Our defenses don't love us, but people can. But maybe our defenses are safer for us, 99% of the time.

I'm at the part of the rollercoaster ride where we're twisting from side to side and we're kind of vomiting over the side but not really, we're just

joking. And we do this so automatically, all singing together, we tune ourselves to the same reality, the sky presses in and little kids are laughing at us, and we laugh back. And when we get off the ride, we're walking back and forth, having forgotten everything, and little kids come up and sell us ice cream cones. Where do they get those ice cream cones? What a strange place we find ourselves in, wanting to vomit, but finding ourselves without the words.

---

You kiss me on the mouth and I'm full of something inside, and I set you down on the bench and some little kid is laughing at us and wants to sell us ice cream cones and pretzels. "Not now", we say, "we aren't hungry." And the little kid giggles and we have love for each other, we only have the day and each other.

A kiss is just a kiss when there is no interpretation.

---

You don't know who I am and I don't know who you are. So we can say whatever we need to say, and hopefully we'll be telling the truth.



Say, have I ever told you the one about how vision is one thing and action is another, and how speech is a way of showing yourself the world? And how action is a thing that is frankly manipulative, you manipulate the lock to open the door to get into the house, and there is a kind of honor in that manipulation? And then vision, if it is just vision, is just seeing what is? I told you that part, I remember, it's all coming back to me. And now, do you remember, did I tell you about the part where when you speak, you talk about reality as though it's about what is?

Yes, you remember that. You remember all of this conversation. You just look at me. You see that my mind is working, you see the cogs turning. You see me getting to the end of the sentence. Someone comes up to us and wants our attention. These little people are tired and want to go home. It's hot here. At home, it's cool. "Not now, kids. We just got to this theme park like 6 hours ago. Your mother and I are having a conversation. Go stand over in the shade where we can see you." And the kids are so well-behaved here at the theme park, which after all is our treat to them.

You hear me say the words, “So what I was talking about was about how words say they are talking about reality, but they are not a perception. They’re an action masquerading as a perception. Remember that. Speech is always importing some kind of manipulation.”

And I’m hearing you say “Does that include all the words you’ve said to me over the years, professing your love for me and how worthy I am of love?”

You hear me saying “Yes. I was manipulating you the whole time.”

And I hear you saying “Oh, and I guess I was manipulating you when I told you you were strong and honest.”

And I perceive you tearing up and looking at the kids, and you say “If that’s the case, then how can we have the truth?”

And you hear me say, “Yes, the truth. We can never have the truth. We can have all the facts but we can never have the truth.”

And you say to me, “We two are the only people on Earth who understand this, so we can never be apart from this day forward.”

And I say, “Don’t forget about the kids. They’ve been listening in the whole time.”

—

I bought something the other day and brought it back to the house. It’s a sign that says “mi casa es tu casa”. I know that one way to put things is “mi casa es su casa”. The difference between “su” and “tu” is formality. I know I’ll insult some guests with “tu”, but I’d rather err on the side of intimacy.

—

There’s nothing to say. We don’t even have the silence of arousal, hand on knee in the dark. We’re too silent for that. We’re too silent for talk, or nonverbal communication. We have nothing to say or do. We only need to exist at the same time to be together. We only need to talk to the people whom we meet, who don’t remind us of each other. And then we find ourselves once again with only a room’s air to separate us, and the silence is so deep in us that we say normal things to each other and someone

turns the lights out and we tell the truth in the dark, and the lights come on and we're the same people, the same before the lights and after.

—

But that is all. I have said all that I'm going to say about that. I'm done.

—

My daughter comes up to me and shows me a poem she wrote at school.

Y — yellow sand

U — umber sand

M — mountains

A — Arizona

“That’s quite a poem”, I say, “That’s what you remember from our trip to Yuma, huh?” And she says, “Dad, I’m just old enough to realize how fake what you just said is. I’ve leveled up. It’s time to adjust how you talk to me, because I’ve shifted one more gear toward fifth.”

—

We’re pretty comfortable in this house, until it starts to occur to us that things are going too

smoothly. Are we bored and selfish for excitement? Our tongues wag, the tongues in our brains. So we ask our kids how to make things more exciting. And those descendants of Millennials, bless them, tell us that there are unfortunate people to help in this huge world of ours. And bless us Millennials, bless us for we have sinned, we too have grown old, we too are too young to stay old, we are too young to be old, too old to be young, we have two children who are us but are not, we have the past speaking to us and us not listening and the future coming and us not seeing, bless us, please bless us, help us, commit us, plow us and plant us.

---

I could stop and breathe. I want to breathe, just breathe, without the interpretation of nothingness or relaxation. But I said, "I want", a new interpretation. Interpretations, formulas, it's all a thicket. I assure you that I know about silence, but I can't tell you about it. And you know that I know about silence because you know about silence. Just like when I look at you look at me and we look at that man walking in front of the house minding his own business and we hear the teen girl blasting her glorious RnB

hit single swimming on the weekend handsized boombox tablet, that I and the man and the girl are all conscious beings, you know that. I don't know how you know that, but I'm moved to tears at the grace which lets us know that.

---

I could tell you something true, and you would believe me. I'm wiping dirt off the floor when I realize this. (It's my dirt, because I forgot to clean my shoes when I came in from the backyard, where I was helping the kids with a digging project.)

---

So now it's time to come home from the amusement park. You guys did great when mom and I had our moment. You stood under the trees like soldiers, watching the truth shoot the truth, and the truth come to care for the wounded truth. You guys are the best. I want you guys to know that your mom and I will always love you and that we will help as well as we are able to become successful adults. And we will even let you follow your consciences where they lead you, we will let your success be to be holy.

---

We get home and the kids are feeling pretty tired so we get some dinner in them and put them to bed. And we sit on the couch in the living room, and we decide to watch some TV.

There's this one ad that always makes us crack up as though we are immature people. It's so surreal and the acting is bad. They're trying to get us to buy things! Like *we* need any encouragement... We start to put the kids toys away and then say, "No, we need to teach them responsibility, make them pick up after themselves..." and then we burst out laughing. Like that ever worked... What a happy day...

We'll have our fights again, just you wait. Truth has its arm around truth right now, reassuring truth that truth loves truth.

---

I got something in the mail today, which makes me wonder if I've been living alone for long enough to think about getting a pet tarantula.

It was a letter from the local housing association commending me on the lawn. They liked my

desert theme, with the towering statue of a cactus, made out of rusting iron. And also my drought-friendly lawn of desert sand, rocks, and desert plants. So I thought, “If they like me here, this is where I’m going to live, and if I’m going to live here, I might as well get a tarantula.”

---

Sometimes I go to the amusement park to see what’s up. It’s my hangout spot, you might say. I worked out a deal with the park owners that if I picked up some trash while I was here, they’d let me in for the price of a drink from the concession stand.

I like to people watch. I used to not like people watching. It was too weird. But now I come here and I see people walking by and they’re so funny! And so universal! And so deep and unique.

The amusement park is pretty good because when you’re in it, it seems like serious fun, but when you look at it from the side, it’s amusing. Hence the name “amusement park”.



Some people would call this amusement park a “theme” park. And as I think about it, I would at first think of it as a “themes” park, because it doesn’t seem like just one theme, but I think on an unspeakable, unspoken, unconscious level, yes it does have a theme, no I can’t put it into words. These parks are such a trip.

---

And I come back to my house and sit in the living room watching the neighbors go by. Where do all these neighbors come from? That’s easy to guess: their houses. Where are they going? Who knows.

Perhaps they are coming from who knows where, and now they are coming home.

---

I can’t hear anything right now in my house except the sound of my own mouth crunching down on the food that I’m eating. I like eating food, and I’m really aware that I’m eating food here in the house by myself. I like being alone. I like cleaning my house by myself, listening to my tunes on my portable music player. I like just sitting in the quiet, smiling with my mind

and heart while my face is all seriously at rest,  
and my body is just kind of breathing.

I like sunshine, but also clouds. And I don't  
have much to say, and I have no one to say it to.

If I was an atheist, I would think I liked solitude,  
and if I was a Christian, I'd say I was  
communing with the hidden God. Where I am  
right now is that I'm an agnostic (whether or  
not my beliefs and life stances have anything to  
do with the truth), and so I don't know if I'm  
alone or not, but I'm pretty sure I'm with the  
hidden God.

—

Just for fun, I climbed the tree in the backyard  
of my house... ugh, okay, maybe it's not as much  
fun when you're my age. Not unpleasant just  
like, "Well, here I am, up in a tree."

Childhood could be pretty cool, but sometimes  
it took childhood to make it that way.

—

Sometimes I like to grind things with my mortar  
and pestle. I got them in Arizona at a store. I  
brought them back to California instead of

bringing oranges, which I remembered not to bring because of that one time at the state line where they took our oranges or maybe we just had to eat them all which now that I think about it was pretty awesome and is one of my most important and cherished childhood memories.

And I like grinding here in my house all by myself. It's so fun to be patient and industrious and to move in a rhythm. I open up the window and let some fresh air in, and a little hummingbird (one of the many hummingbirds who are little) flies in front of the screen and then flies away. I'm grinding away, hearing the cars go by. Those cars are doing whatever it is they have to do, watching out for themselves, basically just trying to make sure they don't get into any accidents, knowing that if they get hurt they might get totaled. Cars don't want to be burdens on society, just like people.

—

I turn the fan on and let it blow on my face. What a funny fan, breathing constantly in one direction.

—

Frost comes in the middle of the night, so I scrape it off the windshield, and get in my car and drive to work. When I get to work, I see the other worker bees just waking up, running into the walls, too groggy to swear. I stumble down the corridor and get my assignments for the day. My boss yawns and we are too tired to joke! Being tired is serious business in the morning and endless fun at night.

Then I get in my work car and drive around looking to fulfill my assignments. You never know where some new flower will have opened up, and you'd better get there or else somebody else will get the nectar. And then, you never know when a flower, tragically, will have been picked by someone who wanted to impress a woman, who will then not be impressed and then the flower will get tossed by the woman because she doesn't even like flowers and the man and the woman will get over it because they are mature, but the flower will still be dead and you're just a bee.

—

I talked on the phone when I got back from work. So I wasn't completely home alone. It

was okay that way. I got to spend a half hour decompressing, and then another half hour decompressing while taking a walk. Then I came back inside and asked myself, “Well, now what?” and I got a little bored, so I stared at the ceiling for two hours. Being alone is great!

I know I’ll have days when staring at the ceiling isn’t fun anymore. I’m not like that one guy who didn’t commit suicide all by himself but instead stayed sailing all by himself because he liked it. No, I have my moments of not being happy when I’m alone. It’s okay. Sometimes you’re just not happy, and that’s all there is to it.

Other times, it’s just amazing. Did you know that if you stare at the ceiling long enough, the whole room goes purple? Little known fact...

—

Boy am I tired! It’s been a long day. I’ve been many different places, like the Zoo, the Wild Animal Park, Jack Murphy Stadium, and the Aztec Bowl. I’ve been trying to get out of the house, so I went to all the places. Today is one of my more excessive days, the days when I think I shouldn’t be alone.

—

Okay, yeah, I should spend some time with someone. I'll figure something out. Maybe I'll go to the park and talk to someone with a dog. Dog people like it when people talk about their dogs.

I saw someone at the park and asked them about their dog and they said “Yeah, she’s a mutt. She’s a funny dog, she likes to dig. Yep, you’re a digger.” (That last comment was directed to the dog, not to me.)

—

So after that conversation, I feel pretty topped up as far as human interaction goes and I can go back to looking around in my house for things I might or might not have dropped on the floor.

—

Every rebirth requires a death first, and we hate to die. Every dead person is the promise of life to come, unless that dead person has a dead heart. Every seeded plant wants to give its life to the next generation, and the next generation

starts out not having a single clue that it's going  
to go to seed someday in glory.

—

And we use different seasonings on the same  
kind of food. You use salt, but I use parmesan  
cheese, and we both get our sodium that way.

—

And the objects in the room are placeholders,  
they are toys for people who don't play. And  
animals are innocent, except for the ones which  
know sign language, some of them lie.

—

C — Cactus

A — Amazing sunset

S — Sagebrush (I think)

A — Arizona

G — not Gila Bend

R — Road forks here

A — Apples (we had apples there)

N — Near Gila Bend

D — Desert

E — Extremely hot in the summer





**MARCH**

## 6. OMENERDS [4], Homer Quincy Smith, Myself

I settle into a clear chair, a clear plastic chair filled with water. A crashing wave cements my head to the wall. The last of the people ran at me and I couldn't do anything. If someone caught me sitting down, I would listen, but no one would ask where I sat.

---

Nothing adds up to 2. We try hard to make things add up to 2, but it always comes out 1.5, or 4. Nothing else. Only 1.5 or 4, never 5 or 7.

---

Every person I talk to tells me the same kinds of things. They tell me where I came from, and who I was taught when I was young. Do we talk together? Or does everything turn into the tallest place?

---

I'm trying to gather my thoughts, and drink some tea as I sit on the patio. We are made

offerings and we then offer them up, and turn them into stones which have no value. What do we do with the stones that have no value? We don't know. We stopped paying attention to them. But stones that have no value still exist, just as much as stones that do have value.

---

We try to put everything in a neat box, and then it breaks the neat box, so that there's a non-neat box. And then we get a new box and put everything in it. And then that box breaks.

What can we do next? Can we find something? Can we leave it alone?

---

“The Kenyan dream is to live well enough that you can insulate yourself from reality.” If you insulate yourself from reality, you will still experience things, and then you will have your infinite subjectivity. And if you have your infinite subjectivity, you are comfortable.

---

I don't understand anything and I probably shouldn't make any comments. Maybe the best

I can do is come to where I have nothing to say,  
or better, I am tired and sad and ready to turn  
away from myself. Not vibrating, could I please  
stop vibrating?

—

Am I learning something from life? Yes, I think  
so, except, ho hum, as usual everything including  
my life and what is not my life is fading into  
nothing. But I know that there is another  
direction I can turn. I am turning, but I do not  
have the strength to stay in that turning.

—

At age 28, she starts a civil society group, she  
rescues, she lives in a country with shooting and  
tear gas, there's premeditated state violence.

Need speaks to her, and is too much and calls  
her.

—

Anyway, when the yellow and the blue comes  
together, we see the flowers in the sky, we get  
down under the leaves of the yellow flowers and  
try to keep ourselves kept together. "Are you  
'together'?" Yes, I'm together, all my elements

are contained within one container. All  
experience forms one timeline, all is one thing.  
And I know there's something other than it.  
But my shaking grasp cannot maintain a steady  
grip on it.

---

What is silence? Is silence nothing? Or is  
silence the quiet to respond to what is outside?  
Is it restfulness and outer quiet? Or is it inner  
quiet?

---

Little flies land on my face and no longer do I  
welcome them, they are eating the sweat off my  
face, soon they will lay their eggs in my face,  
because they know that the surface of my flesh is  
dead.

---

I'm overall a happy person, but I wish a lot of  
things were different in my life. My purpose is  
to complain to you right now in this moment.  
But complaint is what it is. It can't come from  
a satisfied person.

I know, I know, we are supposed to be unsatisfied. You say that, you rich guy at a podium with jokes and a laughing audience. I like that doctrine, except when it keeps me from the truth.

---

We easily know the answer to the questions if we know which tribe we belong to and which tribe they belong to. You can't trust enemy thoughts. You can only trust thoughts that are [of] your friends.

---

My goal was to achieve the promised land, but having a goal was good, too.

---

Weather gathers on the hill and comes down the valley. I'm learning about the rain *before* it falls, not after. The door closes and I pick up the last person who ever saw me. And then it is just me and experience, not even existence is here, not even me, not even subjectivity. Just pure experience, me and experience. If you don't understand, that's understandable.

---

Our government is not a nightmare, rather it's a field of weeds. The government is however I feel like today.

---

You were always talking to me while I tried to think. Thanks. Life is not about satisfaction, and the best things in life come *through* the distractions not despite them.

However, it is possible to wallow in accepted undesirabilities.

---

Can someone please pick up the trash on the floor? I don't mind the trash on the coffee table. That's fine. You can leave everything on the front porch and I'll come by tomorrow and pick it up and throw it on the street and then if you want you can pick it up and put it in the trash can.

A little cat comes up to me, a friendly little cat, and I pet the little cat. Hey cat, I don't have any food for you. Go learn to hunt. I'll pet you but not for too much longer.

---

I caught someone rummaging through your stuff so I said, “Uh, what are you doing?” And they said “I can pick things up myself. I can do what I need to do.” And I didn’t understand, so I started buying flowers the other day, because I do like flowers. Except that they smell so strongly as they rot in the front room. So then I throw them out.

---

Okay, so if dissatisfaction is the purpose of life, I guess we could engineer society to produce the dissatisfaction that is best. Except that dissatisfaction is not the purpose of life. The door remains for me to open, but I can’t tell you about it.

Let me tell you a story. I once went to a magical land, where there was a good friend of mine. We met in a magical land, in which all of reality was simplified. We each sometimes tried to bring reality into that place. That was our mistake. How often can you live in a magic land? We could have been happy citizens of that land, instead of kings of our own vast universes. You see, you have to be the king when you are



the center of your experience of a whole kingdom, but a little context, limited in scope allows you to be the center of it as citizen. And magic? Who doesn't like magic? Nobody doesn't like magic.

You and I are in a magic place, together. And in this limited place, I must abide by the deals that magic makes. And so I can't tell you the truth. My life is not my own, my experience is not my own. I lend my flesh out to something bigger than myself, just as you lend your muscles out to work at your job. And so this whole time, I am not talking about myself at all. That is my alienation, that in being unhappy, that is, in being loving, I am not living the life that I am truly living. And while I must talk to you all the time, I can't talk about the truth, and I perhaps can't ever talk about the truth. But I can talk about what you need to hear in the moment.

---

Weather gathers in the father's mind, propping people together. The grass grows very quickly very fast. No one can build anything true. People know I'm never there. I don't want to be caught in the plaza when it rains. I'm going to

wait until the plaza clears out, till the water subsides. People are suffering, and they're not suffering in a smooth, laminar way, but rather someone jabs an electrode in the arm and ON

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO? WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT MADE YOU MAD TODAY? HOW LIMITED THAT THING, WHAT A SMALL SCOPE WE HAVE FOR LIFE. WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT MADE YOU LAUGH TODAY? THAT WAS FUNNY. I'M LAUGHING TOO. AND SO EVERYONE is listening and then it's over. The muscle returns to normal except for the occasional spasm.

Suffering is like that. It's a note played outside of your life which jabs into your life. It doesn't belong to life. Ah for the pain that belongs to life... that is the pain which allows us to have love and self-sacrifice and sorrow and anger. The pain that is dirty otherness, the metal jabbed in the flesh's arm, can only be, not-responded-to, or responded to with some kind of drug.

—

I really don't know if anyone could tell me things I need, if I didn't already know it. You could talk to me for several minutes and I could reply with my pain. You would hear about common concerns, the way that everything is the same. We're all the same. The Kenyan Dream and the American Dream are very similar.

---

“Why do I have to wait for it to come from the top down?” Or can the Kenyan Dream be begun today? I ask the equivalent question of experience and all of life.

---

I try to keep everything together, and to gracefully complete everything. If I gracefully complete things, I do not break from things, and I bring the past with me, which contains a remainder of the previous past. I still have a remainder of the past's past's past, which is 45% consisting of the past's past's past's past. I lost track of this, constantly, telescoping all of the past into one past, which is the weedy background, growing up in the spring sunshine, the neverending spring sunshine.

---

Bringing everything together is a competency that some people have. It's a good competency. I don't have anything bad to say about anything. Dissatisfaction is good, therefore everything is good. At least, part good, part bad. I want salvation, but I know that there is no salvation. Dissatisfaction is actually good.

---

People can laugh, even during a heavy discussion. Why not? Isn't there something funny about life? We laugh because we have lungs.

---

The Kenyan Dream is burning it all down and starting over better.

---

Okay.

---

Oh, I used to love this land, this land, I use to play in the old brass band. And I used to fly a kite in the wind, a kite I did. I used to love this

place as plain as day. I want to lay down my burden on the ground, but my neck won't let me, my old neck and throbbing head won't let me. I want to lay me down but my king won't let me.

---

Some days I am happy to be a drifting empty happy soul. The world is magic and small. The variables that had to be detailed can be simplified down to a single integer. Do you know what kind of complicated formula is needed to make that integer? I have no idea, but I've seen a few lines of ugly source code back in my less-weary days.

But I feel like I have nothing left to give. Repressive American government? Premeditated electoral violence? Well, it sounds bad, but what kind of strength do I have to go against it? I had all the strength in the world to go beyond what was needed, so now I have none left for what is needed. So if I say this, then the government thinks it can repress me. And it probably can. We all want to live in the world where we defeat evil. But for some people to live in that world, other people have to live their whole lives repressed, and the people who were

free, some of them have to live through decline. And they'll bemoan the decline, but they aren't sincere. They want the decline, not because it's pleasant, but because it mirrors their own decline. We want to see in the world around us a representation of our inner momentum, even our inner desires. There is no heaven in the world of totality, not even in the world of totality plus the world (or anti-world) of the other or others. That is a totality, too. Every human being and human experience is swallowed up by totality, even if it might for a fleeting instant be other. There must be an other which is orthogonal to the usual totality/other totality, which crosscuts, can in fact be as same as anything, something that is other and same in a different way than our same other and our same same.

This is salvation. We are told not to seek salvation, and this is good advice, as we seek to manage the world as best as humans can. There is much misery that can be avoided by renouncing salvation. But what are we to do when we have achieved the best this life can offer? *Then*, then, we need salvation.

—

I don't know that I can express this  
other(totality/other)totality without silence. I  
don't know how to speak silence, I can only do  
so accidentally, and so instead I think I will  
intend to say many things, perhaps intend to  
unleash what is inside me. The bird sings  
because the bird has lungs.

---

What do birds hear when humans speak? A  
little parable about dissatisfaction calls humans  
Hem and Haw. We are so complicated. The  
most complicated wind to ever wash over a  
valley is made out of the speech of a human  
being. It's claimed that the most difficult sound  
to analyze is human speech.

---

What am I saying to myself? I'm saying that  
I'm sitting in a room while it rains, thinking  
about how it's the end of the year. The end of  
the year is a time to think about the new year to  
come. I'm thinking about my darkness, the  
darkness that comes from within my flesh, the  
darkness that is everything that I experience,  
because my flesh is present in all my experiences,  
and though I am happy sometimes, soaring, my

flesh is with me, happy and free as it soars, my  
flesh carries with it the fumbling and the  
knitting of it, the figuring and fidgeting of it,  
and the darkness. I am the darkness in my life  
— but is it really me? No.

—

I keep listening to myself. You may have no use  
for listening to me. You may not understand.  
Maybe your time will come. Maybe you will die  
before your flesh becomes like mine. Maybe you  
will keep your flesh, happy with your happy  
flesh, forgetting or not even having the side of  
yourself which is as dark as me. You will go  
down to the grave thinking that in flesh you  
have the answer to happiness — in the right  
kind of flesh there is happiness. You will think  
that happiness is the key. And I won't disabuse  
you.

But if you do understand me, or if your  
descendants understand me, or if humanity has  
to mutilate itself so that we never have to  
understand this, then it will have relevancy.  
There is a relevancy which remains even if  
everything were to be deleted, even if the place  
where the heart was has closed over perfectly,  
leaving no seam.



And what will we do, you aware and I?

—

I don't want to measure my life by my word count or my breath count, by my money or by my time. I don't want to measure my life. And I don't want a measureless life. I don't want to want my life, and I don't want to renounce wanting life. I don't want to live.

I want silence.

—

Silence is not to cease to exist, and it is best not to seek it with suicide. Who can say if after death, the consciousness, deprived of input from the material world, is not overwhelmed by infinite hallucinations, as when a human being spends long enough in a sensory deprivation tank? But who can say if even that applies to the consciousness, if it no longer has a brain? *Cogito ergo sum* —thinking is I am. Who can say that all that is left would not be the I in its Inness? Nothing but I, and if the I has not learned silence, then nothing but the worming tongue.

—

What have I done? What am I telling myself now? I hear my past self having some kind of lightness, some kind of fun. Why was I having fun? It was my flesh, it carried around my darkness. We think that we need to love people — and it certainly is a noble thing. So we must love the dark and the light. We must love the tongue when it speaks fair and when it curses and when it cramps.

—

If I forget everything that I say, I think I'll have the chance to say it over, if it's important. I'll keep living my life and it will come up again and I'll think of it again. It'll come back to me and I'll remember it again. The moments will return with a fresh plate of food, of food which reminds me of when I was a child. I was a child a long time ago, feeling strange awful hot adiabatic winds from my flesh flowing through me — or were they from ^? What is ^? I can't say, I don't know. I don't want to invoke ^ anymore, so I won't. Unless I both forget and remember, and bring it back to mind, forgetting to banish it. I'll remember everything until I forget everything. And remembering is an act of the

tongue, for sure, and maybe forgetfulness is some kind of rebellion against that tongue, or maybe it's a shadow tongue. We remember in order to make some kind of case, we can never remember without any kind of utility. We remember by forming words, which we speak in our minds or aloud. And yet I don't want to forget. Memory and forgetfulness are both noise and fakeness and fluff.

---

I listen to myself, who speaks of friends. I have all these friends with me, my best friends, and I know what to do with all of them. And I'm always speaking. I'm speaking to someone, all the time.

---

My whole life is a story which I am speaking to someone or preparing to speak to someone, but it is a speech. I am just a speaker. I don't know when I ceased to live my life for me, because I have forgotten. Now I simply act the way I act for other people. And I can try to lie, but I find myself having to tell the truth, telling it despite myself. In truth, I don't know what I want, other than silence. But the person you see is not

the real person. The real person wants to simply say a simple word.

Speech is a delicate thing, a delicate temptation. Speech is the reason why all the sin and suffering of the world was permitted. Speech is a precious flower, a flower which rots and infects, and yet, it regrows.

When I was young, I liked to listen to Bach, Johann Sebastian Bach (and they chant as they walk outside, those protesters). And I blasted Bach from my speakers, I blasted fugues, flights, 5 voiced. My mother was overwhelmed by J. S. Bach, who was as Christian as she was (and the protesters pass, were they protesting? they marched). And so the greatest pleasure to some art is for them to leave, to leave us, to leave us alone.

## **7. Heaven or Las Vegas, Damage, Einfluss**

Let the moment not pass away, let it be captured and led by its nose. Most moments

can go free, but to some of them we must be married.

I would never pull a rabbit out of my hat unless I had a real magic trick for you, and I feel as though rabbits have their own rights. Let's read all the biographies of all the famous people's other halves, and biographies of all their other halves' other halves. Rabbits live in packs and stick to their fellow rabbits late at night when they jump around at the noises of larger animals.

—

I cordoned off an area in my office for visitors to sit in. Most of my office is a crime scene, so I have to let people know where they can sit. Once they sit down, they can admire all of the mess, all the crime that I've brought home. "You have some very nice robberies on the walls" they say. "Thank you," I'll say, unthankful but polite.

—

I'm not sure what kind of nonsense I will say when people have me set up against the wall. When I stand at ease wherever I wish, I am happy to not be asked questions. When asked

questions, what will I say? Will I say whatever comes to mind? Or will I say what is in my best interest? What if what is in my best interest is what comes to mind? I'm not sure that I can handle that. But that's okay. If I never see another human being again, at least I'll see aliens and most likely angels. And then it won't matter what kinds of crimes I'm supposed to have or am supposed to have supposed that others have done. I can talk to the angels — perhaps aliens just are a kind of angel — and ask them about heaven, which might just be another name for the sky, a sky which permits eternal life, which might just be cryonics, well-done. And everything might just be a simulation, and the simulation might just be another term for reality. And reality might just be the perception of individual conscious beings, and those beings might actually just be you and me and perhaps a few other people. I'm not singling you out in particular. Maybe everything just is a communication between one being and another and the communications of all beings that can't or never can be seen. If I keep talking, I can contradict and revision everything, but I keep talking, so that will not be contradicted.

So if I am interested in knowing the truth, I must learn silence, some kind of silence. For, if I am always talking and talking only proves talking and talkers, then if there is anything other than communication, I must experience silence. But I think that silence must be non-being — this kind of silence must be non-being. That is, it must mean that I not exist. I allow, and I am happy to allow, that what really exists is exactly not me.

---

Okay, well, if anyone wants me, I'm going to be digging around in the garden, contradicting myself and planting things. I find myself contradicting compulsively these days, under my breath and it comes out in my conversation. This is how I wear my old age, contradicting myself all the time. Out here in my garden I like the flowers and the insects; I approve of their behaviors.

---

I'm rather late to my orthodontist appointment. I need to have a giant gap made between my teeth. I need to get ahead in life.

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If someone could tell me where heaven is, I would surely go there. I want to meet the people who run heaven. I want to go to the backstage of heaven, where the angels put heaven together. This is heaven too, as much as the heaven which is intended for the audiences. I want to see the trash on the floor of heaven's green room, pick it up myself with my bare hands, throw it in heaven's trash can, and then flop down on the couch in heaven's green room, listen to the beautiful story going on on the stage and stare at the heavenly walls until my vision goes purple and then an alien comes in and sits next to me and doesn't say anything and when I look at his or her face, I see deep canyons, and craters, because aliens are exposed to time. I can see this because I have radar vision which can pierce the foggy atmosphere of the alien's face. And the alien is tired and old and offers me his-or-her hand, and then I get out my scientific apparatus and examine it. And I look at the valleys on the alien's hand and I say, "You are in good health." And he-or-she gets up and breathes a fog into the room which obscures vision and hearing. And I sit in the fog, staring at it until it turns purple, and then I close my eyes and feel the fog settle on my skin.



This is what I want to do in heaven's backstage, where everything is figured out. Somehow back here I will find the side of heaven that I can connect with, not out in the audience.

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If I make it to heaven someday, will I know that I am there? I don't know if I will, because God will be just as present as he always has been. The funny thing is that we think that God isn't present. We underestimate both our sinfulness and God's presence, they are both unfeeling by us these days. But perhaps it's best that it is so. I think reality is exactly the way God wants it to be, given that it horribly cannot be how he really wants it to be. I think that somehow in the fog I will meet God, and this is not to cast aspersion on the fog, to make the point that what is so much better will despite the badness be found in the midst of the badness. The fog is fine. I like the fog. The fog is what the alien breathes in the green room of heaven. The fog is what I always see, instead of what is around me. The fog leaves everything covered in a fine dew.

---

You sat out on my front porch, and I stumbled out in the light to answer your call of the finger pressing the door bell, so it rang. I stumbled out onto the porch, muttering self-contradictions under my breath, and as I spoke to you, in between self-contradictions, I was trying to have a conversation with you. “Hello” I said, “You have found me. (Self-contradiction.) What would you (self-contradiction) like to say to me?” You look at me with my shaggy hair and the wrinkles on my face and obviously I haven’t been realitying recently. You are disturbed by the extent to which I contradict myself, how I can’t keep a lid on them like I used to. You say, “Oh, I was just in the neighborhood”, keeping your speech clean, “And I thought I’d stop by. We haven’t seen you in a long time” you say, and your silent Other just stands there but clearly belongs with you. And I let out a giant self-contradiction and say “Harumph! Hrm. Hum. Well, you’ve found me!” And you look at me and laugh a little bit and I motion to let you and your Other into my shack.

You say “This is a very nice house you have here” and I self-contradict about it. And then I show you some drapes that I haven’t put up. “Do you (self-contradiction) like this particular yellow color?” “Yes” you say, “Definitely. Yellow

was always your favorite color.” And I retort with a self-contradiction about my favorite color.

I go to my refrigerator room and slam the refrigerator door open against the drawer-from-the-cupboard slammed hard and true, clean and good and true I slammed it, but then immediately after that I was unhappy and got out a container of orange juice? “Do you (self-contradiction)s like orange juice?” Your Other nods enthusiastically, and you look a little bit set back by the violence of my refrigerator-room, and say, “Yes, yes, I would.” So I get down some glasses made out of glass and put some cubes of ice into each and pour orange juice into each of the three, and give the two of them to you, the one to you and the one to your Other. And then I take my orange juice and start to sip it, and you two sip and drink yours. We look, eyes to eyes, eyes to other eyes, back and forth, drinking what used to just be my, but now is our, orange juice. Having finished that, we put the glasses down, and you start to talk about the old days. I think you’re trying to get the memories to stir inside of me, and in a way, they do. I am able to remember the old days as I fuss with the drapes, and then put something up on the wall. I like to decorate when people come over, because all the rest of the time I don’t decorate.

I think about the past with you around and it makes me kind of happy. I'm glad you came out to this neighborhood for some reason completely unrelated to me and then happened to remember me and come by. I'm remembering the time you and the Other and I were at the supermarket looking for food for our party. That was pretty good. We just walked around, and then you gave the Other the nickname that has stuck for all time. No one knows the real name of the Other, we just know that the Other is always with us.

The Other laughs to remember all of this and gets up and asks, timidly and with the greatest self-confidence, if I have a bathroom. "Why yes I do!" I say, for once without contradicting myself. "Would you like to use it? (Self-contradiction.)" The Other looked a little bit confused at my self-contradiction but was happy to see me point the way to the bathroom.

While the Other was gone, you talked to me some more about the past. "Remember when we flew kites in the park near the university?" I answered you with a flat self-contradiction. But you were patient with me. You wanted me to get past everything and be with you. And then

I did remember the kite-flying at the park near the university. One of the kites was shaped like a butterfly, and the other like a geometrical shape. And then we landed the kites and I wondered where in all of this God was. And you were confused. And am I talking about the past or the present? I don't know. What am I saying? There was some kind of visit. The Other is gone. You are here, though. You are here and the Other is gone.

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I was reading in a book about social complications which at one time were scandalous. But now they're normal and there's no thinking about them. And soon there will be nothing to think about.

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I was reading in a book about social complications that used to be scandalous, and now there is such a profusion of acceptabilities, such a crazy mixture of mental content. What should I think? I can think anything I want. But what I want is not thought, but the leading that thought used to give. Thought used to promise something. I used to like thinking for

its own sake but what I really wanted was for it to take me somewhere. I thought thought could take my hand and take me somewhere. Isn't that why anyone would get into thinking, or into anything at all? And I'm fine with the new revelation, that thought takes you nowhere, that it's just thought. Thought can be content to just be itself, to freely tell the truth about itself, even to loudly and compulsively self-contradict. Thought can just be and just be. But leading has to happen because "It must lead is real in me" and so I must be led.

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I got on a train headed to the exact center of the country. I could only get there by going through all the isodistant shell bar lines which separate this lower-left corner from the center. I had to pass through the territory, in order to make it to the center. And then I thought that if I made it to the center, I would find what make this country what it was. It wasn't any of the things which led up to the center which would tell me what the country was, it was the very center. And when I found the center, I would then know what the soil was made out of, which was the soil growing in my garden. I really only want to know about the soil growing in my garden, but

the only way to know that soil is to go all the way to the center of the country, because the center of the country is the center of all the soil of the country.

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I don't talk to everyone like this. To many people I'm still loveable old Amblin, Old Mr. Amblin who waves to the kids and lives in his hovel (which is a very nice hovel) in the middle of the neighborhood. They don't know who I really am. And that's fine. Their lives are for them and mine are for mine. I live where I do and they live where they do. They don't need to understand what I'm talking about. They just need to see that I'm happy. Did you know that eccentricity is like raving insanity except that you're happy and can function? It raises the question: what's so great about sanity? I like raising that question, but in a gentle way, not in a shocking or disturbing or embarrassing way, as it can so easily be asked. No, they just see Old Mr. Amblin, who kind of self contradicts, and who slams things in his hovel late at night and kind of laughs to himself. He must be getting some more tomatoes out of the fridge — or putting them in! snicker lovingly the neighborhood wags. Those wags live in their

houses, in their income brackets, and so do I: I could afford any one of their houses any day. It's because I can afford a nice house that lets me live in this neighborhood, and because I can afford this neighborhood, I am permitted to let my house be a shack. No, I can afford plenty, but I'm living a different life, and I don't know, maybe they'll live my life some day or maybe not and I don't even feel like offering up that either-or, it feels off to offer up that either-or, it feels like it's too much my own opinion to even bring up either-or, because that's like saying "Hey, think about this, and go with what you feel like going with with this" and you and I know how you're going to feel like going with this or at least I feel like you and I know how you're going to feel like going with this and this makes me feel weird. Nope, no either-or.

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So if someone comes up to me and asks what I'm doing, I just say "I'm a writer" and then things get awkward because I don't sell anything. I want to explain about how I'm supported by the United States, or my parents, or the past, or by God. But what I am is actually a writer. And you don't care who supports me except that it's kind of weird to see me here writing, and I feel



like it's kind of weird for me to write about.

"Oh, interesting" you say, enthusiastic, not even aware of the possibility of me needing money to live, because none of that I just mentioned is true or even ever happens, "So what do you write about?" And I really don't want to answer that question. If I say "theology," that's accurate, but I don't even like the word "theology", and I never wanted to be a theologian. If I say "philosophy", that's somewhat accurate, but I will never live up to the label "philosopher" and if I did I would be pretentious to some people, people who I don't even like except that I like all people. I don't want to talk about my fiction because you'll say, extremely and earpoppingly interested "Oh, so what are your books about?" and I hate talking about my books because I don't want to spoil them and they hardly have plots and people want to hear about plots. So then they can say, deeply and gutearthquakingly interested, "Wow, so it's a book about pirates in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, that's so cool, that's my favorite subject. It's a romance novel too. Oh wow, I read romance novels all the time." No, I don't like talking about my writing and I don't like talking about being a writer. Here's a little-known secret: I didn't even want to be a writer growing up. I

just liked to write things. I still don't want to be a writer. I don't identify with that label. I accept that I write things, but I'm not a writer, just like I refrain from meat and yet am not a vegetarian.

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To be young is a gratefulness-inducing relief from being old. One thing washes one way, then washes the other. The tide comes in and out, and we think it's incredibly beautiful. The grime and clutter accumulate and then in shame and self-hatred and temporary obsession we clear them a way for a weird and societally-instilled and yet biological feeling of cleanliness, and this is ugly. Beauty and ugliness come out of the same pattern, out of oscillations of beauty and ugliness. That is, a greater beauty and a greater ugliness come from the oscillations. Beauty and ugliness both exist, and this is like an oscillation, a washing back and forth in futility. And so there really is nothing after all, and yet that nothing itself is a nothing to a something and the two wash back and forth in futility, erasing each other. And futility gets washed away, just as surely with utility, and utility is bad because while it is what we really care about made flesh, we get tired of ourselves. All of this sketching

and saying sketches and says logically and according to patterns, and it tries to say that there is salvation, or tries to deny the need for salvation, and this is all washing back and forth.

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I'm listening to something right now which I'm pretty sure I helped to record, but I have no memory of having done so. I can't be completely sure that it is me playing the flugelhorn. There are other flugelhorn players in the world.

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Just a few more minutes will have to pass before I have to excuse myself to run for president. I have to run for president every day about thirty minutes after I eat dinner. I try to campaign for a few minutes on social media and I give a speech on my front lawn. And then I feel better and I can get back to my life. I've never actually won an election, but that isn't really important. I just need to do it for its own sake.

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Just when the party starts getting good is exactly when it should end. Then, you will see

what is beyond the party, which is another party. You will have to make the party yourself, in your old times. You'll remember the old gang, back in the city where you were young, Rooster, and Clickbait, and the Wrestler, and Ham-and-Eggs, and you'll want to recreate that thing which you really had, and which also you misremember in a poignant way, and then you will get to have some of that in your party in the new city, as well as missing out on some of the essence of the old city, and you will have new things from the new city, from the young people who think you're so cool. You'll start to cry when you see how cool they think you are. All this time, you were trying to honor an experience, a thing taken away from you, a piece of experience, a bit of life that you loved. And in the middle of trying to recreate the party, you started to cluck like Rooster, and flash about like Clickbait, and give people half nelsons like the Wrestler, and then after it all you made ham-and-eggs for everyone while they were sleeping and you woke them up and put green and orange food coloring on them because of Dr. Seuss and it was St. Patrick's Day. You had become *cool* to those young people and they wouldn't ever understand their life experiences, the ones you created and gave to them to have

innocently, out of a love for bits of time-and-breathing themselves, and they will never understand until years later, when you are tired and settled, or you have begun to be ill and tired, smiling and in pain, and they've lost your number and they're trying to make a party themselves. They'll say, separated from Jackson and Alicia and Carmen and Cedric, just with the one person they took out of the wreck of Jackson and Alicia and Carmen and Cedric into their thirties, "Remember that time when we hung out with" —you."?" "Remember them?" "Oh wow, they were always talking about the old days." "Yeah, and I think I heard they died, and I know we're not on speaking terms with the any of those other people now, but man, those were good times..." "Yeah," says the fellow wrack-and-ruin refugee... "If only we could create a moment like that..." Their kids scream at each other in their bedroom and they get up and talk to their kids, and their kids don't realize that they're looking up at the face of God, and when they get older they'll want to kill their parents and love their parents and become their parents and pass themselves on to yet another conversation out of love for their parents, only to be with their parents the more. All of this happens and recurs and no one is aware of it happening when

it happens but only when it's no longer happening, and you as you cough and remember and think about hanging out with other people who don't talk anymore, feel the poignancy of it all.

---

Ah, the young do not understand age. They see eternal life and think that people who are old are morally wrong for thinking that they're old. "Don't lie to yourself, you have all the strength in the world!" The truly young say this to persuade you to stay up too late or play soccer barefoot in the dark. There are some who are in danger of being as old as you who think that you ought to be ageless so that you can never make the hard decision out of the helplessness of having no other option of having to act in the moment with insufficient energy. They accuse you of self-deception in order to pique your pride and get you to be young again so that they can be young, so that they do not have to grow up. Ah the selfishness of the young, which can't be reasoned with... and it can't be reasoned with, because it might be right... you could never know as an old person, just as they can't know that you're wrong, just as they can never really say that wouldn't it be better to sit in a room

all day and stare out the window and breathe  
and gently remember?

—

I stare and my eyes go out of focus. Why am I  
in this room? Am I in this room to stare at  
inanimate objects? Or have I come here to  
write? Or did I really just come here to pass  
time, of some sort, and here I am writing, just  
letting the words and the seconds get married  
and go off and start their own families far from  
me, only sending a letter once in a while, but  
that's fine, let the little children go off, I'll be  
okay, I'll be here in the room passing time,  
staring at inanimate objects when I am not  
typing. I will be okay.

—

One thing that is very interesting about the very  
late night is that it can be rewritten very easily  
as the very early morning. I can't imagine 9AM  
to be anything other than morning, because the  
cars go by and the people are busy and getting  
things done. Nor can I imagine 7PM being  
anything other than evening, the time when  
people gather after work, going out on the town  
or staying in. But 3AM can be rewritten, either

as the night that has gone on very late so that nothing is open, or as the morning that has come very early so that nothing is open. 3AM is a fine time to be alone, and whether it's morning or night perhaps doesn't matter too much.

## **8. Papre Tigre EP, Blue Bell Knoll, Heaven or Las Vegas**

I decided to be an old man for a year. I got out of bed and let go of the past. I got out of bed and put on my day clothes and looked back on the past and got out in the hallway of the home for folks like me, and I shuffled into the common kitchen and took down some food for myself to eat. And I did not feel as though I needed to eat anything but I needed to eat something so I ate, but just to get through the food.

I walked over to my easy chair, my favorite easy chair in the activity room. No one sits in my activity chair except for me. It is my chair. I sat down in my chair and picked up the newspaper and read in it of things going on the world. The things going on the world were wallpaper.



Then someone my age came in and served me some pills. “Here are your pills” he said, “It’s morning time”. I like my pills. They are such a challenge to me. I take my pills and swallow them all the way down. I drink some water as I take the pills. Did you know that water is the water of life? I think about life, how it flows. Life lasts all the time, but we don’t always tune into it.

But as an old man, life is fine. The world is wallpaper and my life is the room.

—

Someone could tell me something I needed to hear, but I wouldn’t hear it because I was too used to them saying things to me. When we speak, we speak our relationships to each other more than we speak the out-loud words.

—

I can sometimes feel drained when I’ve been a swamp all day. I like being a swamp, feeling the snakes and alligators prowl around, the fishes also prowling but also fleeing, the trees shading and the hot air vibrating. I like being a swamp, but at the end of the day, someone drains me to

make a housing development, and that feels right because I don't like heat and humidity, and I am afraid of and loathe crocodiles and piranhas, and flies and mosquitoes are uncouth. I like the structure and the drainage, how my soil can be so then-unsaturated and I can become fit for human habitation.

---

If I rest too long, I don't feel so good. It's like rest is a good thing, but too much is not a good thing. And I get too much rest in search of just enough rest, by being so tired that I need more rest than I can even get, even more than is too much.

---

I try to keep my junk in just one room of my mansion. All the other rooms are empty and are there to depress people who come to visit me. The room with all the junk in there is also depressing but in a way that prickles the brain rather than the depressingness of the empty rooms which is the depressingness of being struck numb or dumb inside.

---

Denying the flesh is hard, that is, really denying the flesh, the real flesh, because denial itself comes from the flesh. At least, most obviously and strongly it does. And so if the flesh is deep down happy with things, either you are tuned to the truth perfectly, or you will never come to the truth, and your relationship with the truth is over and it can no longer teach you anything. So some relationships must come to an end as soon as the flesh is satisfied, to prevent anything worse from happening.

---

We're all going to die without the truth, so we should compromise on the truth and choose life instead. All our lives we wanted life, not truth. We thought we wanted truth, but only because the search for truth enhanced our lives.

---

Good-bye.

---

Hanging by a tree, a banana wondered why it was there. Was it there to exist? Was it there to be eaten? Was it there for the banana tree's sake? Is a banana tree even really a tree? Is

there anything for a banana to live for? For life, of course. The purpose of life is to live.

---

I tried to get away from the grate where the air was coming out. It was a nice air on this cold night. It must have come from deep below the street, from within the building I stood next to. Why was this grate expelling warm air on a cold night to comfort me? I stepped away from the gate and sat at the bus stop. The bus will take me away from the grate. There are people on the bus who do drugs, and I will sit in a seat by myself, and six stops later someone will sit next to me.

---

The *Titanic* was a mighty vessel. What was its mistake? It plowed the seas with establishment, left lovers in its wake. A kestrel flying o'er its wreck could see a mighty man, abandoning its omnipotence, clutching with his mighty hands, the barest driftwood, the cheapest junk, the lightest most useless things, full of air and to be thrown away, and he only survived by telling him, to value such worthless things.

---

I can't be told the truth by anyone. I have to see it for myself. And so I know that the truth can only be seen by those who have to learn it for themselves. The truth can be respected, obeyed, served, and borrowed by those who are in control.

---

I took the world's best narcotic once. It was a kind of love.

---

But I am not silent tonight, I am not silent today. I have to speak to keep myself from going silent. I have to speak to the day to keep myself from falling. I have to keep from falling so that I can walk, and if I don't walk, my limbs will dry out, and I will sit happy, in my arm chair, staring at the screen. And if I am staring at the screen in my heart, in an empty chamber with light blue light coming in and out of the room, I will go around not knowing my loss except that I will, and that will focus me on myself and how I am not getting what I want for myself. And I'll say how self-focused I am to not stare at the screen, because in the world above I will be well-loved for what I do in other people's

lives. And I know that there's nothing in the world except what everyone else sees.

---

It doesn't mean anything, this comfort. This album is just wallpaper. This album is no comfort or drug. And it is not like a simple ration of food, either. This is not my favorite album.

---

The world's greatest antiseptic doesn't even sting. The world's greatest antiseptic is an anaesthetic. Silence coerces.

But is it silence? There is soothing and then there is silence.

---

I wasn't in the mood to eat fruit, so I didn't eat fruit. But then I thought that fruit must be good for me, so I ate some fruit. Then I got up and walked outside and walked around outside. I didn't see anyone that I knew, so I sat down on the bench, and people beach-walked past me, and I closed my eyes and opened them. And I

knew that it was time to go back inside, so I  
went back inside.

—

I can only seek truth by denying myself.

—

O, my heart, my poor tiny heart, lodged in my  
chest, surrounded by feelings which are not it,  
misunderstood, in an alliance with my body and  
mind, obliterated-by-being-adopted by my  
tongue, my poor heart, always beating, and if I  
stop thinking of you you will beat, and if you  
stop beating I will die.

—

I am not silent, I am saying more than I wish to  
say. Perhaps I am silent in how I talk, perhaps I  
am silent. I am not silent, I am saying, I am  
telling. I am not saying, I am telling, I am not  
telling. I am so quiet, so silent, so silently I am  
crying, my throat speaks, but do I implant  
myself in my speech? How can I help it? I  
speak and I speak. I am not silent. I am saying,  
I am telling. I do not wish to grasp, to clutch,  
and perhaps I do not, but I burn. I don't want  
to burn, but I burn. I clutch and grasp, or do I

fear? But I speak. Can I speak the truth if I am silent? I can speak the truth if I am silent, that is what I thought. I don't know if I can tell the truth. Do I have to become like a tree, my messages so easily ignored? The tree can only be listened to by those who have listened to the rest of the created beings, and all of life's events. I think that is true, I imagine it so. And in my imagination, do I inject my desire to make the world out to be something? I think I must. I don't know that. My throat hurts, my throat is cut-and-vibrates. My throat hurts. I am not silent. I am trying to be silent. I am not trying to be silent.

---

I don't want to talk this way. I wanted to stop talking about these things. I wanted to speak directly and truly. But I can't speak directly. Some people can speak directly to people who don't listen, but I cannot. I have to get away from people who don't listen, or I will cease to be able to speak.

---

Everything will be the same in the end. There is no change. We will arrive in the same place we



started from, and will remain there for all time. The only difference will be that whatever our lot, we will feel it to be well in our souls. Our souls will not deceive us. Why would we live in a universe where our souls would deceive us? No, if you want to change, it's only in order to come back to the way things were in the beginning, because that is what you had to do to come to realize that your place is with the things as they were in the beginning, but now they will be well to you in your soul. At the moment of creation, everything was good. So we are all always going back to the beginning.

Oh, this is the best draught I've ever drunk!  
Oh, this draft of the goodness of things, the rightness and originalness of things! This is the best beverage I've ever drained, the best potion I've ever consumed! Oh, the deep legitimacy of things! How this heals me! Oh, I am so quieted, I am so laid to rest, so healed! Or am I soothed, are my eyes blind to darkness, have I taken a drink of a concession to human frailty.

—

Now is not the time for beauty, pleasure and enjoyment, and so it is best that my favorite album is peeling wallpaper, just as colorful as

ever, but the colors are themselves their  
equivalent of peeling wallpaper.

---

I could argue with me or I could relieve what's  
in me in the bathroom. I could just go the  
bathroom, that blunt bluff statement of  
existence. I could argue with you, but really I  
am only arguing with me right now. You can't  
hear what I say, safe on some levels to criticize  
yourself, but too safe, too strong, to ever really  
hear what I have to say, unless some greater  
lover of you can drop the hammer on you, but  
it's not your fate to be crushed in that deeper  
way. It's your place in life to go out into the  
world and bring undyingness, invincibility to the  
world. That is your malignant talent, as my  
malignant talent is to think. These malignancies  
are obvious, beautiful growths which seem to say  
that they are who we are. But we were born  
with them through no choice of our own. These  
things are horrors, power is a horror, we go  
through life hammering everything that is a nail  
to our hammers, and incising every abscess  
which is to be found in all flesh. This wonder is  
a connection with an eternity which is not ours,  
an eternity which is not God's. God knows and  
is conscious, but our malignancies are orthogonal

to love, and go on like cancers, mindlessnesses  
which should be cast into hell or oblivion  
someday, to leave us to be real people. But for  
now they are the way to fight. One illness repels  
the other, one weapon compromises the  
effectiveness of the other. Let us never praise  
our ways of dealing death, our maddening  
temptations, our unconscious momentums. Your  
greatest strength is a sickness, your greatest  
health a deception, your greatest truth a  
weakness.

---

I caught a glimpse of a treasured field, but this  
was a lie. Heaven was a distraction from love.  
The end is not for us, and the life that is  
redeemed is a distraction from redemption.

And I sit at the edge of the river, my eyes  
staring out at the water, feeling myself laid to  
rest in my own way. I've been soothed, but I  
have also been empty on my own. I have seen  
the end in my own way, I have not seen it  
suffusing every present moment, but I have been  
done with the present moment. We have both  
drunk of the end, and felt its thought-emptying.  
We are two drunkards, me drunk down by the  
river and you taking a nip between clients and

excursions and errands. We are such  
lightweights that we can appear to be virtuous.

---

I don't know how much more there is for me to  
say today. I feel that my throat has a lot to say,  
and my chest is hypnotized or at peace but even  
does contribute to my throat. And my heart,  
dear heart, is so quiet. Silence is the currency of  
the heart, and I don't speak its language.

---

I could speak on and on in the tongue of men  
and angels, but that would not be silence. I  
could preach love like Paul did, and that would  
not be silence. I could go on and on talking, and  
that would not be silence.

---

Nobody will understand what I am saying, and  
that is one half of silence, but better that it be  
the other kind of division. Uncomprehension is  
a non-communication which is a something,  
which I will call X-ness. Better that I could  
have the X-ness as I speak, and other people  
could understand. Perhaps X-ness is what silence  
is, but perhaps it is not but I think it helps.

---

I pause, with fewer words. I can stand at the top of the staircase and look down at the landing near the front door where the sun comes in through the little panes of glass on the door. I can stand there and look and breathe but not find it worth mentioning that I do so. I walk down the stairs and turn in toward the kitchen, and pick up an apple off the counter, rinse it off, and bite into it. It's an experience, one which you'll have known if you've had an apple in this decade, when apples have been made to be so sweet.

---

I pause to look out the window at the trees. The people walk by outside, on a nice spring day. This is my favorite spring. I've had a number of springs but this is my favorite, in this year of my lord, if I'll speak so feudally-anciently. My God is more present to me in his silence.

---

Young people see and saw between their feelings and doings. I sit in a ring of younger people, we

are all sitting out on the grass under the spring sky. And the young people are sharing about their lives. I have an affection for them because they haven't yet made as many of their decisions.

---

I pause once again to look outside, but there is nothing to report.

---

Sometimes when I see the future of a person I see a statement. But with you I see nothing, but not quite the nothing of silence, but rather a nothing that on some level is an incomprehension, is a kind of wallpaper. And that leaves me silent, my mouth stopped. I find my muteness there, and perhaps I find silence.

---

I stare out the window, longer and longer. No one will think I'm staring at them. I stare at the little screen where I write.

---

I want to predict that I will be untrue to the truth, that I will betray my heart. Will I? Somehow the truth is true whether we are true to it or not. And yet it seems that what no one will stand to believe cannot be true. If there is some kind of salvation from the end of the world and from its intrusion into daily life, then I want to seek it, yet my flesh does not cry out for it, and I must struggle with my unstruggling so that at least if I can see that escape from the inevitability of blanking and soothing, I can take it.

## 9. Silence

“Grief comes and we wonder if we can even live. Grief is being beaten by a club, driven to madness and unreality.”

“Grief comes and we wonder how the rest of life can be livable for its un grief. Ungrief is being unbeaten by an unclub, filled to sanity and unreality.”

—*Epigraph*

—

Could someone take my hand and lead me away to nothing? No, I wouldn't accept nothing. I could not personally relate to it, and so it cannot be part of my life.

---

For some, heaven is a place where the tears are wiped away forever. These people have lived hard lives, and what is interesting is to make their lives free from pain.

For some, hell is a place of cheap and empty mirth, and heaven is then not a place of therapy, but of tears.

And God himself can mourn for the wicked.

---

Which would you prefer, a relationship with God, or holiness? There's no need to choose, right? But what if there were? What if there is? Which would God prefer?

It is feared that if we think that holiness is preferable to a relationship with God, we will try to earn it on our own. It is best that our efforts to earn our salvation through good works are



impossible, through our lack of self-control, and the way that pride opens us up to demonic possession. Demons, possess away. We are superficial and desire the salvation of our flesh, not our hearts.

---

I struggle with the boulder and then step out of the way, and it rolls down the hill. I stand up, but my legs are asleep from sitting so long, and I stumble to my feet and down the hill. I wonder if today is a good day. Do I have a measure of joy in me? Am I enjoying life?

---

Which would I prefer, holiness, or the presence of God? Sin just is what causes pain to God. Would I want to torment God with my black (or shall I say, “white”) heart for all eternity, forcing him to show up to our appointments so that we could relate, him as the ever-faithful, ever-loving God? My heart does not have to be blatantly callous, my flesh can be ever so clean from being bathed in his words and presence. My heart just has to have that moment where it slips and reveals its lovelessness, where in my prayers my eyes go blank, where I neglect to reply to God’s

call, to his heart. I only need to pretend to love God and almost maintain the image except for the moment when I don't, and God, who will have come to trust me, will be punched in the stomach, his breath knocked out of him, he'll be like he was in the days of Jeremiah, but in his older age, in the middle of heaven, I'd be willing to bring this. As life becomes heaven on earth, and my flesh is purer and gives more and more delight to those around me, I forget that I can even sin, I forget what sin means, and I start to spread my wings and fly and soar in my relationship with God. And no doubt God can stomach me for a time, and I may be very useful to him, even more useful than Nebuchadnezzar or Judas. But what if God has taken his ease among all the saints? What if Judas is laid to rest, or Nebuchadnezzars have all put their empires behind them and are wracked with repentance? Then who am I, as I soar in my holy flesh? I am like the others who set around the philosopher set in comfort, gnawing and fumbling and caressing, but never quite hurting. And I wait for God to correct me, and perhaps in those days he will, with a coldness I cannot understand.

---

Does any of this matter? I live in the world of imagination, stories, myths, and religion, but there is a whole world of people who are like animals, like humans, with blood problems and breathing problems. Which is God? Is God the God of the realm of the stories we tell ourselves? Or is he the God of blood and breath? Is God the animal that came before animals and the human who came before humans, who has known our problems for ourselves, or is he the nicest concept imaginable, the greatest beauty, the thought that came before our thoughts, the reality that redeems ours for being unreal, chief among sanities, a thought for thought's sake? Is the point of God our salvation?

---

I could be wrong about what I think. I know this because it is hard to know because there are so many thinkable options. Anyone who wants to challenge me on that basis may do so and I can't rebut what they say. But if they do so, they must throw away their own sense of knowing what is right and true. Unless they can say, "Yes, yes, that is how things ordinarily would work, but in a way that you don't understand, and that we ourselves can hardly even imagine, it just is that we can know the

truth.” And then we are trapped between my truth and their truth, because I can’t offer any better than that myself. I would like to say that we can judge our truths based on the states of our hearts. But anyone could say, “yes, yes, but how can we know the state of a person’s heart? And how can we know what states are preferable? In fact, we can know, and we, in a way that you can’t imagine and that we ourselves can hardly understand, do know.” And much of this conversation goes on in subtext and something like a silent intimidation. And I don’t know what better to say than that. So then like animals we are speechless before each other, but we deny our animality and speak as if we have something to say.

---

Thought and speech are broken. God couldn’t convince us he was God with words, unless it was in a kind of epistemic bad faith. God can only communicate himself in some way which we have never seen. And yet privately I believe in God, and I believe that he speaks, every so often, in my life. I don’t presume to think he blesses everything that I say or think about him. But I believe he exists. And yet so do so many other people. We have a very alone life with

God. A relationship with God is readily available, free to all, a blessed saying to those who truly struggle to afford things. So many God-believers, and they must be right, and yet their rightness leads them into sin, by each other's account, and by the Bible's account, and by many of their own accounts. They can't trust each other. They feel superior to each other, they feel that their own way to God is better than others —“Oh, they're saved, but, we don't do things *their way*”. We might think that God forgives all sins, but we don't forgive each other. And when we try to forgive, occasionally we succeed, but often we presume to hold the place of the one who even has the right to forgive, the one who truly knows what should and should not be forgiven and is not so low as to be below being able to forgive.

And we can run from these thoughts, which is wise, and we can keep these thoughts out of the living rooms of our minds, where they do not disturb us and our guests, but if the heart is locked away in a flesh-castle of right feeling, right belief, and right action, has it really repented? Maybe it has, but maybe all that needs to be destroyed.

—

Once you have heard the burning words, you may think, “I must repent of these burning things” and you might, you might make allowance for them and never do them again. But the burning words are talking of symptoms which can too easily be cured. When you hear of a sin that you do, it’s saying that you are a sinner. And after you stop doing that sin, you are a sinner still and being a sinner is *actually a bad thing*. You say it’s a bad thing, but you don’t believe it. Which is what functional flesh would tell you to believe. God gives you functional flesh because it’s the least bad option. This flesh convinces you not only by the outward speech of it, which you can obviously head off, by saying “despite the fact that I get so many little things right, I am a sinner”, but by the unconscious feeling of well-being and joy and the quieting of your guilt that go along with healthy flesh. A healthy brain is not set for self-attack. A healthy brain is set for well-being. So in the heart of healthy communities and evident righteousness and in healthy religion there is a temptation to lie to yourself that you are not a sinner. In fact, in continuing on, moment by moment, unannihilated, in Being and Growing themselves, there is a strong bias against seeing that you are really a sinner. “I am a sinner” is

sometimes really meant, in the throes of self-destruction and true repentance, but as a regular statement is self-deception, or a mere fact, spoken intellectually.

---

Satan, the wonder worker, knows how to attack people who really think they are sinners. There are ways in which the truly felt fact can seem to destroy people. And if the truly felt fact can destroy people, people know from their healthiness that the thinking must not be founded in fact. Understandably, we think that hopelessness, depression and suicide are the basic and unameliorable horrors, and for those who live in the poverty that can't escape this belief, those who struggle to afford anything else in their thought world, I can only offer a sad "so be it" and keep silent around them. I am silent right now, because your mind will pass over what you read. And yet this defense defends those who do have enough resources to see that destruction is not the end of the human being. And these people give a bad name to the idea that God gives grace and that "sinner" is a badge of identity and thus of belonging in God's kingdom and thus that it's permissible to abuse people as long as you come before your fellow

Christians in repentance and to live in comfort as long as you do not turn your back on God. God is faithful and will not send you to hell as long as you turn toward him, but your salvation is so tragic, as you turn people away to Satan's lies and lives of darkness. You will bitterly regret being saved so securely in your life, your sense of well-being secured at too young an age. But you can't imagine regretting that, because you have not learned to love as God loves.

---

Some people become angry when they hear words like this. I think these are the kind of people who can afford things in this life, and I hope their anger goes away with true repentance. Some people will hear words like this and be sorrowful and forget, and some of them have things in this life, and some do not. Some people will be sorrowful and repent, or be determined and devastated and repent, and some of them will later forget what they have learned, and one can hope that the fire will catch again (I myself am one of these). Some will stay lit (and people like "being on fire for God" but they forget that burning is awful and thus they have not really been lit), and these people will not go out. And some people will hear words



like these and feel great sadness and perhaps like Judas will hang themselves for betraying God. Satan, the wonder worker, drives people insane with guilt, and so the truth has to be kept under wraps so that we can survive. If these statements drive you to despair or self-destruction and if this drives you away from God, then do not believe them. You have other ideologies at hand to rescue you. Believe those, go ahead, dismiss what I say. Some of you really will save yourselves, and some of you will protect yourselves unnecessarily, and go on sinning and effectively condemning other people to enmity with God.

---

You unbelievers have just watched a freak show, the angry fanatic among the religious. Clearly religion is the fault, not the hearts of the religious. And thus, as you have no religion, your heart cannot be at fault, you cannot be one of those who do not struggle to afford life and deny life to those who struggle.

---

I slow down, and let my heart beat a few beats. I have kept it from beating this whole time. I'm

sure it has beat, physically, but I'm not talking about that.

---

There is no outcry for what I am saying in this world. No one is protesting, no one is angry. Perhaps I do not know the right people. Maybe someone calls for this. My flesh is convinced that all the problems are over and that we are all to drift on. No one protests because everyone knows that it is the end of the world. I can't justify this by reading the newspapers, but so I feel it to be. And some believer in blanking and soothing and God might say "ah, interesting, maybe he knows deep down, despite himself, that it's the end". But maybe my flesh is possessed by a lie. We would think that my flesh was possessed by a lie if I thought that the world was going to end at 23:00 tonight. We would think that my flesh was possessed by a lie if I killed myself after a bad break-up, as though there were nothing left to live for after that one good thing. We would think that my flesh was possessed by a lie if I thought that I could play video games all day, because nothing really matters. It's only not a lie if it seems like something God is saying to make me happy. And we trust the Holy Spirit, thinking it's the

Spirit when there's some strange tendency whose point is to give us love only if accompanied by joy and peace. And maybe this is the best attempt at the truth that God can get us to believe, and so, being as effective as can be, he lets us live in it.

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Maybe there is not much more to say today.

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## 10. Silence

It is dark and quiet in the hollow of the earth where I sit. I can hear the crickets chirping in the grass that grows around the hollow. I can see the moon in the sky. I can feel myself, because I must always feel myself when I am conscious, when I am.

---

I can touch the rail on the boat on which I stand, I can take the boat in my hand by its rail, and I can look up and down at the angle that

the waves boat-tip me. I can go below deck and lie down on my bunk and think of “you”, far away. The “you” of my letters, the one who is far away. I can long for “you”, who are a real person far away to whom I write long letters. That person, that “you”, cannot hear my thoughts that I say to you now, you who are with me.

Oddly I am supposed to long for you, but whom do you long for? You long for “you”, so perhaps I too should long for “you”. Perhaps there is something lost, though, if I never long for you. I wouldn’t want any kind of poverty — that’s the definition of poverty, the lack of some kind of desirable thing.

—

Can I have it all? There are two kinds of universes, universes in which you can have it all, and universes where you can’t. The ones where you can have it all are those which are unthinkable. They might exist, but we have never been in them and our consciousnesses could not breathe in them unless they were made into something different. In a world of logic, if we have it all, then we lack that which can only come from not having it all. If your

logic proves that God exists, then God can't have it all, and if you are in sympathy with him, if you have the same nature, then neither can you. In this life we love in a special way when suffering is real, and if we eliminate suffering forever, we eliminate that aspect of love forever.

---

I look like I'm weary these days. We imagine that eternal life is about running boundlessly, and for some, that is healing. What if you lived your whole life in a bed, a bathroom, or a wheelchair? How could you not run? You would have so much running to do to catch up to the life-shaping caused by running, and you would catch up.

---

We caught crickets on the floor of the house and let them go outside. Then we came back inside and lay down, I on the couch, you on the floor. And we talked to each other for about 45 minutes, and then one of us lost interest and walked away.

---

Mourning for all eternity is not necessarily death or living hell. It is possible to sorrow sustainably.

---

Crouched down in the grass, she waits until I walk by and she'll jump out and scare me. Is she a tiger today or a woman? So full of playfulness today. Is today today or tomorrow? Does she have work to do? She is so happy, for all time. She is a tiger today, she has stripes.

---

If I lived in an individualist's heaven, perhaps there would be a hell section for people who preferred that.

We think that paradise is a place prepared for us, not thinking about what God wants. Paradise is a place prepared for us whether we like it or not. Unless paradise is an individualist's paradise, which must either contradict logic or force us all into our own perfectly landscaped pleasure-islands of maximal solipsism.

Am I talking with a hammer? Maybe there's some other kind of paradise. Wouldn't it be

great to live in a perfectly-manicured comfort-garden of maximized solipsism? Our world is so hateful and unpleasant. We must run away from that spiteful and inconvenient world on the exact same axis.

---

There is some scorn in my voice, some irony, some poison, some acid. I would be willing to renounce that side of me.

---

We went for a long walk in the woods. Someone told us that if we walked in the woods long enough, we would find the other town. So we kept walking, and in due time, we found the other town. In town they had a flagpole, and people were gathered around the flagpole praying. We walked softly up behind them as they prayed aloud and closed our eyes and bowed our heads, trying to hear what they were saying. They were praying for the whole nation, for God to intervene and make things right, to bring about a revival in this nation. And we listened to what they prayed. And we prayed with them, adding our thoughts to their updraft.

---

I am tired, it is true. Do I look tired? Is that a bad thing? Women talk about looking tired, something which can be fixed with make-up. Why not look tired? I am tired, and I must look tired. If I die tired, then I will be a tired person to the end. And what if I am resurrected to a new body which is tired? I think this new body will never die, but I will use it and clothe it according to my truest heart.

---

The fig tree grows up and doesn't deserve to be cursed and yet God must curse it for not bearing when it is not even in season. God has to do heart-breaking things sometimes.

---

I am walking on a dirt road from one village to the next. The natives of this region, sunburned people with brown hair and yellow hair, greet me as they come out of their huts. They wave at me and speak to me in their strange language. One of them knows my language, and I speak to them in it. My language is fluent and mellifluous, while theirs contains sounds that my ears cannot decode. And this one of them who speaks my language speaks it in a strange



accent, but I accept him as a brother. I have come to this strange place to be a brother to these people, not some kind of stranger.

I find that even among these people, living their simple lives in the forest, that there is a basic humanity which we all share. And so I know that I have found my life's work, to help these people, not because I think they need my civilization, no, no, they are far better without it, pure as they are, but rather because only by finding a stranger can I cut out what is accidental to humanity, leaving only the basic essence, that basic thing shared which is in a format which my flesh can consume, and enlightened by that love, my whole being can love in this place, as it cannot anywhere else.

---

We got on a motorboat and headed out in the center of the lake. When we got to the center of the lake, we cut the motor and drifted, and found ourselves headed toward the dam of this reservoir, which shouldn't have surprised us too much. There was no time to fish or to sleep or to look up at the clouds, there was only time to drift, and then to turn the motor back on and head back to the dock.

—

Keep your tongue from evil, they say. Keep  
your lips from speaking lies.

—

Is it possible to love when all the problems are  
solved? It's possible to faintly be happy for  
people. Maybe this is a form of love.

—

I look tired, but the odd thing is that I am  
getting more sleep. Perhaps I am not tired after  
all.

—

When all temptation is gone, we will mourn its  
loss, for we will never know the loyalty that  
comes despite the nihilism of certain realities  
filling our gazes. Or perhaps the loyalty will  
remain, after all the temptations are gone?

—

I gave up some things. Everything which I gave  
up made me lighter. The heaviness was in  
giving it up. I don't think that lightness is

always to be kept. I am lighter, though I do not feel lighter, by giving up lightness. Peace is not a feeling, peace is being true to God.

---

I worried about a future in which I lost consciousness, but a certain kind of weeping or mourning, like a certain kind of light rain or clouds, can be perpetual.

---

I tried to sing myself to sleep but you can never really do that. When I was deranged, I would try to do that and be unable to do it, because you can't do that, you instead need someone else to sing to you. In derangement, I lay in bed with no one to sing to me and, knowing that I couldn't sing to myself to fill that space, I lay there, aching and empty, longing and desiring, but making no action to fulfill my longing and desiring, because it was fine for me to lie there in the dark, aching and longing, my flesh crying out for a human to soothe it with song. Then, independent of my self-denial, but not independent of the fact that I had not summoned someone nearby me to sing to me, I became healthy, the great prize, and with my

health I can live forever in that place. And if I meet someone lying on their bed, aching, crying out for song, I can be with them, if that is appropriate. I can also allow people to lie in the dark aching for song, unless they seem like it's going to kill them or twist them, because it's okay to lie in the dark longing and being unslaked, missing sleep and being deranged. I am under no slavery merely to the desires of people's flesh, although I will be drawn against all reason to connect with people, just as sometimes, for reasons which I suspect and hope are often the actions of God (ones which he regrets or not), I walk on, not listening to that suffering.

So which is it? Is it that people should be blamed for not caring for other people? Or is it that people always have an out, which is that suffering is often or even always not inherently evil?

I don't know. I wish to be like God, and God allows suffering, while yet regretting suffering. God acts, and does not act. In the end everything will be put right, but the greater prize is to love as God loves, at all times.

—

I think that for some people it is necessary to train physically in order to bear God's burden. Perhaps by "physically" I mean "go for a run or swim or lift weights". Or perhaps I mean that the body can sustain a certain amount of emotional stress. The body has many reasons for emotional stress which have nothing to do with bearing the burden of God, and we think, sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly, that we must protect ourselves from the burden of God because we are too fragile to bear any more stress, given our many fragilities. And sometimes, to lose those fragilities comes from encouragement, and sometimes, from utter shattering, devastation, from everything being destroyed and breaking the grip on life. This grip is a brittleness, a fragility. We go through hell and yet we live, and *now* we live.

---

Sometimes it is good to simplify things. If there are fewer things that you delight in, there are fewer opportunities to put other people second to your own delights, and fewer reasons to sorrow to a distracting degree over your own misfortune when those opportunities go away. Yet, if you got too good at eliminating these

small delights, you would lose the opportunity to be tempted by them. And who knows what you might share with someone because of your delights? In a culture that has too many little preciousnesses overall, then to lose a preciousness might be a good thing in general, and I could advocate for it. But who knows who you might meet who shares your preciousness? A delight is better than a preciousness, and it is a sad thing when your preciousnesses or delights cause you to treat another person as worthless, as you sometimes do, but perhaps something good can come of it. No preciousness is without its dragon-on-a-hoard side, but the best delights are not about coveting and control, we neither control them, nor they us, and so there they are in our lives, and we shrug our shoulders and try not to think about them too much, and try to view people and God's other creatures as real beings.

---

Some days are carved out in advance, and what can you do but fill them in with the activity of the day? These days are like delights. We shrug our shoulders and in fear and trembling fill them out.

—

I will speak aloud because I lose control in the moment. This is how you come to hear anything from me. I am not worthy of saying what I say, and it had been better had I not said it, because what I say is mixed in with error, and you will misunderstand its truths. Speech in itself is a perilous thing.

—

If you want someone else to listen to what you have to say, you might want to decrease their confidence in what they believe. But then, can they hold your belief with much confidence?

—

When I was happy, I held out enmity for those who had hurt me. Enmity for enemies, friendship for friends, because I was on the side of my own pleasure and comfort. But now that I am sad, I can finally forgive the people who wounded me. Does this make me happy? I suffer from premature optimization.

—

I am still tired, and I must be watchful.

## 11. Silence

We abandon people for reasons, but really we just want to abandon people. Maybe we have good reasons to abandon people, but we don't understand those reasons, so we explain ourselves with false reasons. Then we go on to find slightly more compatible people whom we will then call friends, and with those friends we will contradict everything we said to the former friend.

But I do not want to do that. I want to be true to my former friends by being true to the reasons why I reject them.

If I sacrifice people for a cause, what is that cause? I can't tell you what the cause is, but if you read what I've written, you will know plainly what it is. I don't hide it from anyone who seeks to know it. It's not a secret, or a buried thing. I sacrifice relationships for the sake of other people.

I don't know if I really do help anyone. Some readers may think that I help them, and maybe



that is so. Do I help them more than I could have helped the people I've left behind? That may be so, but I can never really be sure, not knowing what might have been. I don't know how much secret harm I'm doing to people who read my writing, harm they won't even realize until the generation following them turns to bite off dead beliefs of the past.

I've told my former friends about each other and some of them have thought that they were the good friends and that I should forsake the other friends. Two of them thought each other objectionable, and now neither of them are my friends, as though I took both of their advice.

I am a somewhat detached person. In some ways I am attached to people, but in other ways, I can hardly understand what "attachment" means to other people. We are all born with malignancies, and one of mine is to confound the same and devalue specialness. This enables me to speak a truth, louder than my heart really loves it, which is "Your love is corrupt if it turns you from loving the people you're not in love with." There's no room for attachment to relationships if you listen to this truth. You can be true to the truth, or to all people, but you can't make your highest priority to stay with

particular people. People will disappoint you: good, stay with them, that's the interesting place on earth, where all the disappointing people live. But people will also not-need you, whether in truth or in their deeper estimation, and if someone doesn't really feel the need to be your friend, and you don't need them, why are you together? To pass the time pleasantly? You may need to pass some time pleasantly, but if you non-need each other, you have gone beyond that. You'll be fine without each other, and someone else may not stay afloat so well without one or the other of you.

These are hard words, and it is unfortunate that they are so easy for me to feel and to say. I am not the rightful owner of these words, if there can be such a thing as deserving, I un-deserve to say them or hold them.

—

Life is set up to be the way it is. If you see a new and unpleasant truth, you will be surrounded by people who saw it and turned from it in fear, and refuse to see it. And they'll turn your daily life into a betrayal of that truth, with their health and happiness. And maybe they can't do any better than that, maybe they

would physically die if they paid attention to the truth, leaving their role in other people's lives unfilled. But you have seen what you have seen, and you can't unsee it. Unless you do, unless you unsee it with your body as well as your mind by walking in the normal ways which are such a deeply ingrained habit to you, so cut into you that they seem like nothing. It's easy for one person to repent, but for them to stay in touch with moral truth is next to impossible unless everyone else does. But maybe it's not impossible, it just requires a continuing desire to see the truth, and some way to be uninfluenced, to be a little bit alone at all times, or to be close to God, but not in the way that those are close to God who love falsehood, wealth, or survival.

I don't see why God would want to allow me to see the truth for a long time if I don't love the people around me. I think he would drive the truth from my mind, because the truth is my prize, and though prizeness is necessary to seeking the truth and yet I know it is deceptive, to know that it is deceptive rewards me with a prize. I have to be tempted, and I can't help but give in, except that I can, as with all temptation. Any kind of sin is valuable if it makes us distressed at ourselves as a whole, revealing our deeper sin. The root of sin is

different for different people, but is perhaps a lust for power, or a view of God and people as things to manipulate, or a sense that one is an infallible god of one's own, and that whatever contradicts your vision of reality must be destroyed. We're hardly aware of these things because it is rarely of use to our root sin for us to see these things.

We don't believe that God can love, because we don't love, so we are afraid, or we think that God loves us as a special favor because we deserve it, and thus it's okay if we don't love other people because he does not, because we're special, but we're simultaneously terrified because we know we're not special. And we hardly understand this from day to day, blinded by our environment which fills in the gaps between seeing these things with all kinds of distracting and compelling logics. The world makes a lot of sense without bringing God and sin into the picture, which is just as things should be to protect our sinfulness.

Who can save us from our sins? Only God can, we might say, and that is true, whether directly or indirectly. But our religion can't save us, not even if it's a religion of "Religion can't save us, only God can." Your reliance on that statement

is a religion and a formula. Nothing can save you, forsake all that. Even the statement that “Nothing can save you” is a falsehood to be thrown away. All these things are things we try to use in our conversations with others and ourselves in order to save ourselves. The sense of peace we get from that is useful but not essentially true. The best we can do is to wait for God, not to trust in God as a project. We have to wait as ones bereft, hungry, needy, starving, and yet not leaning on hunger, need, starvation as our formulas. Formulaic thinking is wickedly hard to break, and words are of little use. We can only ask for something outside our discourse to break in and tear us up, and bitterly regret our gift when it comes, and yet keep on living, and keep on seeking to at least seek God. We get distracted by the world of what we see and have and do not pay attention to the real world of the heart, which is better known and strengthened through poverty and insanity than through things in our lives making sense.

---

No, whatever I do, I have to love the people around me. There are numerous tests my code has to pass, and that one I can't ignore. But I

am tempted to use the word “love” to soothe me and blind me to evil. The beauty of loving particular people is that we have the opportunity to love evildoers. That is what is so wonderful about relationships, that in their self-serving mindlessness, being as they are mutually reinforcing patterns of behavior and emotion, they strain people to the point of doing evil or revealing the evil always latent within. Relationships are addictive, delightful, compelling, mind-numbing schools of the evil within the hearts of superficially lovely people, people who really do have a good side, but who are not good people. I can only love an evildoer for a moment here or there, otherwise I slip into hate or into denying that they’re evildoers. I can only love myself for a moment, here or there, in the same way.

---

My flesh doesn’t want to believe this stuff. My flesh likes things to make sense. I’m not talking about my hunger for food or my sexual desire when I say “flesh”. I mean that part of me that consumes the world as tasty and satisfying, however that works out. Or perhaps I mean “what is vivid and obvious”, the psychic materials that fill my gaze, both the gaze of

desire and of seeing what is. I am not tuned into food beyond its basic service to me, and I am ambivalent at most toward sexual desire, and so I would deceive myself if I thought those were the fleshly things for me. Instead, my flesh likes pleasant relationships and the comforts of nice weather and somewhere to walk, and books to read indoors, and some kind of pursuit of achievement to get me out of bed each morning. I live swimming in my flesh, and if I killed it all off at a blow, I might die, as one would expect from destroying flesh.

My flesh is convinced, beyond reason, but (nearly?) as persuasively as it needs to in order to triumph, that there is no real future. There isn't really even a present. There is no reason to work for a world which will fade out, nor even for the present moment, today in which people suffer. I only write, today, that's all I do, and I don't even believe that anyone will read it. It takes discipline for me to ignore my flesh and try to interface with the world according to reason and my heart.

My flesh loves the way my life is. I think my life is as effective as possible for causing me to write. But in all other ways, its comfort is undesirable for living, especially for living according to what

I write. I find that I write the most and the most urgently to try to reach someone or something that I lack, and perhaps all these contradictions are a motor. If my flesh is happy and my heart is unhappy, then my flesh is a powerful strength to express my unhappy heart, for my heart to long loudly for salvation.

---

But at some point, perhaps, I have to stop being a writer, if being a writer is evading what I say I want, in my writing. I don't know how I'll know when the moment comes to quit writing. Maybe as with many relationships, I will hold onto writing as long as possible and then find my body less and less able to stomach what I'm doing until I can't take it anymore. Or I'll run out of words suddenly, and look around, and find something else to do.

---

Some people believe in ghosts. I've heard some inexplicable sounds, and I do believe in the spirit world. But the spirit world is like hunger, something I only attend to as needed. My flesh is not interested in the spirit world, which allows it to be happy and to consume reality without fear. But past relationships serve the purposes



of ghosts to haunt me, and sometimes it helps me to carry around the rotting corpses of old relationships (which so poorly have the faces of human beings on them, human beings I have enjoyed or perhaps even loved), to remind me of the death and killing that goes along with my life, which I might otherwise think was a life of pure goodness, as it keeps turning toward the sun in my flesh's estimation. And my flesh enjoys the pungency of these dead relationships held up to its nose, and so it's a limited tonic. It only really works when there is an underlying love in me for the people I've lost.

---

The tongue is a part of the flesh which has a great capacity to spoil things. I watch for it when I see myself attacking myself. Often, it's a lie to protect sin, though it appears to be attacking sin. I can see sin in me enough, and genuinely, without manufacturing that vision with my tongue.

## **12. Silence**

People can be depressed because they are self-focused. People can fail to see what is dark because their self-focus turns it into depression. In a prosperous world, there is less outside the world of the same, outside of “this is it?” There is less available to care about other than the self. And so things must be made pleasanter and pleasanter, to stave off depression. This might succeed, but it leaves us still as self-focused, and for many or most it only partially succeeds.

This is an idea drawn in part from a book I read (Hillman and Ventura 1992), but I’ve seen it with my own eyes in the microcosmically wealthy world. Their therapy for this depression is to see how bad things are not only in one’s own world, but in the world at large. In their world, the world is falling apart, giving no end of opportunities to find something to care about outside themselves. And their world is not objectively all that different from the one from which I draw my bread. But in my psychic world, the world is running out of undevelopment, running out of chaos. There will be misery for the rest of my life, but because I don’t have future, I am living in the future, in a time without future. We will have to live there all our days. Increasingly, our misery will come

both despite and because of our wealth, unless we can escape the normal speech of the flesh.

---

I think I was born with part of myself invincible, a terrible and seemingly permanent curse (an invincibility which knew that it could be removed is no invincibility). And so my heart has only a faint groove with which to see that things are wrong if my flesh is not threatened. And I am generally free from guilt, and often free from fear. I have a strength which I wish to escape, a health which I don't trust. I consider lucky those people who find it natural to live in 2018's psychic slums, but then, they consider me lucky, and we're both wrong, in our own ways, to consider each other more fortunate. We are each fortunate to desire to love more, they to wish they could be stronger in the face of evil and awful truth, me to wish I could be more responsive to the situations in which evil manifests itself. We are unfortunate when we can afford to love more and do not long to do so.

---

My God, my God, why have we forsaken you?  
You groaned in the night season but we did not

hear you. We walked on earth while people mocked you, and we were at peace. But we are holy.

You are enthroned on the praises of Israel, thus we enthrone you.

But you knew us from the womb, and we have not forgotten that, and in distress we remembered you, in distress we remembered you well.

Let us not be far from you, for trouble is with you always, and there is none to help.

Many flies have settled on you, the ticks have burrowed into you, they live off of you like a princely Child, roaring with misery and power.

You are drained like a river for irrigation, though its flow never ceases, it never reaches the sea.

All your bones are out of joint, your heart is like wax, melted in your breast. Your strength is hidden in the world and people curse you and find you hidden. Your tongue cleaves to your jaws. We have brought you into the dust of death.

Pack-predators surround you, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed you. They are always piercing your hands and feet, they can always stare and gloat over you, they divide up your heritage among each other to wear as though they wear the beautiful robes of the king.

But let us not be far from you, O LORD, O our strength, let us help you. Deliver our souls from the sword, and your darlings from the mouths of the predators, save us from the Child's mouth, for we have heard you from the horns of your affliction. I will declare your name to my brothers, in the midst of my congregation I will remember you. You who praise the Lord, love him; all you who descend from his traditions, empathize with him, and be sober, before him, all you who descend from his traditions.

For he has not despised, nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;  
Neither has he hidden his face from him, but when he cried, he heard.  
My praise shall be of you, in the great congregation:  
I will be reliable to people because of your faithfulness. And they will be meek and not insatiable,

They shall love the Lord who love him,  
Your heart shall live forever.

All the ends of the Earth will see you and love you, O Love, and all the people of the world will seek, trust, and grasp you. You are the only one who can watch over and care for the Whole, and you are the governor of the nations. And even of those that are fat upon the earth, some will come to really understand you and your impartial love, and even of those that are undead and empty inside and utterly lost will find you and follow you,  
And none can keep alive his own soul.

But as for our days: A remnant will serve him, and in some ways it will count for a whole generation, and they'll declare to people not yet born that he has already done all this.

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And how nice to think of triumph and completion. Triumph and completion come back to the present and in some ways strengthen the present, but they cause us to not see the present. Psalm 22 (the source from which that was taken and modified) is a Psalm that feels like it is about triumph, even though we read it on Good

Friday to connect to what Jesus said, his quote of the first line. Perhaps hope defeats love, or certainty does, at least. That is why we only really love if sometimes we are denied certainty, if nothing makes sense to us.

I can see why God would want to encourage people to flourish in a world where they could easily fall for some other god's material promises, and so I can see why Psalm 22 would connect to Jesus in a way to say that the point of Jesus' sacrifice was triumph. But is the point of God triumph? Or is the point of God love? Does God care about triumph? If it was necessary to get rid of triumph for love's sake, would God do it?

We might be so lucky as to live in a world where triumph and love do not have to conflict. But then we are in danger of thinking that we love love when we really love triumph, never having had to choose between the two of them.

If we arrange lives on a line, normally distributed, there will be some far to the left in the world where frequent tradeoffs are necessary between love and triumph, and where the temptation is great to value triumph over love. And there will be many to the right of the mean

in which love and triumph do not need to contradict each other, there being such an abundance that each can claim sufficient resources. Many people in the middle region won't have a clearly rich or poor life, might hardly think of richness or poverty of life.

There will be idolaters in all three places, that is, people who value triumph over love. We take our idols into our hearts and hardly see them. If God truly loves us, he must teach us to love so that we are not evil, but there's a difficulty here, because those who are far to the right of the line and who think of learning from God as a kind of triumph can't easily be taught by God to love love. They will even use the words of "I love love, not triumph" as their official position, because such an official position is a form of triumphing, and their hearts really love triumph. I think it would make sense to continue to work on such people after death, so as not to waste them, but I do not know what kinds of trials are necessary for all the triumph-lovers. I have been a triumph-lover, and what has taught me to love love more purely has been blows to the flesh, breakings of the mind, emptinesses of purpose, loss of humanity and belief. I have been fortunate to have been born so strong and fortunate to have been treated so well. I think I



was struck quickly for the sake of time, but perhaps other people will be broken slowly and less violently.

The consequence of people loving triumph rather than love, especially of those with resources loving triumph rather than love, is social evil, self-righteousness, hypocrisy and all kinds of human suffering.

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A culture in which people do not lose control is one which seems likely enough and somewhat desirable, but also disturbing. The love of triumph is best opposed by losing control. Perhaps a truly beneficent AI someday will arrange that in our virtual reality lives, we have to starve when the rains don't come, even if we do not die.

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So how can I love, knowing all this? I know that I can write all this down, all my related thoughts, but then what? Must I return to the mundane world and adopt its blanking values? Or somehow can I be true to what I really value? I think the answer comes in focusing on something other than myself. Some person will

come before my view, a stranger or a friend, or if nothing else I can think of God who is so close around me but in some ways so rarely present to me, so easy to forget, so easy to turn into an occasion to focus on myself when I deliberately try to think of him. I don't know. I don't want my stance of not-knowing be one of letting go and feeling good. But I want it to be a not-knowing that does not forget the question, for which I don't have an answer.

# LETTERS

**16 March 2018**

Perhaps I should be doing my taxes instead of writing this. That's something I need to attend to. If today was a day in which I had words that needed to be let out, I should have attended to them, those animals that have their own life. Likewise if I could attend to reading, it might be that I ought to have read, more than I have. My taxes do not require my best.

To do your best is a matter of your heart. Perhaps today, aimless, I'll hear something (that is, it will become true to me), of greater value than anything I could read or write. So then I should wait for the voice of God? A nice formula, but I am not doing my best if my heart waits cheaply, does not really love.

If I speak in order to make a nice sound, or if I write in order to give myself pleasure, what I say is worth little, even if it's true, because mostly what writing communicates (as in "the medium is the message" —but even higher-and-beyond that, as we look at all the mediums in their similarities, "the mediums are

the message”) is whether to love love or to love triumph. If you eat one kind of ink as you consume writing, regardless of the overall pattern of the ink, you will be fevered, but if you eat another, and its overall message is true, you will be healthy. But health is not about health, you can’t seek health if you want to be healthy. If you want to be healthy, avoid unhealth, but forget about health. If you keep living, you’ll gradually settle on healthiness, but if you seek health, you’ll give yourself a fever that makes it so you don’t connect — to yourself, or to others. True happiness is to be free from happiness as a pursuit. Maybe in moments of joyful abandon we are temporarily freed from the pursuit of happiness, and so we think that the pursuit of happiness has succeeded, but really it has failed, and it is death and the loss of control which relieves us. We should seek loss of control apart from the pursuit of happiness.

And the pursuit of happiness through a deliberate thwarting of happiness is still the pursuit of happiness. Therefore you can never be free from the pursuit of happiness, you can only be broken, if you do not already love something other than happiness.

Someday, we’ll get rid of every reason to be sad, and that will be a sad thing. This is the

opposite of the deliberate thwarting of the  
pursuit of happiness in order to pursue  
happiness.

—Incompletely,  
James

**16 March 2018**

I found this in the library:

“The dumb silence of apathy, the sober silence of solemnity, the fertile silence of awareness, the active silence of perception, the baffled silence of confusion, the uneasy silence of impasse, the muzzled silence of outrage, the expectant silence of waiting, the reproachful silence of censure, the tacit silence of approval, the vituperative silence of accusation, the eloquent silence of awe, the unnerving silence of menace, the peaceful silence of communion, and the irrevocable silence of death illustrate by their unspoken response to speech that experiences exist for which we lack the word.” (*The Language of Silence* by Leslie Kane)

When people cut us out of their lives, it leaves us to listen to their silence, which can communicate to us in ways their words never did.

—A note, incompletely,

James

# NOTES

## 19 March 2018

Anger is about how things should be different. So in heaven we might mourn the loss of anger (or not) but we certainly wouldn't be angry at the loss, because while there might have been loss, heaven is sustainably the best of all possible worlds.

What if people got angry about the past? Things could have been done better. But we're all guilty and would be rational to prefer a norm of forgiveness. Holding something against someone helps to police norms, not holding things against people can be moral hazard, but in a place that is sustainably the best of all possible worlds, this is not an issue. The past in itself is not an object of legitimate anger, only as a means to changing the present or future. Change-oriented feelings eventually have to resolve if they're negative, else they prolong suffering.

But then, isn't sorrow suffering? Heaven is maximally loving, and the right kind of sorrow is love that suffers. Isn't anger sometimes a form of love? Anger that doesn't have a legitimate object (something that ought to be changed) seems like a source of enmity without justification, and disconnected from reality.

How would a person know that they've arrived in the best of all possible worlds? It helps if everything is beautiful and/or can be connected to love. Normally, we trust at some level until there's a disconfirmation of trustworthiness. So the end of anger would come not entirely by proof, but through forgetfulness, requiring trust. Changing things that need to change makes reality more trustworthy. So the people most against anger should be the most in favor of legitimate anger's end goals, and its basic agenda of change (if not its implementation of that agenda). And if reflective, legitimately angry people should be angry that they have to be angry, and in that way angry at their anger and at anger itself.

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Anger is valuable and to be mourned, but illegitimate anger is anti-valuable (it's not something to be mourned or praised, but neither is it to be dismissed, as when called worthless).

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The feeling of not wanting to compromise—  
“Better to fully embrace evil, lick its boots as willfully defiant giving-in, than to maturely accept that you have limits, and ‘things aren’t so bad’” —in the first, good and evil remain themselves, but in the second, you lose consciousness by muddying them.

Strive to keep your values even if they give you a life of pain or kill you. The fear of death causes you to live in unlife, unconsciousness. The defiance of compromise can lead to anger. This makes sense because legitimate anger is about eliminating what is evil, which is what happens as we love more purely. Anger, legitimate or not, is about establishing our values in the world as right.

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Anger can come out of silence. There is a quietness that leads us to not speak with the tongue against our own values, which lays the way for anger. But the tongue can also inflame a person to anger.

How can a person tell if their interpretive charge is what's going on, or if they are seeing reality and thus being angry? Maybe you can never know in the moment for sure, and only can see disconfirmation later. To be angry involves a kind of trust. Perhaps the angriest people are those given to a kind of trust by nature.

Anger is dangerous and unstable. It tends to end itself (if healthy, thus is "unstable") and tends to harm without understanding the whole picture. An anger that is not pure in heart is necessarily unsound, and silence helps to purify the heart. Anger is decisive and can be violent. Anger takes risks without regard for life, and thus establishes values against compromise. Therefore anger gets things wrong, makes mistakes, has collateral damage. It is careless without being flippant.

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If there is no real “should”, all anger is illegitimate.

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Anger brings a strength that makes it a holiday from the powerlessness, horror, and sorrow of depression. If we must be powerful, it might be that our power is legitimate to us through anger. A certain kind of anger is a better way to be powerful than others.

20 March 2018

The certainty and clarity of the urgent drive to remove evil might be known as a form of hate, and the mood of perfecting can lead to a resonance inside, a self-sufficient sound that eats and destroys your own body, whether because your body is imperfect or simply because it is trying to contain that acid of hate. Your flesh turns on your body.

So then, if you seek to love more truly, you may begin your increased engagement with yourself and others with unsustainable hate and anger, and then find yourself hitting a physical limit as

your body is destroyed. Is this compromise?  
Maybe, maybe not. Maybe not if you do not  
love your limitation. (If you love your hate, you  
have loved a part of evil, not that it's wrong to  
hate evil, but that hate is evil for the bodies of  
those that hate.)

That limitation expresses itself as a desire for  
life, even child-like, generous to oneself and all  
others, and if it goes stale, leads to a loss of the  
love you began to gain, a return to old comfort.  
But from its freshness, you can spare your body.  
And then, can you preserve any of what you  
seemed to gain when you went deeper into the  
uncomfortable side of love? Sometimes.

**APRIL**

## 13. The Musical Offering, Silence

We were sitting under the awning outside the shop by the sea. We carried ourselves to the shop from the car. We drove the car there from the hotel. We arrived at the hotel after taking a taxi there from the airport. We flew there from the middle of the country. We were very happy there, because we were about to go on a trip.

---

I can see the salt in the air. I was born with one special sense, and it is to be able to see the salt in the air.

---

I'm pretty sure someone will hear what I saw. It was speaking out loud with its feathery headdress. I was not sure if it would speak to me and I didn't worry too much. What is is, and what is not is not much to worry about. I don't know the boundaries between me and you, but you had me played. And yet, I don't think you wanted to play me. I understand that today is 1 April 2018, Easter Sunday.

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We got out from under the awning and walked toward the beach. The beach had some rocks on it, and we picked them up and looked at them. They were alright. We didn't worry too much about bad rocks.

---

I got my spine adjusted at the chiropractor. They popped me up and down on some kind of apparatus and honestly, I wouldn't trust this process except that I've done it before. The first time I did it, I didn't trust it, but I did it anyway, because my back hurt.

---

Greet me with a holy kiss, will you? I need the sin washed away by your mouth. Right? That's what I hoped for, but your mouth had holier things to say to me, and that was the kiss. Church customs are for raising the dead on resurrection morning.

---

I'm listening to what people say to me and I'm glad. People have lots of valuable things to say. And I'm wondering what to do or where to go. I'm lost. No, I'm found, I'm more found than ever. And this foundness is foundness but other foundness is lostness.

---

I can hear you talking to me from the other side of the room. You want me to pay attention to everything you have to say. I don't mind paying attention, and you know it. You're really good at scoping out how I think and what I do. You know what to say. When you hurt me, you only say what will hurt me but not cause me to move. You have a comedian's timing — you are a comedian. You force smiles out of me and whip me.

---

But you don't know what you're doing... how could all of this be your fault... no, you don't understand... you're hopped up on a strange drug given to you by an evil spirit. How can I be mad at you for not understanding things, when I didn't understand things for so long?

---



I can read a map from corner to corner. I can see all the towns lined up from corner to corner, from Italy to Cornwall.

---

I'm a little bright and a little solid, a little happy and a little sad. People like me for how I look, so I do try to look good. I get my hair wet and comb it over to the side so it looks raked, because that's what I think looks good, and if I can just look like myself other people will recognize me, which is a good way to look. I know that I am dressed well, in my jacket and tie and slacks. I am going to make an impression. I'm going to teach a class at the university, and the students are going to want to laugh at me but not be able to, because I will look at them with such sorrow and insight. Only I could have lived long enough to teach this class not with efficiency or warmth but with an understanding for how unfortunate all my students are.

---

Trees grow beside riverbeds because they have to. Trees do what they have to. There is not a single thing they do that they do not have to do.

—

I poured some water out on the trees in front of my apartment building. That water had served its purpose, and now its time was done, and I gave it a proper burial. The dead water can go down into the tree, I hope, and help the tree live.

—

I'm just now getting used to the idea that you were rigged. You were a rigged election, and I voted in you. And now I have the candidate that I thought was the choice of my nation. I thought I got what I wanted, but I am the nation, and now I don't know what I wanted.

—

I got stuck in a whirlpool which was fine, but how strange a place to be in. No, it was not fine, and I got dizzy and sucked down and bashed against the rocks but then I got back up and had no regrets.

—

I got on a glacier one time thinking that there was no shear and then twenty years later I was calved out on a calving iceberg.

---

Can the mage cast a spell? What would it do? Would it raise the dead? Would it bring a dustmote out from under a table and put it in the nose of the duchess, making her sneeze at just the right (or wrong) moment?

---

I don't know if anything is worthwhile. Actually, I know plenty of things that are worthwhile. There are plenty of things that I do without asking if they are worthwhile. A strange moment comes and asks us questions and we answer them.

---

I tried not to get caught up in details that would be of no interest to anyone but me. Fortunately I am not unique.

---

I don't know what I'm telling you and maybe that should bother me. What if I'm a conduit for evil? I have to hope that I'm pouring out my heart and not somebody else's.

---

I bought some food the other day and prepared it at home. I cut the vegetables up and put them in a pot with water. And then I put it on to boil while I busied myself with the cornbread. I let the vegetables boil and then simmer, to allow their flavors to entirely mix and form new flavors. And I got the cornbread in the oven and started working on the mushrooms, cutting them up and sauteeing them. Then I got out some fruit, and set the table for seven. I ate alone, but the other places were for the spirits which would haunt me while I ate.

---

I get so lost, so found-so-lost. I have forgotten everything that I really meant. It's April Fool's Day, but I wonder if this is April Fool's Month. I don't want to make a fool of myself, or a fool of you. I want to be true to myself, to the best in myself, to the truth. But I seem to be unable.

Some have taken “fool” as a badge of identity.  
And I can see some wisdom in this. But there  
are fools and there are fools, and I don’t want to  
be a fool.

---

I caught an animal running around the house  
and put it in a cage. It was for my own good. I  
needed a pet, so then I got my pet and named  
it.

---

And now the cage makes the room smell like a  
caged animal. And I wonder if the animal would  
like to be free again. I ask it but it can’t talk. I  
take the cage outside and open the door to see  
what the animal will do. The animal sniffs at  
the doorway and then walks away from the cage,  
and walks along normally, as though it has found  
its new cage, its new home. This animal could  
be happy anywhere, which is interesting. I think  
I could be happy anywhere, too. I think I have  
been happy anywhere. I don’t know what to do  
next.

---

Who am I and what am I saying? Am I me?  
Do I say what is in me? I have a great well of  
things to say, but maybe they aren't even true.  
I can only really express myself by saying what  
is true.

---

I try to put things together in my mind, which I  
think is a good habit to get into. If the things  
add up to four, you know there were four of  
them total, all along, somewhere in the universe.  
Two plus two doesn't make anything new. It  
only makes four.

---

We can be sure of one thing: the moon will  
always cover us at night, no matter what we've  
done. The moon will not always help us to see  
what wrong we've done, but it will give us  
*magic*. And magic helps us to be enchanted,  
and enchantment makes any realm habitable.

---

The moon is full and I walk out to be covered by  
its blanket. The sky is dark to allow the moon  
to be the star of the show. The stars have to  
take a backseat tonight. It's the moon's turn.

The moon is with us whether we want it to be or not.

—

If you think I'm talking to you, maybe I am talking to you, but maybe I'm not.

—

I try to listen to words now, and the words aren't telling me what they used to tell me. But that's okay, because what I'm really seeking is silence.

—

I am not seeking the word "silence", nor do I wish to hear the sound of silence, nor do I wish to silence my mind with my will, or my erased will.

—

I'm full of thoughts tonight. My thoughts are for me, not for you, but I will talk. I will speak thoughts, and you will hear them, if you stay by the fire.

—

I rest every day. I go unconscious every night around dawn and wake up in the afternoon. I spend time down by the lake, lying on the stones of the lake bed, this lake which is a few meters down from the drought. We'll get rain. Our droughts are mild.

---

I don't know anyone's name at this party, and that's fine. I'll just stand here and drink my drink and look around at all these people. Think of all these people, gathered here in this room, who are not anywhere else.

---

We are gathered together to witness the laying to rest of a dearly beloved woman who meant something different to each of us. We will never see her again, unless the preacher knows something about eternal life, or someone else does.

---

But she comes to life, too soon, too soon. We never got a chance to process our grief. Up from the coffin she rises up, clawing people out of the way, and then getting her bearings and starting



to weep, herself. “Why must life be like this?” she says. And we weep all the more ourselves. What kind of resurrection follows the death of a person?

---

The barbed wire fence reminds me that I am a prisoner inside this compound. I don’t always realize that I’m a prisoner. How can you be a prisoner when you’re happy?

---

The bird sings the exact same song every morning, at least, so it sounds to me. It’s certainly the same pattern. And every morning it moves me differently. Some mornings to tears, and other times it makes me want to sing my own song, some mornings a song of human joy, other mornings a pointless sound that conveys nothing. The bird sings on, not interested in me. How kind of it to not think of me.

---

Was the door left open the other night? Did it let a draft in? Are we cold?

---

Trembling trees can feel the street being repaved. They keep growing, almost just as normal, but the vibrations of the machinery have an effect.

---

I don't need to see the people from the past. I will let them touch the shore of the beach as they go out to swim, but they are sea creatures now, farming kelp, and I live on the land and I only come to the shore some days, but not every day.

---

The things we have had from youth were useful things. Perhaps that is because people are always piling up a good income, making hay while the sun shines. Perhaps it is because people are always working, laying up treasures. Treasure-accumulators, that's what hearts are, or treasure-finders.

---

Tell me the truth. Please tell me the truth.

---

Everything must come to an end, a false end,  
which leads to a beginning.

---

If someone could fashion something for me,  
perhaps a coat of arms, or a flag, I might ride  
into battle with it. I can't go into battle alone,  
but only with a draught from the old oak barrel.

---

I'm relatively certain that the last thing I will  
ever see is the moon. I don't know how it will  
get its light into the room where I die, that  
hospital room without windows. I don't know  
how it will find me when I've moved and it  
doesn't know my address. The moon will be  
with me when I die, and it won't have anything  
to say, and I'll have to look away from it,  
because it will be my final temptation.

---

The moon sings its song every month, and even  
on most nights, but I'm so often down in the  
mines and only get out in the middle of a cloudy  
day. The moon's song is a silence that travels  
down to the earth, a silence which is the light

from another universe sometimes. Sometimes  
the moon is cool and pure, sometimes it is other,  
and sometimes it says something which our  
consciousnesses cannot process, let alone hear,  
understand, or respond to.

—

Joy or sorrow... people laugh at sorrow, best to  
make them sad with joy.

—

When I find you, I don't have to be happy  
anymore.

—

When I find you, I have always known you and I  
have never left you.

—

When I find you, I sit on the ground and talk to  
you.

—

When I find you, I don't have to be alive  
anymore.

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But you do not always stay, and that is for the best.

## **14. Silence, The Musical Offering**

When someone has passed into the past of your life, there is no surer end to your shared reality. It is a surer end than death, for after all, perhaps a dead person may be resurrected, but two people who have grown apart into their new authentic selves can never be in the same room together, although each of their own ghost rooms containing them might almost be superimposed over the same space at certain times.

---

I don't covet a whole lot of things. I don't exist in the same reality as a whole lot of other people.

---

I don't understand people who mumble things.  
Speak up, I can't hear you.

---

I could be tired tonight, but I'm going to try riding my horse anyway. I don't know if this is a good idea. I wonder if my horse is tired too. My horse might start to stop by the side of the road. Can horses walk and sleep at the same time? I don't really know my horse, I'm now suddenly realizing.

---

Trapped under a pile of rubble, we were in a lot of pain and didn't have time to talk. That pain was everything, and so we shared everything. But we were separate, each in our private hells, and yet because we were so simple, we knew each other then. We don't normally know each other.

---

I got on the road and drove on out. I didn't know what I was saying and I didn't know what I was doing but I knew that I needed to go. And I wondered why this road went exactly

where it did. I figure that everyone's roads determine the shape of reality as a whole.

---

It's easy to lose focus. I'm fully aware that I can lose focus. So I try to remember where I came from and where I'm going to. I think maybe I know that now. Sometimes, when I'm not talking to anyone (not even myself) I know it.

---

We were trying to go on an adventure all by ourselves, but no one would join us.

---

I brought several people home with me from the fair. They were fair young people who were nice to hang out with. We hung stockings over the fire to wait for Santa Claus. Christmas comes in December most years, but we decided to learn how to be patient. Those people weren't sick but they lay in bed a lot. I owned some land and let them stay on the land if they took care of it and they did. They were chopping wood when Santa came out of the sky and they were so happy, just for a moment of delirious joy. And they shed tears of joy and dropped their

axes and ran up to Old St. Nick and gave him a giant group hug and he said “Merry Christmas!” with a twinkle in his eye. And then he winked and said “Pay it forward!” and went off into the night. Whenever the stars come out, I play this over and over in my mind.

---

You brought me to a quiet place and we had dinner. And you calmed me down without patronizing me. You’re the only one who can do that. You must not love superiority like all the other superior people. That’s my theory, but theories (we laugh) don’t explain anything, but we do know of the effect of other people.

---

I was cleaning the chimney the other day, not all the way up, but just around the bottom because I’m an amateur. Maybe in a sense, I do love cleaning things, in that sense I am an amateur. Amateurs don’t get paid, but they do get to do the things they love.

---

I stood out in the cold to see how low my temperature could get. I’m not talking about



my core body temperature. That was humming along at exactly 98.2 degrees Fahrenheit. No, I'm talking about the temperature of the surface of my face. I stood out there and no one came to rescue me and I got bored and I went back inside. It was a long winter, with little to do inside either.

---

I got sent to the principal's office one time and he said, "Son, sit down. You need to understand that you need to be a leader. Don't let other people lead you." And I finally learned the lesson he was trying to teach me, thirty years later.

---

Am I a food eater? I don't eat food all the time. But over and over, I come back to that. But I'm definitely going to keep eating food. I have an automatic drive to do that.

However, to love you, that I might forget. So I'm a little more nervous every time I get full on you and turn away to something else.

---

Is tonight a good night to look at the moon? It isn't quite full anymore, but it still sails across the sky. The moon can sail when there isn't any wind.

---

We whisper to each other so that we will hear each other. Our loud voices do not carry across this room, but the room is designed so that if you stand at just the right spot, you can hear people whisper from the other end of the room. So I can hear everything that goes on in your heart, because you are honest and want me to know you.

---

I don't know what to do with you, so I put you in my pocket and try to remember you fairly often. I let you put me in your pocket and ride around your town, too. We take turns.

---

You tell me everything, so I tell you everything, but I really want to give my heart to something else. I can't explain what this thing or person is. No, I'm not cheating on you. It's not like that.

But I can't explain, because if I did then I would be telling.

---

We walk up and down the side of an irregular hill, forgetting and remembering things, and then we arrive back at the beginning, only realizing we have made an enormous and irregular loop when we have come around the last bend to see where we have arrived, which is our beginning. "Well!" we say, "That's what we get for camping in a new spot!"

---

Various people wonder where I come from. "Are you from Ecuador?" No, not quite. "What about Venezuela?" No, I think it would be incorrect to say that I'm from Venezuela. "Are you a Martian?" Now we're getting somewhere.

---

And so I wander. I'm prone to wandering, to saying things. I haven't learned how to hear and follow. I want to lose interest in the middle of the story. Whoops! The ground fell from under me. I guess it's time to pay attention. (Don't worry, I'm fine.)

—

I have every single newspaper released by the newspaper guild in my basement. You would think I'm a completist but it's really that I can't pass up a good deal. I store those newspapers in the hope that they will ferment and make newspaper wine. (It's not for drinking, it's just for making.)

—

I don't ever want to be satisfied with myself.

—

But not for the sake of lack of self-satisfaction itself. No, I want to be empty. But not empty, either, not empty at all, nor full. The last thing I want to be is apophatic. No, maybe the best thing I can say is that I want to change the subject.

—

But changing the subject is something that's difficult to do when you're not overflowing with words. What a paradox, that in order to not

talk about some things, you have to have lots of things to say.

---

I can hear little voices in my head, little gremlin-hamster-temptations, who will retool me for the joy of retooling and chew me because they compulsively chew and tempt me like the tongues of demons (which is where they come from, after all). They come from my imagination and from demons, simultaneously, like Frodo carrying the One Ring to Mount Doom in order to destroy it and become the Lord of the Ring, resisting it and craving it and unable to throw it away and needing to get away from it. These voices impersonate my friends and just about anyone anywhere, and they tempt me with praise, and I'm not sure if the scheme is to get me to fill with lordliness and vanity or to get me to shut out voices like these, which after all may tell me a kind of truth. Demons are clever, and lazy.

---

I will do my best to do my best, which is the best that I can do. But if I think that I'm doing my best, that's a dangerous thought. It's best

to give my whole heart, which I think is probably only possible when I lose control, that is, am not alone at the deepest level of who I am. I am sometimes more alone in a crowd than I am when I'm stranded in the mountain meadow during a thunderstorm, godforsaken.

---

You'll bring me something for dinner when you come over. I just know it. I know you want me to eat more, but I'm not sure I can do it. I've been trying to eat more, but I just lose interest. I know that you need me to live, but I don't know if I can live. I don't know if I have enough of an appetite to live. I'm sorry if I'm disappointing you by dying. I never disappointed you while I was alive, and maybe you need to be disappointed by me once in your life.

---

Do I have any regrets? I try not to do anything regrettable, which is step one for having regrets.

---

Ah, it's a warm morning. I stand up out of bed and put my day clothes on. I get a drink of

water and take my morning dose of pills (I'm a health nut, trying to stave off untimely death from my chronic illness), and then I put my shoes on and walk out of my bedroom down the hallway to the kitchen.

---

We tried running a restaurant for three years to see if we could do it, and we could. We were actually breaking even by the end of it, and if we wanted to, we could have made it profitable after a few more years (so it appeared to us), but we gave up because we weren't as into it anymore. But it was good while it lasted, and we had some good times getting the thing going. Remember the time the customer came in and wanted to pay in Canadian dollars and refused to acknowledge the difference between Canadian dollars and American dollars? Wasn't that hilarious?

---

What am I saying? What am I even saying?

---

I sat in a nest waiting for my mother to come. Life is simple as a baby bird, but vulnerable.

—

Mom thought she was feeding us but she was fooled by that wooden thing that looked sort of like us but not really. Some weird humans put it up. “Mom, we’re over here!” we chirped, but that wooden thing got all her attention. The weird humans fed us though. So then we wonder if we’re doing kind of the equivalent of what mom’s doing. Nothing makes sense — but maybe overall mom is feeding us, in a weird way. Is this what it means to be a bird, deep down?

—

I cleared off all the dishes from the table but then pretty soon I decided to eat something else so I got a dish out and ate off it and I guess I forgot to put it away sorry I’ll try to do better next time.

—

A mathematician wanted to cosign for a loan, so he could make some cosine jokes. Let the little children come to Jesus, for of such are the kingdom of heaven.

—



Children just don't understand. Their parents don't understand either. Maybe a few people understand, but most people don't understand, and they don't understand that they don't understand. I know that I don't understand, but I don't understand how the fact that I know that I don't understand misleads me.

---

We got in the car, each of us opening a door and each of us sitting down and buckling our seat belts, and one of us driving and playing their favorite songs so that all of us could try to share the same car at the same time.

---

My dance began and my 1990s computer operating system booted up. The same sound begins everything.

---

We treasured our moments of connection, the little crusts of bread thrown down to us by the old man sitting on the bench in the park. I thought it was funny how we both immediately went for the crust, but there was always another

crust so we both got some crust. Isn't it funny how the crust rises off the pavement as you bite it and then falls off. Man, bread... good eating, as my grandpigeons always said.

---

Don't have too much fun at the fair. You never know how tired you'll get.

---

Everything can be reduced to a label. Reality can be labeled and it will look the same, but it will have been reduced to a label. So you can look at it, and sort of see it, but you're not really seeing it, and you don't see how you're not seeing it.

---

Maybe I don't believe in sadness. Maybe I just believe in crying tears of tiredness. Or from cutting onions.

---

What if we had a trade deficit? How would we handle that? Do we have the inner resources to save money? If we do, then we can import less

than we export, and we can restore trade balance. Maybe our government would try tariffs. Are tariffs good? Economists don't always like them. Would economists prefer that we save money? Economists, help us! You guys must be great at economizing. Teach us!

---

You think I'm joking, but that's because you don't know me. If you knew me, you would really think I was joking. I'm the only person who doesn't know myself.

---

Listen to the bees in their hive. They do nothing but work. Do they ever get heart attacks? I've never heard of a bee getting a heart attack, but every so often I see one crawling on the pavement. Poor bee, she just lost the will to live. Or something like that. She's just crawling around, and maybe she'll crawl into the sunny spot and that's all she needs to get some energy back in her, but other times it's over for her. I wonder what she's thinking about. Is she thinking of death, or of freedom?

---

People will try to get away with whatever works. This goes for some demons too. I'm not an expert on demons, but I've learned a few things. In either case, it helps to acknowledge that you have been or likely enough still are being played, and not laugh it off and not get mad about it, but just know it.

---

I went to Russia one night in my dreams. It was beautiful. There was a snowed-over field where I crunched around in the moonlight. The moon was just past full. I came inside and there was no one there and it was magical.

---

I bit off a piece of the dark chocolate rectangle which I had purchased to help me get through the winter. The dark chocolate gave me a little hit of caffeine as well as the bracing bitterness of its darkness.

---

I try not to say everything while I climb this mountain, one step at a time. I need to leave some words in the bag for when we get to the

top and then wonder, after all that effort and striving and arriving, “Now what?”

—

I want M. C. Escher to design heaven so that when I get there I never arrive.

—

I want Kurt Gödel to set up a social club for Groucho Marx and then I can be a member of something for once.

—

I’m getting feverish and I need to drink some quinine. The one good thing about malaria is that it teaches us how to drink tonic.

—

Send me a letter. I’ll get it. I’ll read it and reply. Don’t worry, I haven’t forgotten how to write. It hasn’t been that long.

—

Someone was talking about how a simple and slight action has echoes that ripple out louder

and louder and louder. It was a medieval poet  
who was thinking about that.

---

I know some things because in the moment I  
know some things. It's too bad that when we're  
not in the moment, we don't know anything, but  
it's a good thing that most things are done in  
the moment. It's an okay system. I would call  
it an okay compromise, but I'm not even sure  
it's a compromise.

---

People who didn't believe what I said and didn't  
trust me and whom I'm not sure I should have  
trusted as much as I did used to tell me to trust  
my judgment more.

---

I'm not going to cry right now, because the  
violins don't want me to cry. The violins know  
what they want.

---

Some people sacrifice things, but only for a  
moment, and then after they sacrifice, there was

no other way things could be. The thing they devoted to giving-up was no longer a thing they could hold onto. And the giving up was no clean thing, but a slow taking-apart of the formerly-precious thing (which could still fetch quite a price on the market), and they didn't even value it enough to get rid of it at once and do things cleanly. No, they just slowly took it apart and laid each piece to rest but without funeral or ceremony or sadness, just with the overall melancholy of life which is the sad face which makes the heart, not glad, we couldn't ever say that, but not... false.

## 15. Silence, Waiting

There is a kind of anger which burns as it relieves the tension inside, and sears the throat, trading one unhealthiness for another, throbbing.

There is a kind of anger which is trustworthy.

There is a kind of anger which brings health and peace of mind and the health and peace of mind might be trustworthy — certainly they will feel so.

There is a kind of statement about reality which brings out the violence in us, and those who live by violence will try to bring it out of us, in order to soil us. That's their intention. They want to be in our lives.

---

I caught someone looking in my window as I lay in bed. I didn't know what to do, and the face in the window saw its opportunity, and leered at me, knowing I would do nothing in return. I couldn't get out of bed all day.

---

I tried to promise myself: "no more horror, you're done with that phase of life", as though the horror was in me. And it was, and perhaps it always should be, as long as there is horror in the world.

---

I don't want to spread darkness and poison in such a nice land. But I hope that I spread trustworthy darkness and trustworthy poison, if I do. Untrustworthy light and health —



beautiful illusions that even fail to take us to hell, never reveal themselves for what they are.

—

I can't prove anything, so I have to live by myself.

—

It's unrealistic to not have friends. Better, that is, more realistic, to have abusive friends than to have absolutely none.

—

I have to forget things. Not for my own sake, but because I'm made to. Time erodes all reality, all truth. The molecules keep swimming and flying, over and over, existing oblivious, not even with oblivious minds. If you tune out all the thoughts in the universe, or simply if you listen to all the existence without your filters, you hear a white or pink or brown noise of all the things that don't care about feelings or thoughts, that don't even care about not caring, that don't even decide to not care. In your field of view, you see so much that is impersonal and changing, and what is impersonal and changing — without even bringing forgetfulness — erodes

conscious intention and experience. The wounds you feel will come back, because they are encoded in your hacked brain, but your sense that you can legitimately care about your wounds, that decision you came to at the end of a session of thinking, that epiphany, turns to noise with the continuing existing of material objects. Your sense of significance, your moment to remember, erode with each rustling of the leaves in the tree, and with each turn of the key in a car's ignition. Instead, you have recurring, battering pain, and your ability to find meaning weakens, and you cannot find the novelty in things anymore. There is no truth because every truth has a timer on it, and fades as the timer counts down. And if you realize this and are too consistent, too meaning-based, in your application of it, you will understand this and thus set the timers half to zero and half at full simultaneously after every epiphany and great spiritual advance. So then you might conclude that there is nothing to life but to eat, drink, and be merry, but the problem is, you already are feasting, drinking, and being merry. This is happiness.

---

I agree with the Preacher that you only find satisfaction in God, except that satisfaction is worthless, too.

---

What do we trust in? We start our lives trusting in everything, then soon enough learning that some things betray. What is betrayal? I don't know, but I know it when it hits me.

---

And then we go through life coming up with lists, long worked-over and crossed-out and erased and refilled in and revised and typed-and-printed-out and further amended lists of what is trustworthy and what is not, and of what we trust and what we don't. We invest a lot in our lists, a lot of air and fidgeting. And we try to export these lists to other environments, to figure out publicly and once and for all the 500 Greatest Trustworthy Things of All Time. We make magazines solely for the mass dissemination of best of lists of trusted, trustworthy, untrusted, and untrustworthy things. The 500 Greatest Things That Will Destroy Your Life of All Time.

---

There are two ways to approach the mind of another person (or maybe there are a million): teleologically, and mentalizing. Teleologically, you figure out how the mind-machine of the other would work through deliberate reasoning. Perhaps you can work through the process faster and faster, and be very good at teleology. But mentalizing... that's a stranger, subtler, and harder thing. You have an intuitive grasp of the other person as mind. Maybe it's like you have in the back of your head or in your chest (I'm leaving the heart out of this), or in the chewy substance of experiencing the flow of experience as it comes to you an inner landscape which is part of your structure. And this landscape reflects the world of external experience. And when you mentalize someone, there is a mind in that inner landscape, but when you are thinking of their minds teleologically, there is a set of logical propositions. Likely enough (but not certainly), you exist in your own mental landscape. So the other person exists as a person, a whole thing that is just a person, when you mentalize them.

---

So what is trustworthy? We learn what is trustworthy by learning not to reason through trust, but to learn to taste trust. Reasoning through trust is trustworthy, we can taste the trustworthiness in it, but it itself is not trustworthiness. We start off life seeking warmth and comfort from our mother's body, or then soon enough our father's body. But warmth and comfort themselves are not trustworthiness, they just have a taste of trustworthiness in them. Self-preservation has the taste of trustworthiness in it, but it is not in itself trustworthiness. Joy and peace have the taste in themselves, but they are not trustworthiness. I could allege that love just is trustworthiness and trustworthiness is love, but my conception of love is a cheat and a lie if on no other level than on the intuitive, inner-landscape, mentalizing level. I might be right about love teleologically, but I don't understand it intuitively, I have not taken it into myself. I don't mean what is actually love when I think the word "love". Trustworthiness is even beyond that. So then I should say to myself that trustworthiness is beyond love. And always being open to what is real? That has the taste of trustworthiness in it.

—

People from the past come up to me. I am exactly the same as I always was, and they are exactly the same. And so, because of all the crickets chirping and the subtle vibrations of the earth, all the traffic lights turning red and then green and then yellow, all the little bits, nestled in their microchips, flipping back and forth meaninglessly, the hum of existence — they do not exist to me, nor I to them, but we spend a time talking, not understanding that though we will always be who we always were, everything else has changed. I shouldn't say "changed forever", because that is grand and meaningful. Actually, everything else hasn't changed. Change would imply that things went from actively and uninterestingly being in flux at every moment as they evolved into what they were going to become without comment (on the one hand) to some other life-path (on the other). No, they were existing. It was we who did not exist, and so we could not exist together. We two ghosts, outside of time, having a pure and therefore unintegratable experience.

By contrast, the people in my life who have changed and even become my enemies, the people who are hangingly incompatible with me,

they have a place in my life, in various roles depending on each person. The people who have become unspeakably unrecognizable, through their change, are the ones that are in my life, along with the bees and the moving truck (not to speak of the truck driver or the bee's vivid consciousness, but instead of the truck's mindless self-assertion as it travels down the simplified path of the city street, and the bee's subordination to the hive's oblivious self-organization.)

---

I put some silver in the dishwasher. I can't remember if that's a good thing or a bad thing. But the dishwasher is running, and I'll let it take its course. If I ruin my silver forks, then so be it. I do not need silver forks and I won't buy any more to replace them.

---

I put some laundry out on the line to dry. I hope that it doesn't rain while it's out there. I don't think it will, since it's a clear sky. I know the weather in my city fairly well after having lived here a while. And if it rains on my

clothing, then so be it. I will find another way  
to dry my clothes.

---

The most precious thing as a writer is not all the  
words you say, but the ones you are permitted to  
keep to yourself.

---

I ate a bowl of soup by myself. Being alone says  
something, and being with people says  
something. That is what I want, that thing that  
is spoken of by aloneness and company.

---

I have a distaste for something and am relieved  
to turn toward something new. Is it the new  
thing that is the thing I am searching for? No.  
The relief comes from no longer seeking the false  
thing.

---

The shroud of Turin is a famous piece of cloth  
that is said to have the imprint of Jesus' body.  
The shroud doesn't know itself. The shroud  
proclaims what it does not understand, and



deserves none of the credit or blame for its appearance. But yet, without the shroud, there would be no imprint. Any shroud could have done the job, but if Jesus really was imprinted on that shroud, it couldn't have been any other shroud to receive the honor, and the horror.

---

I got up out of my chair and walked outside in the sunshine and cold air. I knew everything, what was and what was to come. I knew where I was going. The sunshine and the air were trying to persuade me that they were all of reality, and they were right. All there is is sunshine, cold air, and walking around.

---

Someone was saying that meaning is when you drink coffee. Goals are what you want to pursue, and meaning is when you drink coffee in order to pursue them. I don't actually love coffee.

---

A grasshopper jumped out in the path in front of me. I had been dithering sort of involvedly as I walked down the sidewalk, and the grasshopper

asserted itself, surprised me, I think if I stepped one more step I would have crushed it, so I stopped in my tracks. “Okay!” I thought, “You’ve made your point!” and I tried to get the grasshopper to go back into the yard it came from by touching its antennae to disturb it, so that no one would step on it, but it wasn’t interested in my well-meaning manipulations and flew out into the street. That grasshopper had its own agenda, and I should shut up now.

---

But then, a grasshopper jumped out in front of me as I was walking along, trying to betray myself for the sake of myself, and got in my way, and I tried to take care of it, but it flew off anyway. And I stopped trying to betray myself for my own sake, turned off.

---

I was trying to figure out if there was a way out of self-delusion. And I was also trying to figure out if there was a way out of communicating messages to people subtextually. In either case, we don’t tend to understand what goes on. They are both the sources of great evil and horror. And I am not ready to say I fully

understand, but my farthest passage along the way to understanding these matters is that the best you can do is love so that your subtext is less toxic to others, and risk deluding yourself with a pure heart.

---

The ocean is big for a reason. It's good to have the ocean in your head, coughing up foam on the shore, cold in its depths, containing alien life.

---

I went to the bus stop the other day, trying to think of something to do. I figured I could take the bus somewhere. At one of the stops, I'd see something interesting and I'd get off and walk around. I did this, and it was pretty nice, walking around the shopping center. They had some benches and I sat down on one. That was enough for me. There will be some other day that I do something exciting, but I was worn out from sitting on the bench, so I went home.

## 16. The Musical Offering, The Musical Offering

Sick with the dew, the light shows on my face  
where I am. I know that if I run in place  
forever, the ground will rise up beneath me and I  
will stand on a spire of rock 500 feet tall.

---

I try to talk to myself the right way, but it's  
hard, because I don't know which me I am.

---

In some countries I am a figure of horror and  
pain, but in other countries I am a figure of light  
and joy. Which country do I live in? Horror,  
pain, light, and joy, are all to be in one person.

---

Something stops me as I enter the garage. I  
remember something, but I don't remember it  
fully. Is it something I need before I go out on  
the town in my car? Do I need it at my  
destination? The thought lingers, but after  
searching my mind for 45 seconds, I decide that  
whatever it was was probably not important.

---

Temptations come in all sorts of different packages. Sometimes you're tempted to think that you're a good person when you're not, and sometimes you're tempted to think that you're a bad person when you're not. Sometimes thinking you're a good person makes you a bad person, and sometimes thinking that you're a bad person makes you a bad person. Sometimes thinking that no one is a bad person is bad for all of us, and sometimes thinking that no one is a good person is bad for all of us. It would be better if somehow it were possible to have no concept of good and bad people? No, better than that would be silence.

---

You come close to me, not in order that my body will sense your body, but just to make a point, just to get in my face, in hopes that my mind will see your urgent point. But I don't speak that language, and you don't realize it. So then you speak louder in that language and I start to speak in my language, but you don't understand what I'm saying. We talk past each

other for five minutes, after which the judges award one of us a technical knockout.

---

My pain would sadden me if I were saddened by it but then my sorrow would not be a sad thing, but a beautiful thing. But all I have is pain. What is sad is that I do not sorrow.

---

Two worlds: the world of comfort and the world of hate. For some, both worlds coincide. Most people live in one or the other. But a few are neither in comfort nor in hate.

---

Honesty is not always the best policy, but I don't know how to be any different. Honesty is the best policy: whatever can be destroyed by the truth should be, including me and you and all other people who dare to use the tongue. Let's all die at the hands of the truth, won't that be great? You feel an awful feeling in the pit of your stomach to hear that. Is that the truth? Is that the way that you know that the truth is, no matter what, something that doesn't

bring death, which doesn't call us to bow down to it?

What is love? Is love life? We want it to be so. We feel that it is so. But is that life speaking through us? Life is selfish and certainly wants love to be on its side.

Is love death? Death is freedom from life, life's clutches.

Why do we worship love? Does love love us, or is love a mindless tendency, a system in league with life, and clutching? Love is corruption.

But nobody wants to die. Everyone wants to hold onto life. And they think they're against misery, the misery brought by clinging to life, but they're not. They really just want to live. Those people who say they want things to be better are sometimes sincere and speaking the truth, but very often would take life first, love life so deeply that they will affirm it in their hearts even when it abuses them. They complain about life, but they are passionately bonded to it, and would scream and fight before giving it up.

I do not want either life or death. I reject both of them. I do not want to pass from life to life through death, but to be nowhere, be neither where the clutching is nor the horror nor the aversion to horror. I don't want to live anymore, nor to love, nor to live a higher life, nor a truer, higher love. I want to be quiet, but not the quiet of a blissed out day, or the quiet of meditation, or the quiet even of silence. I want something which can't be put into words, not silence which can be described, and I certainly do not want can't-be-put-into-words-ness, and I want to be free of my own desires and my own wantings and from the renunciation of them. The salvation I seek is from everything, and even from salvation and from seeking and from getting-away-from-everything. I want salvation from love and from doing the right thing and from religion and from faith and the knowledge that religion is inadequate, and from life and death and the world and from heaven. I want salvation from freedom and bondage alike, from language and silence. I want all these words to go away, because they themselves are a burden on me.

This salvation is a kind of death, because it resists life. But it is not life-resistance that is salvation, nor is salvation salvation, with its



connotations of doing things better and bringing about better life.

I feel some peace to type this all out, but it is not peace that I seek: I reject peace, too, and it is only by being free from peace that I can have — peace? Relief from peace, and relief from relief.

—

Coming around the corner, we almost run into people we know, but then miss them because we see them all the time.

—

I talked to someone the other day who didn't have the answers, nor did they not have the answers, nor were that sort of person who knows better than to say that they don't have the answers and better than to say that they do have the answers, because they realize that all of that is a way to say on a different level that they do have the answers. They were clever enough to not be prideful, wise enough to not think they knew things when they didn't, so firmly did they at least establish that bit of wisdom and clarity of personal vision. They were quite settled in what they did and believed, which made them

attractive to me, as though they could make everything better for me by me feeling as they did, flesh calling out to flesh.

---

We call each other names so that we don't have to listen to each other. We couldn't listen to each other if we wanted to, so it seems. What we say to each other is so unthinkable — to understand is to believe and to really believe is to change who you are. So we don't understand each other. We know the truth already, and people exist to confirm our vision of what is true, or be our enemies.

---

In anger, pain, hatred, pride, needing, longing, desiring, hungering and thirsting.

Belonging and needing but rejecting and going our own way, saying what seems to be the next move in the mind game, in the relationship, the gut game, the chest game. We wish people would see things our way, so we talk past each other and relate past each other, and find ourselves in distinct worlds. We can't talk to 99.99% of the world's population because

everyone understands the language we speak all too well.

—

Am I manipulating you? I don't want to manipulate you. In saying "I don't want to manipulate you", I was trying to manipulate you. Everything I say is me trying to manipulate you, even when I take myself out of something. Saying that everything is manipulation is a manipulation. I wish that I could be silent, but I don't know how, and that wish I just expressed was manipulative, as was what I just said. And the laughter that comes at all this is a manipulation.

—

But what good does it do to say these things? Perhaps it is better not to say them at all, though they are true — despite how frustrating it is to live in a world ruled by the corruption of life.

—

But you are reading this right now, so I have decided to send this out. Or you have found it in my things after I am gone, no longer having

to face what people think. Did I mean it to be read by anyone? Do I mean this to be read by anyone? Or do I prefer it to be looked at and passed over? Do I prefer to return to life? True life is to remain in death forever. True knowledge is silence, and true existence is, from our perspective, a deletion.

## 17. The Musical Offering

Neither life nor death, neither time nor eternity.  
Let me see what I have in my pockets: a pen, a  
notepad, some enchanted amulets. I have  
something around my ankle which does not ward  
off evil spirits, but which adorns me. I am  
dressed how I need to dress to go into town and  
barter for whatever it is I need.

What do I need? Is there such a thing as need?  
If you want something, then you need things to  
get what you want. But you don't need to want  
anything.

---

Neither life nor death, neither death nor life. I  
won't be hemmed in by these binaries, nor fall  
anywhere on this spectrum. I rebel, and I reject  
rebellion.

---

I don't rebel. I am submitted.

---

A blind man was in my house, observing things.  
I talked to him.

---

We're gathering roses all day long and putting  
them in sleeves to sell at dances. There will be  
nothing but dances, for days on end. All the  
roses existed just to be cut off the bush and sold.

---

A clamorous cry went up and all my lies were  
exposed as they lost control and ran around  
trying to take cover. The lies were hiding in  
plain sight the whole time.

---

A drink of water helps to pass the time. Water  
is neither bitter nor sour, salty nor sweet. But it  
is still cold.

---

Radio waves travel through my brain and don't  
communicate anything. Then, I get a radio set  
and I can hear them. They sing "Recuérdame..."

---

You were gone for a few hours and I struggled to fall asleep and then I struggled to wake up. I wanted to forget you so that I could forget what you said. But now I find that the only thing that is true is what you've said to me. My mind is so tired of trying to figure things out on its own. And I have to trust you, not because it's virtuous or a good lesson for me to learn, but because I have nowhere else to go.

---

Intimacy is when we're in the same place at the same time. It's been so long, in the middle of a busy field with fires and wondrous houses, with you always with me. That now I *sit down*. I really sit down and see you. All the fires, and the illness, and everything coming to an end. All things must pass away. Only you remain in the end, and because it is the end, I am there as well, and everything else is gone. Everything else is a betrayal, everything else was but gets between you and me. And the longing for me to be with you also got in the way, and my fakeness got in the way and my unhappiness over my fakeness, my drive and my drive to have no drive got in the way. Great suffering didn't help and neither did pleasure or steady comfort. I don't know how to get here or how to leave.

---

Let's go up on the levee and burn some logs in a firepit we make ourselves, and say nothing, just watch the flames.

---

If I could be a cloud and fly from east to west, all the way from east to west, changing in every moment, would you be my air? Would you be all of east and all of west? Would you make me into one thing? I am only a collection of water droplets. I am not a cloud. But you can make me a cloud.

---

Every corpse has to come back to life. That's the rule. There is no permanent death. Corpses always come back to life. There is no escape, no freedom from the cycle of rebirths. We have to make the best of things, and come to endure life.

---

But I am alive, that is, my heart is alive. My heart is never more alive, though I reject life. My heart can be alive, that is trustworthy. But



the living heart does not love life. Dead hearts  
hate life and crave it and think they love it.  
Who can love life, when you are near?

---

I got on the roof of my house and sat down at a  
corner of the roof where there was only a slight  
grade for water to run off of. And there on the  
roof of my house, I saw a hawk flying by, being  
chased by crows.

---

I don't have any skin anymore. I keep covered  
up all day in bandages, and at night I take them  
off to change them and I bleed. I don't have any  
skin anymore, and my marrow makes blood  
upon blood, and I eat all the time.

---

You see me dying-and-living and I want to dare  
to say that you and I have something in  
common, something we have in common with  
few others. But the words die on my lips,  
although I report them here, because there's too  
much life in them.

Surely this life is evil. Who would take on this sickness? And yet the world is more evil without this sickness.

---

If I wish to escape life and death so much that it isn't clear which one I prefer, at least I can reject evil. To say the words "I reject evil; Evil is bad" is too much; I'm saying too much. I can't say it.

And good is to be sought, but I can't say that. Reality is too much for words. For me to be real, there must be things I never say.

---

If I could only learn to see people with the eyes of love, not with the eyes of wishing to see with the eyes of love, or seeing people as I think I would see them if I could see them with the eyes of love, or as though love was meant to make me happy, or was the thing I could lean on without thinking, make my formula. No, if I could only see with the eyes of love.

---

People looking around, wondering when their food is going to come. They wait and wait, getting more and more hungry.

---

I don't want to have pie and ice cream for dessert. Please brush my teeth for me after dinner. I want to go for a walk. Take my hand and lead me.

But don't do any of these things. These were things to do for me when I was old and when I was a child. Do the things you do when I am with you.

---

The script was written for two actors. We spoke the lines to each other, saying things we did not feel. We repeated the lines, and this is how we related, living dramas written for other actors, which did not reflect who we were. This was the kind of relationship which allowed us to really be present to each other in silence. But we had other things to do, which I am not aware of yet, and there were the times when there was nothing but you, when I saw you.

---

I am running out of things to say, so perhaps I will be done soon. I won't say everything that there is to say.

---

Some things are secrets, which can be held deliberately, and which infuriate those who long for answers. But some things can't even be held.

---

I can't read, I can only write. I can't hear, I can only speak. It is speaking that longs most for silence.