

**Dismembers**

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I already felt in my head the dreadful torpor that heralds disintegration of the personality, I sensed that in truth I had neither memory nor the power of thought, nor even any existence, that all my life had been a constant process of obliteration, a turning away from my self and the world.

— W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

I will walk, I am walking the wreck that is the strand.

— Gil Ott, “Untitled (I make plans.)”



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## **False Correspondences**

*There are no repetitions for me. Each day is dangerous.  
Smooth on the surface, we are all bone beneath  
like snakes coiling.*  
— Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

### *By Way of Preface or Prelude*

Aggressions grey with the weather  
as victors again begin to overwrite history.

One is only noticed as bones show through,  
as veins vine blue and bulging.

Blink and the landscape is suddenly gone lush,  
blink again and it begins to wither inward.

Everyone here says hello.  
Note that the enclosed photos glow in the dark.

*Greetings and Salutations*

If the sky were to fall, it wouldn't be sky anymore. So I'd send it to you with a promissory note.

In today's mail, complimentary address labels accompany requests to aid blind children, hungry children, children injured by landmines, those with spinal injuries, the dispossessed, the disappeared.

Bitter chills here, even as papers claim negation of greenhouse gases. So we trundle in bundles, batten the hatches.

Hello, how are you, you who I know, I knew.

Hello, my friend, I just called to let you know no eye of newt, no rhyme of reach exceeding its meager grasp. Blinding every eye, queering every angel's thigh, my brain squeezed out this song.

Hello, my friend, are we divisible today? Once you'd promised solar solace, relief from windburn and ennui, yet each day's weather's remains abstracted and now, Aunt Nell, the bell tolls even for thee.

My hands are chapped. We never clap.

I know it's late. Hello.

Moons of Jupiter in the news but so cold I can't take out the trash.

Decades' decay thrown over and us older / stranger / stranded,  
every standard stripped of layers, left with blackened slaps,  
dysrhythmic clicks.

The dailiness of this dalliance, left to obsessively track packages and think of those times I should've died, simply stopped breathing.

Put it on a postcard, drop it in the mailbox, walk around the block in this big rock dandied montage.

*Lines Drawn*

Life conspires.

Trade winds skim the surface, push back plans for poems and proclamations.

Fat cat carries a static charge, though rest assured: nothing here is burning, that smell is not smoke.

Cleavings, convergences, letters half-pressed into paper by the cleanest of lines.

You meet your awkward doppelganger, invite him for a cup of coffee, end up groping one another in the walk-in closet.

It's a fact: any offer of sexual gratification is probably a trap.

Radar blips, this landscape lunared by mask-blank faces, the fatigue of a plastic- wrapped homeland.

Here we've arrived at an accepted version of the past, visions recast for clarity. Every shot is cropped for crispness of image, every shared space suddenly flat and emptied.

We go about averting eyes, scheduling appointments only to cancel them on a whim.

The boy had been nervous, body full of tics and lisps, skittish jitters  
and cramped gaseous emissions.

Soon silence will be broken, alarms will sound, spines will slide  
beneath telescopic lenses.

Soon sirens, slippage into an unnerved earth.

*Many Moons, More Maladies*

Recall a Dionysus once chided for slopping grape from his goblet,  
now retired from the debauch and swathed in stain-resistant  
Dockers.

Stare dumbly at today's bright sky.

Ashes pass as snowflakes, or the other way around.

Imagined remnants of silent shockwaves in a shiver of recognition.  
Fission melts these fictive missiles on tips of fingers.

Portents of nonporous borders sweep between sleep and sickness,  
gently exfoliating all skin types, toking on lowly hash pipes,  
indulging our decadence in the face of dastardly disaster as Klaxons  
click off at a clap.

Cayenne keeps aggressors at bay, each comma causes delays w/in  
the line, pauses in this barely varied scheme.

Again the voice mail picks up, each instance mutates as it moves.  
We monitor the odds, ponder probabilities as barriers of mesh  
screen unsightly bulges, these sallow feelings greening the gastro  
tract.

That mannequin could be a one-handed assassin in any other  
context. So erect this complex of mazes, a monument to  
amazement, then relax as spasms pass.

Deny everything, then envy the exceptions.

He was once a boy walking funhouse halls, seizing from shivers, suffering from failing eyesight. Then he recontextualized himself into a state of neutrality, considered himself to have been decommissioned.

Inked, dyed, poked with holes, no longer pleased by either stretching exercise or exit strategy. Still getting twitchy toward afternoon, sea legs shaky as keyholes dissolve.

Yet no manner of ailment or aneurysm could ultimately drop the monster.

Woke from ominous fog creeping down around the shrouded houses, the small roads out of town, the brown cow standing solemn in its omnipotence.

Grammar solves mysteries of missing flashlights, sheds momentary illumination. The black cat awakens. Yet it's still too soon to place the all-important call, to switch places in the narrative.

So go forth to clot softly, carry very little, wear comfy shoes.

## Phantom Planet

Rapid eye movement proves to be my balm.  
Again against the flat & boring,  
the blue hue of it all. Borders

smoothed, soothing.

The air is moving.  
Something's

missing. My joints ache like mad.

---

What washes over, hovers lower.

He admires the shades,  
stares at shadows for hours. Neither oblique nor orphic,  
this sense of oblivion.

Of course metamorphosis. & how obvious to crack, crumble,  
OK, but please don't sink, slip, split,  
disappear.

---

When breezes are softest, our eyelids quiver,  
we shrivel inward, shrug southern,  
are tugged subterranean

through a series of rabbit holes, of pinhole constellations.

The sound of velcro ripping gives him shivers,  
scares him to bits. This fear of tonsils returning, of total free float,  
the fumble of a heavy hand:

either hope for overlap  
or simply refuse to share your shoes.

---

Find some friends, scrounge a token,  
maybe visit a sister out west. Motion manifests  
in a flock of swallows,  
a façade of stars.

He titters,  
teeters,  
tightens his grip,  
grins at the lens as he pushes off to walk.

Watch as every window  
eventually empties, each floorboard's creak  
is cast somehow iconic, elegiac,  
inelegant,

another second's edges already gone grey, decayed.

---

Endless lists & scripts, partitions  
& divisions:                   this one likes candy

& is handy around the house,

the other must sit by the aisle when flying  
& refuses all offers of fudge.

---

She ripped the stitching, broke the bedframe,  
finally spoke to proclaim a map,  
a ladder,  
a pattern in the babble.

Having surfaced the signifiers, parsed the process,  
cored the words until they fail

or fall apart,  
all bound & stuck. Having hissed & spit,  
squinted & limped a path of asphalt,

inert,  
a lattice of faultlines  
over top of sinkholes over top  
of quagmires over top of quicksands,  
  
a series of wormholes, of whispers down the lane.

## **So the Sham Shall Mark the Start of the Ark**

Within the context of suppressing the negative:  
    scaling the local, imagining the liminal.  
Destiny's tread detected through lexical selections of dread.  
    Tremors are registered, retracted.  
Struggles tend to twitch the switches, condense and extend.  
    Phrase as fuse, ruse of arousal.  
Ghosted opposition of divisible positions,  
    a paradox put in a box and monitored  
        from panopticon's top.  
He was brought up in the service economy;  
    he spoke only in positives while assigning  
        each segue's significance,  
grading visible resistance,  
    or grabbing a preemptive reach around.  
Sort of problematic in frustrated fragment,  
    sorting out this fragile totality.  
Step back to let one person out,  
    get pushed from behind by another.  
Symptoms in motion:  
    culture of lockdown, cult of lockbox, cusp of lockjaw.  
Slippage of emotion:  
    force dispersed across networked connections.  
Call me priest-confessor,  
    call me emissary-advisor,  
masterminding the mechanics of mustering momentum,  
    moving from monolith to myth as empires are engineered,  
coalitions are coerced.  
    Decree an era of the constant nomad, horizon lines

in erasure.

Let's say the metallic age, let's say one lost decade,  
one last graze of the interface.

Sensing the socially saturated, decoding the candy coating.

Making something like meaning, cobbling together  
the collapse of space.

**Hot Town, Summer in the City (V 2.0)**

*for Kevin Varrone*

mass para-  
transit

tourists, horse  
shit

tar &  
skip a light

feathers  
& fandango

## Some Propositions

two of swords  
sworn,

wands  
of the world

whirl & whirr  
of words

lessons  
lessened  
upon daily  
reflection

unit shifter tipping slightly,  
shoving forward  
its admiring tidings

playing aces  
at an angle

\*

rock  
gone soft,

ink released  
as a final line  
of defense

\*

if orange is the new black,  
then this page is a cage

illumination occurs in error,  
community is corrected  
with clarity & discernment

they waxed enthusiastic  
of slide fasteners,

ushered in epaulet,  
espadrille,  
eton jacket

\*

avenues  
of arousal

other-  
wise uncounted

a sixty-second workout,  
a fit of natural expansion

divide  
digits by fives

shirk solutions  
& resurface smirking  
all cross-bone styled

\*

oracle of opposition,  
of error

pool in error  
elder in error

or arrow

advice gone silent

swords gone cyclical  
& unexpected,

an unnerving swerve  
averting tragedy,



& triaged  
immolations

left one dramatic stripe  
of solid color,

left the herringbone  
emboldened

across the wire-rimmed  
extrovert,

the picturesque  
failure

\*

fifth word  
coined,

con  
of a world  
gone weary

small blue thing,  
ball of string

this seventh generation  
is scentless,

is not suitable  
for philatelic archiving

\*

the offended syntax error commands  
that sometimes you eat the bear,  
sometimes the bear eats you

\*

acquisitive restraint,

subtle tug  
on baton  
    & wand

battery of mismatch,  
  
of plateaus & pinnacles  
gone all multiple  
  
open palm,  
open eye

ambisextrous au pairs  
jaunting on catwalks  
  
    & promenades,  
flaunting pajamaed plumage

\*

ring  
around the sun

runs  
these countless challenges,

affection lost for glossy documents  
sloshed by the radiator

radioactive eunuch grafter  
    shafting slyly,

    apples cored  
    at capture

sixth coin  
    afflicts  
a wish,  
    a promised ultimatum

senses forgotten  
at the summit,

falling pensive  
yet again

\*

wands  
stave off wands,

swords  
sworn depressive nine times over

an acquisitive obsession  
w/ all things mundane & esoteric

wearer of layers,  
tilter at windmills

glutton for comfort,  
whore for more

\*

if spit spreads death, then this  
slip shod cloak & dagger  
is a clipper ship lost from shore

mornings spent slipping  
the occasional poem  
thru mail slots of the sleeping,  
these meditations  
on an emergent sea

\*

sham  
enacted, lessons

hang low-tapered  
& beribboned

lasso of the torso,

torsion w/ a twist

the sealdian  
moment slips

past,  
the carnival closed,

the rides silent

\*

clock parts  
coiled  
in the ear

this wake of weathered  
rock,

quaking  
distance  
from distance

stripping  
cadence

of modest divergence,  
mocking charm of untruths

surface spurred  
to further observances

\*

jawbone  
jinxed  
linked  
to skittish jitters

figment  
out of pigment,

linament  
on the ligament

goad & scold,  
blame shame on sundays

as the leathers begin  
to spread & swelter

\*

green tea leaves  
foresee

gestures of lover  
or somnambulist,

a burglar  
dancing barefoot

abscond  
w/ the diphthong  
of longing

& feel all existential  
w/ a papier-mâché face  
in place over yr own

\*

enamored of this  
barbed wire kiss  
my ass

such utilitarian  
tripwires & slipknots

coda  
encoded,  
may dazed

{o monday morning  
pls show me yr glitch

bodice all deep imaged  
so I might find this circle's  
cycle, this pool's pull}

## **Consecutive Exits**

These things, then, occur as simultaneous: subways, scarlings, the  
bind of the blind sublime.

Today I shine my skull, I scrub the stains, I sweat the smallest,  
shame then swerve to hide behind hematite, a diety's tears.

Today my blood moves unobstructed but conversations clog. Here  
there be snapdragons, gila monsters, zombie hunters run amok.

Here there be symbols, signs, a system of pulleys, levers, slightly  
better mousetraps.

Today I click but can't catch, spring back in fear of the latch.  
Loosely translated,

Now you've screwed me, too, Brutus. I burst absurdly then bruise,  
bloom, assume there will be no more torrents or tirades.

Today I see the rend within the rendering, the spiral within the  
ascent.

I sketch the running man, the burning man, the man overboard.  
Then I stare into sun glare, assume the stigmata.

Today I tend the embers then split the difference.

This, then, is an entering through exit wounds, the vantage of the midnight vox. There is a body of song, a trophy of dystopia. There are pings

turned into pang, the tang of tangents, this cache of intangible baggage.

Today I scorch like fates on fire, I crave instant karma incarnate, a spate of amnesia if not a taste of ambrosia.

Meanwhile I endeavor to keep the peace, take the pledge, tow the line. I instantly insert more cowbell. I am anxiously awaiting my own abstraction.

Today I draft the hollow man, the missionary man, the man of the hour, the man-o-war, the manatee. In this meeting,

I am advocating my own obsolescence. In this moment, I am pondering marginalia as the new mix tape, antimatter as the latest rage.

As a rule of thumb, my albatross is phosphorescent, and of the seven deadly infrareds, I'd have to choose reductive reasoning. So I send these greetings

from the ether, the either, the welcome to the whitewash, this wish you were her, this string of slender slanders.

This, then, is life as neither electroclash karaoke nor punk rock cabaret. I call but can't quicken, quit but can't Icarus or even lengthen Sphinxlike.

Today I bought x-ray specs, an inflatable lifesize exoskeleton.

Here there be crystal wrists, metaphysical graffiti. Here there be an ad hoc altar to St. Vitus, St. Anger, Our Lady of a General Despair and Malaise.

Not spies but slow hands. I squall but can't shiver, cut but don't shuffle.

Today I am leashed all Apollo, lathered in lattes, lost between the build and the bury, the cursive and the crash.

Yet I remain yours from the concourse, I request radiance as an afterthought, I grow concerned with issues of continuity.

I love carpet, I love desk, I love lamp.

Today I gift you this three-ring binder, this stain-resistant relic, this succession of nervous verbs.

Today I visit the vampire in the attic. In silence I hear backslide, in baseline I see blowback. Yet I remain wary of inflection,

I reuse allusions, I come unshattered at random intervals. In this slide show are assorted snakebites and lightning strikes. In this scatter of snapshots are sixes,

sevens, a school of ragged tiger sharks, a tower of song, a pillar of salt.

## Loose Ends

Growing suspicious of pundits, stockpiling for hibernation.

Dreams set in the childhood house, the high school house,  
the house that doesn't exist.

Reading quickly, he skimmed for organic ingredients.

Reading quickly, she skipped to the naughty bits.

From an office in a strip mall to a strip bar called "The Office":

his friends went high modern, but he's still low brow.

Marzipan hangovers, melancholy scones.

They elected for brunch over a night at St. Elmo's Bar,  
they each had hopes of publishing their memoirs.

When she called the gesture "poetic," she meant "futile."

Fear of smacking one's head on the ceiling,

of water finding its way in.

Liniment on the ligament, the poignancy of pigment

when it implies both direction & texture,

when it promises a trilogy in five parts,

an alternate route to the cornea's core.

They say that even a soothsayer can be vexed,

that every drawing room contains erotic subtext.

It was the space between interior & exterior,

the extra income & the exit interview.

It was time for gift certificates to be exchanged.

It was a situation where the *Selected Poems* sufficed.

## **Help Wanted**

reason residing in matter

to deal

Ability to read and interpret

stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl

several concrete variables in standardized situations.

The binding will not crack or split. This is a permanent book.

---

a generative fluid, or

occasionally exposed to wet and/or humid conditions,  
moving mechanical parts, and risk of electrical shock.  
The noise level in the work environment is usually loud.

---

safety rules, operating

peripheral rate, ratio

furnished in written, oral, or diagram form.

a materialistic physics

---

This job has no supervisory responsibilities.

makes him feel strange in the world in which he finds himself

refutes itself in the very act of being formulated.

---

unmoved prime mover

and ability to adjust focus.

finger, handle, or feel  
reach with hands or arms

the spirit of compromise appears

Specific vision

required to

open flat for easy reference

---

discord      an eternal fire

occasionally required to stand; sit

from a concrete human situation

polarity      of the ancient mind. Properties inherent

signatures      will not drop out

they are made of finer, shining atoms.

This animation or vivification

“Nimble  
dogs or, rather, doglike

---

draw and interpret bar graphs

apply common sense

opaque, with a minimal show-through:

to obscure itself

Thus the Empire fell.

---

frequently exposed to extreme heat.

perform the essential

distance

to write routine reports.

Reasonable accommodations may

close

and procedure

regularly exposed to fumes or airborne particles.

add, subtract, multiply, and divide

each sleeping person return

## **The Unities**

*The roof is new, the wiring sound,  
so I suppose this house will do.*  
— Hank Lazer, *H's Journal*

Still spared change & veins grown strange, stranger still. Backdrop  
balsa sparring & thus propelling styrofoam scenery. The onslaught  
of monstrous words rehearsed, speeches curled in false warmth.

Slippery shrugging off, sluggish correspondence between one  
vexing question & the next. Sustain this ethical slump, this  
meditation on sacred statuary hoisted safely into place by a chorus  
of strapping lads. See the turtle conjured, then preserved in cement.

Each doorway a hollow revolver, all gap & shadowy screen,  
pointing toward interior cool, an irony of affectionate inaction.  
Phrasal tension, phased & entangled interactions, pleased  
dissections cloistered telescopic, clonelike. Replicant aggression this  
coming together, an orbit all gymnastic & slippery eyed.

Sudden anatomy of vast, unknown spaces.

Behold: the piety of soy. Storied worries as inevitable, invincible, viral. A question of order, of place. Fearing fire in the wires, a scrambled shambles, symbols sampled & dismantled.

Imaginary itinerary of sporadic correspondences, false walls of evasion. If he's sporting the Kangol, it must be Saturday: an unchanging frame of reference. The lack attacked & stripped of answers, as sure as I'm standing here. Well, sitting. Working hard or hardly working, this stationary stationery.

She disrobes three times in the first act, is pleasuring herself by the second. The habit of repetition, the repetition of habit. This pretense of sectioning off, of factions fractured. Grasping at gist's mist, monologue caught & stopped, miming a shrinking box or a walk against the wind. Dredging skull's sludge, skull of alas I knew him, skull of newly neutered. Alas this alias, its bathtub electroshock, its barbaric tooth extraction.

Placebo effect: recurring dream of smashing so much of this stuff, tossing it out in the garbage. The sausage was confiscated, but the narcotics were not. The idea more excruciating than the thing itself; the inevitable, inelegant letdown. You had to be there.

Slavish tastes, sluggish pace, universal template: coffee cold & sweater discarded the only track of one's own passing. Tensions of unit & measure, pleasure pressured out until vestiges shine in the light.

Serendipity is here, poor storyline & all. Share a spine, split a line. Risky script divergence so stark this stage of no cabinets, no closets, all open space: not what one knows, but what one can only imagine.

Realm of hypotheticals, realm of pregnant pause, realm of funny air. Peculiar, I mean. Resisting workplace khakification, the pleasures of diet soda, the covetousness of snugglies. Back in five minutes, back strapped with a heavy pack.

Vantage scatters this broken sift of voices, horrific bits & discarded parts that simultaneously climb & sunder, trip & trap our premature surrender, collapsing always inward. Within this tangle of language, increments of pause. Applause. I am, I said, twice upon a time. Backtracking, rewriting in order to savor, pull apart, negate each nuance.

What accumulates: motivational taint. Stacking what was said, plied by deceitful speech as snag & severance stockpile, fate's deception nothing but bad sitcom plotting. There's no mistaking the half-empty glass, the litany gone slightly akimbo.

Lack of ambient sound, swish only of synthetics. Friend of a friend of Mary, fellow traveler of Bill. Like kinds divided, lifelines decided: you had me at helter skelter, you had me at helvetica.

Shades, degrees, each season's extremes predictable as submarine radar ping. Being vastly unpleasant as a political act, or wanting to do no harm, finding oneself wanting in that regard.

Between fear of the seen & unseen, questions of deadlock dread. Suffering's specificity submerged in dim glimpses, scrawled on cave's walls. The strutter stuck, the stutter struck out. Wrestling the moment until movement stops, lost in pleasure's wink that doubles, troubles this contrary diction switch.

Flattered & fattened, stroked with one hand while slapped with the other. Poetry passes from fashion, passion flashes for girls called Gilmore. Witness crossing of cardboard swords, bodies fallen to the floorboards, climax coming so fast I missed it, oblivious to the stunning sunset stage left.

Seeming extremes so tiny, slight, untraceable, an identity brimming with voids & evasions, shifts & elisions drifting toward ambiguity's porous reform. Reading transience for transcendence, reverberations within a swaggering, enigmatic pseudonym all lazy, low slung.

Metropolitan catharsis so deceptively effortless: fortress of core an architectural gesture at aim & gain. Complex & slippery questions of willful recurrence, chaos of sustained meditations, destinations quickly meshed. Second guessing an uncertain performance, meddling by lurk & lark, spark of dark disclosure. Skilled hand of visible division, scattered rush of consciousness, this tension of suspicious vintage.

Ghosts float, gloat, flounder. Scrupulously spliced enclosure, the framed reclamation of flip-book physicality, the fluency of footnotes lightly taken. Condescension twists these sterile linguistic shifts, acrobatic syntax as strictly an urban disease.

Broken historical insertion, a motive carefully honed, blissfully ignorant of temptation's sly sharp disorient, every stranger's cunning wink. Cutting blink. Sumptuous spinning & thrust suddenly & into the thick simultaneous. Void this raise, reclaim this veneer. Chronicle of coherence, contradiction of character construction & charmingly incongruous & indeed did congeal thru contraction.

Watery paints, spotty selection, daunting content. Wan, wand, wanderlust: light blue doubled letter, red tripled word. Yet this posturing preen of pen to paper does nothing to stop squirrels from destroying the flowers.

Switch flicked, fixing these doors belatedly stormed. Blunt inevitable, blunt somewhat affirmative, somehow cohesive this rigid clichéd bohemia. Deft delineation of pleasures pitfallen, split from kindred this myth spit from mouth, surmounting history's inaction trap.

Bond evolving all fierce & determined. Act of coupling, connecting double & therefore blurred at the edges, & therefore construction of collective, perception of urbane umbrage & expanse.

## Legends

secret cadences  
insistent instances

*this unrest*

close quarters  
invisible borders

(in passing)

parameters of contact

frustrations of latched clasps

vague evasions  
tentative itineraries

thinking "*caught in the legends*"  
or "*victim of geography*"

drawn to scale (reading  
inches as miles, lines

as canyons, chasms)

*"despite (to spite) your  
destination"*

despised interpretations

(runes ruins)

accusations of clasped hands

passed glance,

past chance  
to turn, return

(paths gaps)

complications of unmapped lands,

*these cities in dust*

### Three Engagements

1.

Small walls,  
short accordingly. So existed his he  
to frown never cough, somehow  
embody both.

Cap off apple penetration,  
armor-like through belly's  
successor  
literally lodged  
or lodging, always. Anxious coughing,

then work, sit, rest.  
True door, his author  
remained.

2.

Pain grows fists,  
first complains the ghost hands.

Plague  
as passage, protection as semblance  
of beside the beloved.

The house kills  
when bends,  
beheads, begins at its porch.

Guilt  
and regret of flat  
luck, fault far out beyond bit,  
bridle, house,  
broken.

3.

Fall what gesture,  
haunts. Passion what gnaws.  
Pearl what apples her daughter,  
stricken.

## **Exposures**

stretches  
the

, obscuring

light traces tight lips  
densely woven,

her long hair hangs

stutters  
suggest blocking  
depth. mesh over flesh  
torsos sequence

tension  
; seemingly  
arms

silvery

black this.  
her unrushed poses  
flushed  
as she

frame outlined, betraying  
shutter speed

erasing facial features.

no emotion

of hide or heavy shield,  
stark sculpted perhaps  
sightless or

opacity  
stutters for flash.

hips' slant  
is intention: these  
fingers brush netting,  
show

repose of flash-  
flesh here, lashes gesture  
light.

stutters sequence:  
blocking  
sheen over flesh.  
gaps

of artifice,  
her long hair hangs

## Chamber Series

*We go about our business in the rooms and corridors  
of the Splendide-Hôtel. Outside, the black polar night,  
a chaos of glaciers.*

— Gilbert Sorrentino, *Splendide-Hôtel*

1.

And the strings begin,  
build momentum in increments. The air here  
is orange hued, gelatinous, somehow

lacquered in formality.

Dear Apnea:

Everyone is ringing,

disrobing, the elevator is hanging suspended, the light  
now golden, the floor beneath us  
suddenly diaphanous.

Not hesitant  
but a question simply of slowing motion,

a sense of curve versus straight progression. Static sequence  
as geometric patterns repeating in the wallpaper,  
perhaps, hypothetically hypnotic.

Exactly, except  
the tangle of wires we wear, wings beating in the rafters.

2.

That second chair is fetching, dreaded,  
drenched in reverb.

The drive winds, the riff ascends,  
it smears its edges, drifts in white noise.

Dear Flux:

Your invitation must be declined, my profile  
cloaked in anonymity.

I require a blind spot  
within a blank book hidden behind an enamel mask,  
a hollow domino. In this passageway, a photo montage  
layering leather atop latex,  
fishnet, finally ribbon threaded through skin.

You are asked  
to pantomime the password, to choose either  
the tightrope walker or the tiny ringmaster  
doffing his tophat.

3.

Torches, mauve.

To light a burner or furnace, to reignite,  
or, make these old bones quiver  
& shake this sluggish blood.

Dear Fractal:

Outside is a city of intersections, of reworked nocturnals,  
of softened gothic architectures.

See the pig  
on a spit, the shotgun in the face,

the secondary cast of heartbreakers,  
blackhearts, banshees, bad seeds.

Snakes  
circle in the graveyard, the sharp slick shiv is sensed  
just before it's shadowboxed between the ribs.

Wolf sniffing in shrubbery starts digging for myth,  
comes out the other side covered in grit, glitter,  
a garland among the girders.

The lobby's aquarium tonight is backlit,  
is shapes flitting amid synthetic plants.

The diver hovers  
just above the gravel, his helmet awash in a flurry  
of bubbles, his pose frozen in half salute.

4.

Interior epistolary,  
this audience-less audition.

Dear Sieve:

Lacking the required black tie, I sit timing the slide  
between green and grey.

Already the bow is brandished, the chandeliers dimmed,  
the windows thrown open to the cold.

There is negative space to be traced,  
fractions and fragments with which to grapple, the firefly  
to be snatched from an already closing palm.

Dear Siren:

What is this water so heavy  
& hard. Your song

is all echo, its chorus knocked off-kilter.

Dear Angels,

both Burning and Blue:

## **Erased Debaser**

*If you put metal inside of a man  
He can work much faster than you can*  
— Rasputina, "O Injury"

Between elevation and vertigo, a something inverted, a somewhat unnerved by enervation, somehow unshouldering these sacks of stones. In this settling into setting, a sudden sense of excess, a sprouted sag and swell even as sages shake in protracted contractions.

Having walked this route by rote. Having staved off this craving of cave-ins, having crawled forth from the wreckage of tectonic shifts and continental drifts. Yes, rest pressing down, account for the stillness of shadows and the filthy state of your neighbor's shoelaces.

More mechanical than mammal, yet more reptile than replicant.  
Lacking a mirror to monitor movement, only a blank canvas against  
which to press one's profile, a paralytic flicker behind one's eyelids.  
So grind the spine and lick this lilly's gilding, hope lotus folds back  
to blank the mangled hand.

Upon this turning, stilts tilt, twist, sink into sand, splinters splitting  
nail from flesh. Skin can singe, sound can drown. The charm of  
armor, its thistles bristling.

Flick of the wrist or is that tableau. The telltale freezing of lesions,  
be they premalignant strictures or merely the metaphoric nipple  
stiffened in the chill.

Cognizant of each blister's rip, every splice, slice, cauterization.  
Vertebrae straightened, strengthened, a series of stitches, sutures,  
sutras to tangle, tingle, trip this vivid divide.

Cartilage closes holes, toughens, grows rougher as pores coarsen.  
The cut, the shunt, the clog of it all. Yet the excess pressure is  
pleasing, the crackle of excision even in slow burn.

So soak the lapsed synapse in early afternoon, your forehead  
embalmed in its subtle secretions. Gasp to swallow shallow surface  
or drown amid the drainage, a shivered brisk balm.

For this lithium picnic, a grey-scaled rainbow. For this tardy retreat,  
a half-assed tango, an erasure of the phantom bride so as not to  
awaken the easily elysian.

Limbs ripped from scrap heaps and stitched into sequence, muses  
cubed, subsumed, sublimated into extinction. Should one sprawl  
atop this unmarked grave or stoop to embrace this liquid image, a  
subtle shifting self.

Survived the extraction, then steeped a dream of neither saints nor snakes. Cold control coaxed, sparked as charge.

Each ear an appendage as forehead distorts, segues space synthetic. Squeezed the portal to orbit astral lapses, to border abyss all cosmological. A dsymorphic orgy of anorgasmic ecstasies, an existential eskimo highlighted by the underlining.

Fidget the frail, modulate to shape this gaze's scrape. Shaking to break, to sunder the hollow, bowl of halo's shudder.

A hand-written resignation burned to cinder, its surface disbursed. Signing this sounding, a slipping outside inner wiring, shading the graze of speech received via a lifted endless loop.

## Postface

*In this identity, disembodiments*

*Still keep occurring.*

— Wallace Stevens, “An Ordinary  
Evening in New Haven”

To slay one last computer-  
generated dragon, to erase, efface,

dismember. From behind his chemical peel,  
he thrice denied his metrosex.

In the margins  
of his blue book, he glossed the sonnet  
by writing, “You are pretty, you are selfish,

you will die alone.” “Loud  
Bomb” therefore becomes  
an anagram. Botox

for negotiation,  
Ativan for after the fact.

Faced with another apocryphal apocalypse,  
he stepped out for cigarettes & caught the slow boat  
to either Albany

or Albania,  
he was caught off guard by the forbidden dance  
of the one-eyed king.

Pause for gaper delay, for gaps  
in the causeway.

He began referring to himself  
in the third person, he dreaded a crooked frame

& so refused to drive the first nail. As the finale neared,  
the prophecy imploded & the endgame

extended,  
taking the last stand

off camera. Played in reverse,  
the record's backward masking revealed a call to relapse,

reload, resurrect. Within the confines of this monosyllabic  
songbook, a polyphonic spree. He often dreamt  
of trains, teeth falling from sockets,

becoming buried beneath pieces of flair  
or postures of sincerity.

Mouth rounded,  
thumb turned, he coveted the mud  
while caught in the mosh.