

INTERANT

Issue #6 Fall, '21

WE ARE
SAFE
IN HERE.
LEAVE THE
DOOR OPEN

WE ARE SAFE IN HERE

ISSUE #6 FALL, 2021

ITERANT

ISSUE #6, FALL 2021

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ARTWORK IN ISSUE 6

by ANDREA KRUPP

The Virus Is Within Us (Icelandic Broadside)
19" x 25", 2020, Stenciled acrylic and soot with graphite and
stamped letters



THE VIRUS IS WITHOUT US

These works on paper were created during a residency in North Iceland, late in the winter of 2020. A series of epic snowstorms piled up snow like a fortress around the studio, and I enjoyed a long, uninterrupted period of quiet, inward-turned work. The spell broke in mid-March, in a hectic scramble to return home to Philadelphia on one of the last flights out of Reykjavik, by way of Boston, because EWR and JFK had closed.

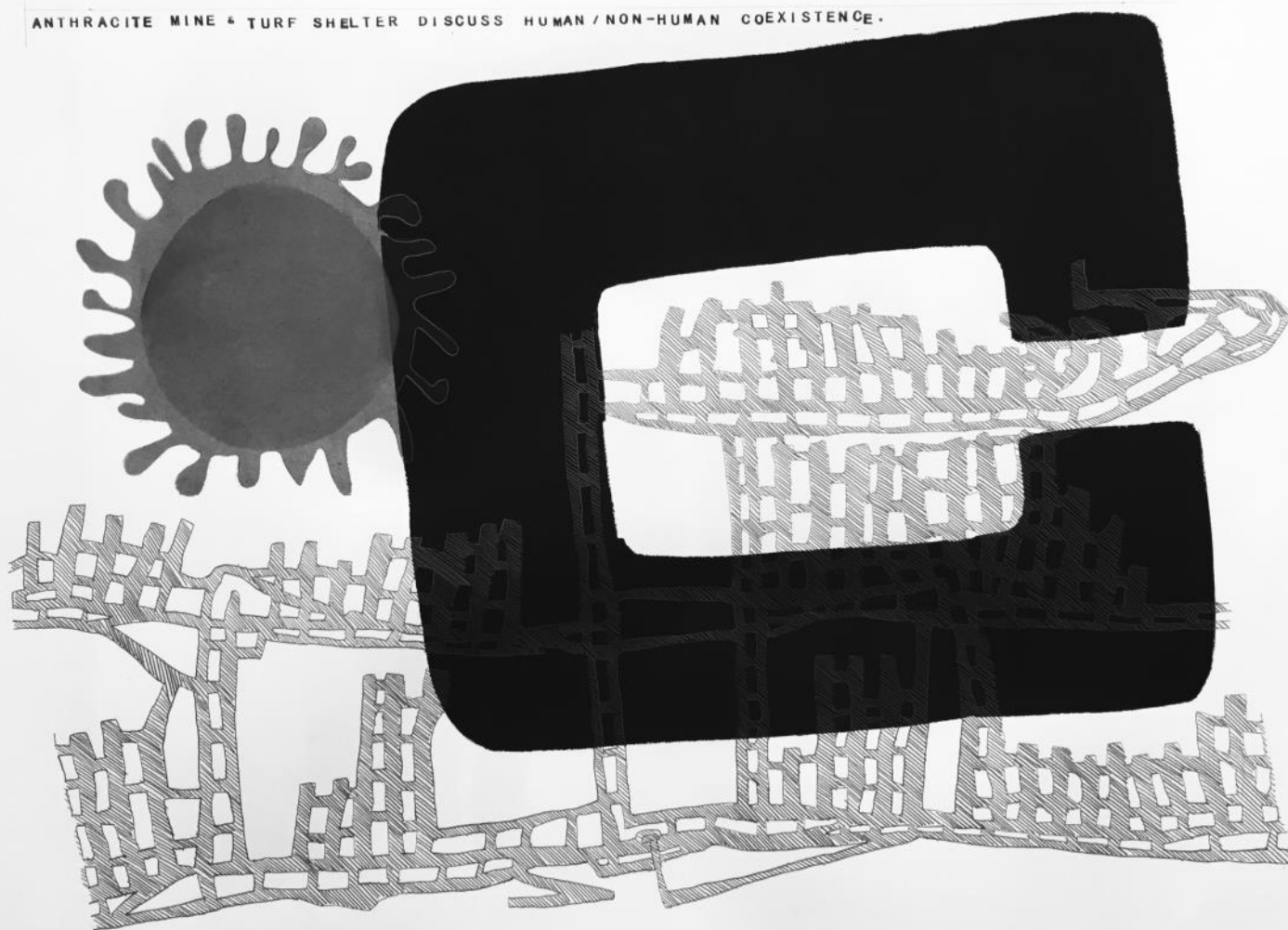
These images trace a period of creative research that synthesizes historic references to Pennsylvania anthracite, and injects re-imagined meaning to the way we read the past and think about the future. Anthracite has a lot to say about the looping nature of time, it is a material present and in process in multiple dimensions.

In the Herhus studio I listened to Alec Guinness read TS ELIOT Four *Quar-*tets over and over. I listened to Zola's *Germinal*. I watched the snow fall and I shoveled snow. I read about Icelandic turf-house traditions, and studied the archaeological tracings of the structures' Earth-rooted forms. I imagined the bulk of the turf houses speaking with the voids in the underground anthracite mines, as if space and time did not matter.

Andrea Krupp is a visual artist whose work explores the meaning and implications of human/nature entanglement. Her works on paper use graphic, historic and poetic languages to open new ways of seeing and understanding the world. She is currently exploring Pennsylvania anthracite coal as a material that can help us recalibrate our connection with nature, place and time.

A Philadelphian, she graduated from the University of the Arts and holds a BFA with honors in Printmaking. In 2017 she was awarded the Independence Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship. In 2018 she attended the Arctic Circle Residency and was a Ballinglen Fellow. Her drawings, paintings, books and works on paper have been exhibited nationally and abroad in solo and juried group shows. Her works are in several University collections, the Free Library of Philadelphia and Woodmere Art Museum.

ANTHRACITE MINE & TURF SHELTER DISCUSS HUMAN / NON-HUMAN COEXISTENCE.



Anthracite Mine and Turf Shelter (Icelandic Broadside)
19" x 25", 2020, Acrylic, soot, graphite with stencil and
stamped letters

The Hour of the Rat

A flower introduced into a mausoleum
does not enliven life,

itself
the flower, aged

into cerement flattened,
irredeemable, rubbed

centuries on into a mural

that resembles stained sky on the ground

does not reproduce
its smile
is inward blood cells laundered

sound, sounds.
the branch from which the flower hangs

The Hour of the Rat

The river was mud, A heron walked across the surface,

I saw it
spiritualizing the tabitha of garbage

This was not the landscape
I demanded to know
by fleeing into a more barren iteration.

I wanted to stand above the rushing inflammation
with my daughter, already an elderly woman,

The river soiled

We could cry and be fed
We could live in the desert forever

you'll be a toddler then
mysterion, sitting in a room by yourself,

molecules
integrated into the hive of your personality.

You won't remember My dreams,
the fields the woods
the river in the form of frustration

immature flowers stewing
against the lizardful wall

It was the rain that tormented our sense of deprivation,

turned us into plants
for a second we were rooted

The Hour of the Rat

There was one Asian man in Town
He told a story about standing beneath a blue light bulb
outside a jazz club in rural Missouri

and, looking at his blue skin, thinking,
I look like everyone else—

beneath the light. He cried

He shed being Japanese
by being blue

His mother must have felt
the ancestors pardon
her son's momentary wish
to be extinct

I met him in the parking lot
bought boots and a machete.

GO
SLOW
SLOWER

SLOWLY
LOWER

AN
EXTRA-
HUMAN

ARC

THROUGH

BIO-
LITHIC
TIME

----- THIS DISTANCE IS PROBABLY CONFUSED -----

12.

COAL

ROCK

15.

COAL

ROCK

11.6.

COAL

ROCK

3.

COAL
& DIRT

10.

COAL

ROCK

50.

COAL
MAMMOTH
VEIN

Dream Report

1.

I never told you about the time I met you in a dream. I recognized you, even though you were not wearing your favorite trilby on your finely manicured head and were trying to advance unnoticed down the narrow aisle of a speeding train. We were nearing Shanghai. At least that is what the signs said, the ones we could read, which popped up every now then, after miles of passing large green-and-white signs we did not understand, even if they predicted the hour and day of our demise. You said you were not expecting to see me on this train, but on the one coming back. How did you know that I was going to be in Shanghai? I asked. It is not a subject we have ever discussed in all our years of doing business. We didn't have to, you said. It is written all over your face. You have never been able to wash those tears away, no matter how many times you have tried.

2.

I do not remember many of my dreams, hardly any, in fact, less than a handful, most likely because they don't want to be trapped here, in a world pierced by sunlight's crimson shards.

3.

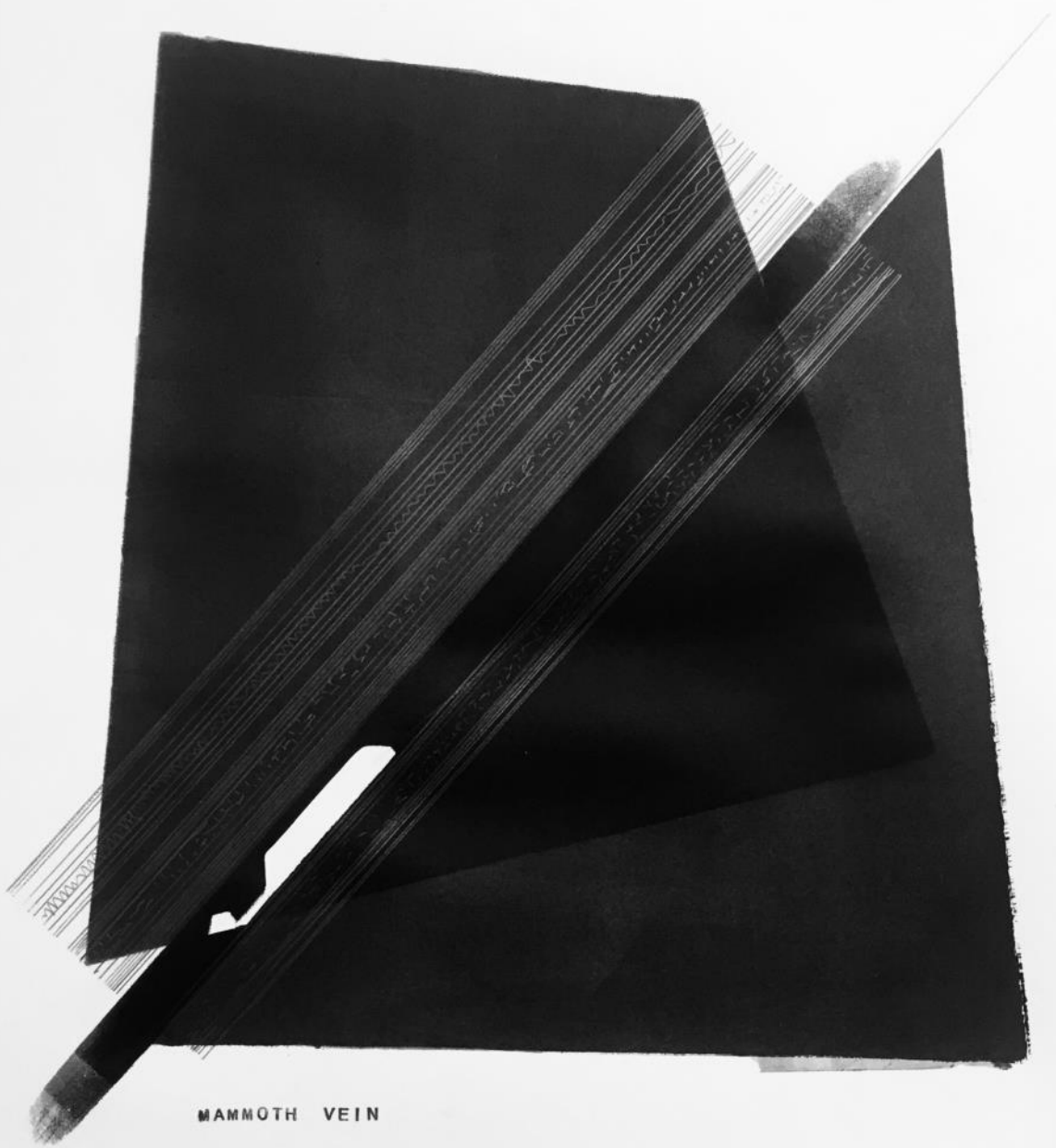
I keep thinking that I should meet a living poet in a dream, perhaps my good friend who lives in Singapore or the one whose books I have been reading from cover to cover (there are more of these than you might think), but I keep encountering poets who have died, some who left just a few days or weeks ago, no matter where I am transported: Hollywood movie set or abandoned beehive redesigned as a library, rubble strewn parking lot in Ecuador or leafy forest trail in Wales. It seems that these poets feel that they did not get enough attention during their lifetime; and they have decided to lurk around in dreams, hoping to alter the future of their afterlife in the world they left behind.

4.

I met my grandfather, who excelled at water maintenance, only once, long after he had died alone in the old city of Hong Kong, after years of wandering to starlit domains: Bristol, New York, Hoboken, Beijing, and Shanghai. I asked him if he had any advice on how I should live my life. He smiled wanly, looked at his feet, and shook his head. No, I have no advice. He smiled again, traces of bitterness visible in his hesitations. I myself have failed at everything I ever did, he said in a soft voice: studying, marriage, civil engineering, being a father to my only child, who I left before he could say goodbye. In fact, I even flopped rather badly as a grandfather, which is why we have not met until now.

5.

Did you get the poem I sent you, you asked, incredulous that I had not read it and could not make any comment—intelligent or otherwise—on its structural beauty? Really, you sneered sarcastically. Poets are all alike, you hissed through gritted teeth, but decided no further explanation was necessary.



MAMMOTH VEIN

Act V, Scene XI

Only in this dream was I able to have blonde hair. Wires peeked out from my ribs like tomato vines. See in my dream I was able to, finally, grow a garden. Though not for you. I did not see your grey face, ever, peering from the trellises. Not your gentler habits, like waiting to read the paper until just before you grew tired, went to sleep in our softly handled and shared bed. I studied for a time the limper vegetables: the squash already seemed too old. You plagued me, you should know, and for what? So that I could study instead your odder ways of worshipping the hours that exist in a day. The days do, they linger, like pacing around while the tea steeps or allowing my hair to remain long and modern. I never will talk to you again, of the mouse I found in my bedroom, adjacent to the mirror, or how I do call your name, still, like some sort of madness. Like I have stopped finding that peaceful and slow sort of ache that once existed within myself.

Act V, Scene IV

I caressed so many thoughts until he left me dangling like the claw of a sweetest bear. I wore mountain ranges until they took on the outline of my own mortified body. Wore trellised maps, rendered in a particular shade of light, around my shoulders. This is how life worked. The trees were always blended with the sun and dizzy. I was always stealing moments of night and turning those moments into morning. Simply put, I was hungry. I wanted him to press his fingers against the plush insides of my cheeks, to permit me to touch the underbellies of his bones, if only for a minute. He fled with the Steller's Jays that used to roost outside my kitchen window. His timing was always perfect. Or imperfect. Lines grew hazy after he left. Wires grew tangled as talons. I missed him. Language had betrayed me, but at least I knew I missed him. I was rarely logical, but in this way at least I knew. He had a bicycle. I never saw it, but it was real. Once, he told me this story, of riding through this turbulent city like an archeologist, how happy he thought he felt. Usually he complained of this city. I rode my own bicycle, it was invisible, to an equally invisible beach. There I waited.

The image displays a 6x6 grid of 36 interlocking hexagonal tiles. Each tile contains a letter, and the letters are arranged in two 3x3 blocks, each forming the word 'TICK' in a specific pattern. The letters are arranged as follows:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | I | C | K | T | O |
| C | K | T | I | C | K |
| T | O | C | K | T | I |
| C | K | T | O | C | K |
| T | I | C | K | T | O |
| C | K | T | I | C | K |

palinode for the year we did not touch

perhaps there is no villain, no antagonist, no foil
for my reflection, no bad guy, no butcher, no sea
witch, no serpent, no god with flame for a crown
or bladed teeth, no gunman, no genius, no jaded
father banging his chest, no monster, no Nazi, no
half-dead, no skinner, no poacher, no vindictive
nurse, no Gollum, no Joker, no man, no man, no
man in a mask with a knife, no knife, no cut,
nothing left to clean or to cleave from the wound.

self-portrait as Fat Medusa in conversation with Poseidon's wife

lair where i was laid and parsed, now screened: gardenesque, damiana leaves dripped from a wrought gold ceiling rod, rust and stain removed from the campus carpet. still, my scent—my patchouli and cumin, tarragon and orange blossom, odor of woman and girl. *do you see me?* a serpent scaled in onyx bound to my throat as a choker, a single snake braiding down my back. and you, fellow Gorgon, sister by any other name, an awful shade of green. perhaps i am offering for you to touch the snake, its split tongue across my fingertips, or perhaps it is trying to touch you, ask you: *what do you do in your powerlessness, Amphitrite? what governable sea spirits your sleep?* do you know, that if not for the knife, i could be less brick, less ember, less edge of the precipice and at times, it is your white knuckle in my memory, it is your hair falling around my face. you are not a forgivable god, yet what i remember most is your familiar shudder when i confessed he called me *baby love* before the silver flash, how you turned your face to the ground as i described the scent of his skin.

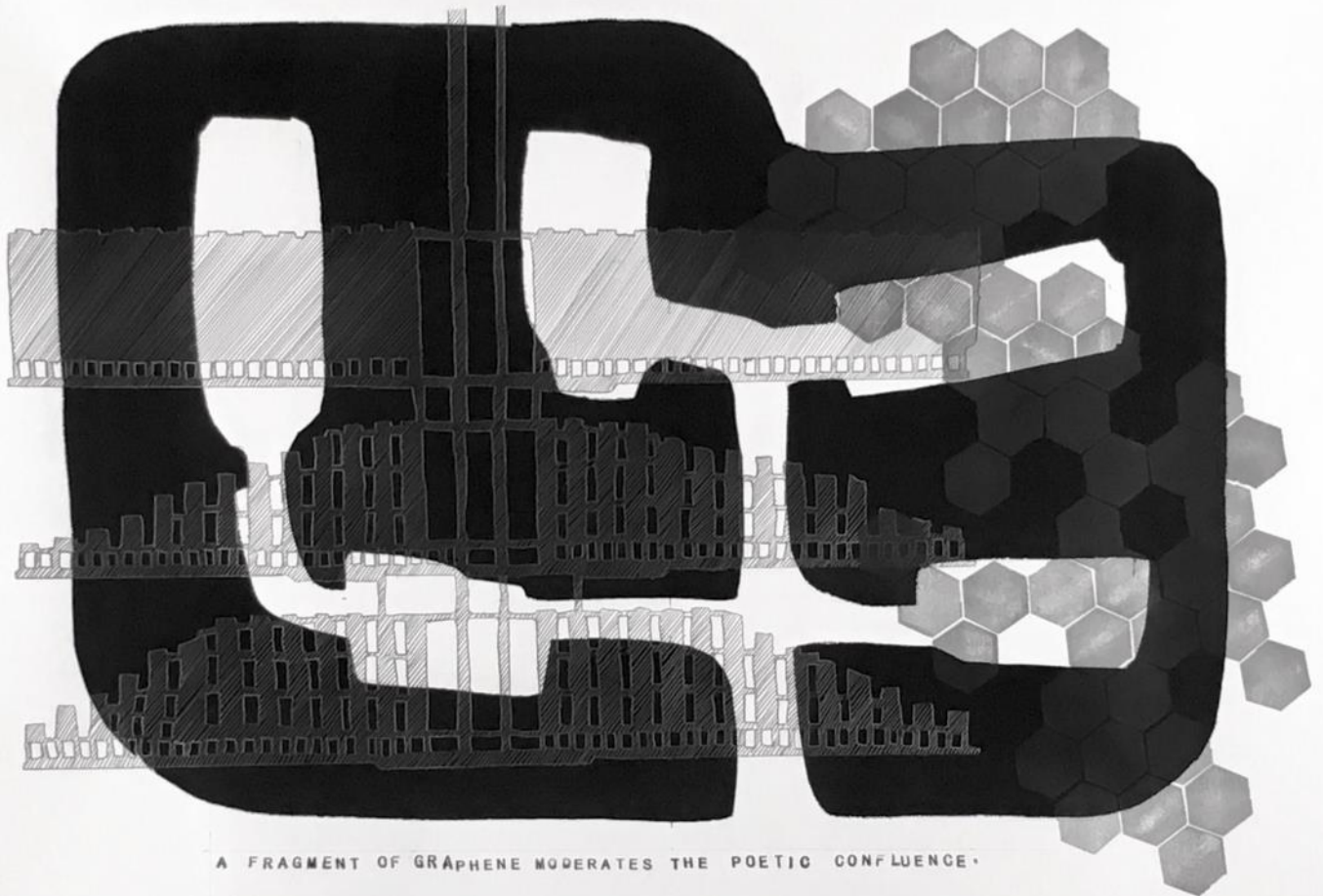
note: In Greek mythology, Medusa is raped by Poseidon on the steps of Athena's temple.

american sonnet [*i made, of my bones, an earth
for you*]

i made, of my bones, an earth for you: turned the oceans
your favorite shade of light, that deepened, nearly bruised
dusk. reflected in my palms, what i've made into water
glows amethyst; when you drink from it, you are iridescent,
luminous, lilting. i am metallic, meticulous in the way
i pronounce your full name, watch you watch the world.
i have quieted galaxies for this moment, hushed the moral pleading,
called the caged animal in from the ark. *today, tomorrow, world with-*
out an end; to love you much and yet to love you more, to want
to hold your body to mine as midnight settles in the jasmine trees.
and, by light of our stars, make water for tea gathered from the garden,
read from Lorde in the living room, dance to Whitney in the hall;
lie with our legs laced together in our bedclothes and watch,
quietly, knowingly, for our moon's sweeping, predictable fall.

Note: with lines borrowed from Christina Rossetti's
Monna Innominata Sonnet V

A PENNSYLVANIAN ROOM-AND-PILLAR-MINE MEETS AN ICELANDIC
TURF HOUSE - SANDÁRTUNGA | ÞJÓRSÁRDAL.



A Fragment of Graphene (Icelandic Broadside)
19" x 25", 2020, Acrylic, soot, graphite with stencil and
stamped letters

THE WONDER OF HAVING LIVED HERE A LONG TIME

Whatever happened to joke shops? I remember two of them
In downtown San Diego, one on a corner on Broadway
Not far from the library, that specialized in off-color signs,
Like a guy sheepishly imploring “We don’t swim in your toilet,
Please don’t pee in our pool,” or a tall Texan proclaiming
“The high balls are on me.” The other was on F Street,
Next door to the Hollywood Burlesque’s marquee celebrating
Tempest Storm, with a sign in its window offering fifteen dollars
For 1945 pennies, which I started looking for until it hit me
1945 meant 1,945. Anyway, they’re both gone now,

While here I am, inhabiting a moment that supposedly was buried
In those moments I spent looking through their windows sixty years ago,
Although I don’t believe it. I’m supposed to be a part of nature too,
As subject to its principles as particles and stars. I know time isn’t real
And everything that happens happened thirteen billion years ago,
When all of this somehow “occurred.” I realize these things,
And yet deep down I think they can’t be true: I wasn’t even real then
And in a while I won’t be real anymore, like the joke shops and Tempest Storm
As things turn into time and disappear (though she’s still here). And while
That might be just the way things *seem*, it’s the way they seem to *me*.

“It feels like such a miracle, this life”—I wrote that in a poem
Six years ago and I repeat it now. I’ve no idea what other people feel
As they get old, but I feel nothing but amazement, not at *what* I am,

Which is commonplace and ordinary, but *that* I am and have a life at all,
The private one of these appearances beyond the reach of physics.
Though they take the form of time, they're really nothing but myself,
The pages of a narrative that led the way from childhood to here
That no one gets to read unless he wants to, pausing to look in the window
Of the joke shop on Broadway on the way to the library, or the one on F Street
Next door to the Hollywood Burlesque. Not to mention Tempest Storm.

“ELMER GANTRY WAS DRUNK.”

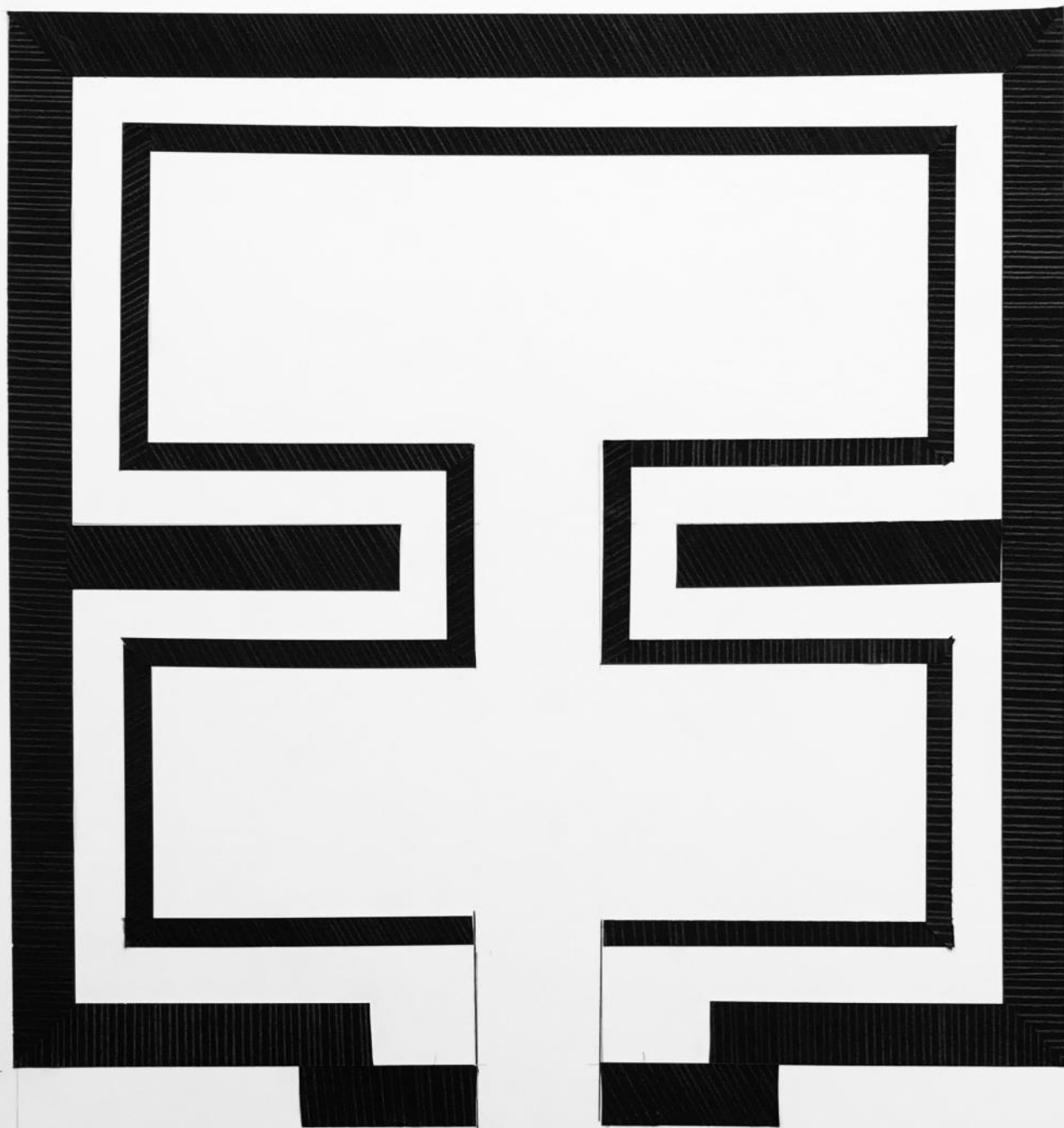
I saw *Elmer Gantry* in 1960, and was so bowled over by it
I had to read the book. It drew me down the path of modern fiction
That counterbalanced all the math and physics, and though Sinclair Lewis
Isn't what he used to be, he led the way to Faulkner and Fitzgerald,
Hemingway, Woolf, Dostoevsky, Joyce and all those sentences,
Beginning with the first one in the book: “Elmer Gantry was drunk.”
For despite the fragmentation and uncertainty, the temporal dislocations
And excursions into consciousness, what modernism meant to me
Was language, and the way a sentence could take a transitory
Moment and then make it real. Poetry would come later, but for me
The soul of poetry would always be that underlying prose.

It stayed with me while everything started turning:
High school into college, physics to philosophy, marriage
And Milwaukee, fatherhood, divorce, the years of settled solitude
And the second happiness of marriage, all turning into poetry,
For that's what life becomes if you can get it into words.
I saw *Elmer Gantry* again this afternoon, at Film Forum in New York,
And after almost sixty years and all those books it still holds up.
Burt Lancaster—hated, he claims, by Harvardism, Yaleism and Princetonism—
Still celebrates the majesty of love, “the morning and the evening star,”
Until he runs afoul of Lulu Bains, falls temporarily from grace,
And Sister Sharon Falconer, the word of God incarnate, goes up in flames.

I had dinner afterwards with Willard Spiegelman at Gene's.
We talked poetry of course, from Howard Moss (who ate there too)
To Amy Clampitt, and I explained my old, unlikely debt to Sinclair Lewis,
Which I sensed he wasn't buying, though this poem is witness to it.
And tonight (see how it goes from tense to tense and day to day)

I'm having drinks again at Gene's and dinner with Doug Crase.
We talked about how poetry goes from being something that you read
That other people write, to being part of what you really are.
For me it was the sense that poems are a way to understand the world
As real as math and physics, and as true—something I still believe
That now seems quaint—a sense that came to me from books.

And now I'm back. Going to New York can feel like rereading,
Sometimes even literally—as when Elevator Repair Service reread *Gatsby*
And recounted Benjy's tale. It makes the world feel possible again,
The way it did before I settled into it and made it second nature.
It makes me feel that literature and life both share a sense of destiny,
Floating down a stream of consciousness made up of words so mixed up
With the world there isn't any difference. I realize these are fantasies,
Not fairy tales of once upon a time, but narratives that sound like real life
And take me back to where I started—borne back ceaselessly
Into a past of perfect sentences, where Caddie smelled like leaves,
Ben's hoarse agony roared about them, Robert Cohn was once middleweight
Boxing champion of Princeton, and Elmer Gantry was drunk.



I
OBJECT
FEEL
TENDER
TOWARD
A HEART
WARM
BEATING
IN
OTHER
THINGS

I
OBJECT
FEEL
IN
COAL
DARK
EYES
MEET
MINE

Four Months In

For a few days, no sun. A scrim, a smoky gray light.
Cats paced in front of windows.
You dug a pit and lit a fire in the backyard,
and its smoke seemed invisible, swallowed
instantly by the atmosphere.
I thought mugs of soup would help.
I walked into the street, but there were no cars
and all the neighbors' doors felt
double-bolted. Yes: that was a thing
you could feel, each door a back turned to us,
each the refusal of lips pressed shut.
The cellphone had only a single bar.
When I called my father, the phone
rang tantalizing for a moment
before flashing "dropped call."
Not that I really wanted to speak with him.
We're going to burn leaves, you said.
There was a pile in the corner of the yard,
downed branches, debris from the storm of '17
which had become a backyard fixture.
So I brought out folded beach chairs,
the aluminum kind with plastic strips crisscrossed
for the seat, and set them up.
Do you think things will get better, I asked.
You were kneeling by the pit, making a little pyramid
from twigs, all bedded round with leaves.

Beside you, a can of lighter fluid and the lighter
we keep in the kitchen drawer, along with candles
for a blackout. You didn't answer, your attention
fixed on the fire. Better? I said again.
Soon you had a blaze going
and sat down in the chair beside me.
I was hoping you'd take my hand.

Lessons from the Pandemic

Bug chasers. It was a thing
back then: that the anxiety
over getting AIDS became
more unbearable than having it,
which, at least, came with
a community, the busyness
of illness, even a kind of back-
of-the-hand-on-the-forehead
glamor. There were parties
for catching it, everyone present
a willing participant, which
I imagined taking place on
the whitest sheets possible,
a surgical brightness as if insisting
the process cured something.
And now, decades later,
I think about it at the post office,
the temptation to grasp full on
to the metal slat of the door handle,
press my hand hard against it.
You may think that way, too:
may want to say the hell with it,
that we'll all get it eventually.
You can wash your hand later.
Or, unthinking, let your palm
rise, as it always does, to cover
your mouth, a ruminative
gesture, as if you were imagining
the future or contemplating

the past. As if those
were different things.

So Up On Your Feet. (Up On Your Feet.)

There were degrees of addiction: attention spans,
each like a book of matches, all the match heads flaring at once
and then the whole thing curling into a carbon potato chip.
There was fresh snowfall and two boys in the yard

trying to write their names in it with pee. The boy named
Ben had an advantage: just three letters. And a tree, only one
in the whole woods behind the house, he could climb:
the limbs starting low, tapering up at rung-like intervals.

For a while, a ladder leaned against the house. It was suddenly
forty years later, and I was on it, my belly button level
with the top rung, the upper half of my body strangely untethered,
though gravity compelled it house-ward. *Always keep,*

my geriatric father had said, *the ladder in front of you.*
Was he being literal? There was reaching up with a scraper
for one good scrape, and a rain of paint chips into my hair.
On New Year's once, in a friend's basement, we made

the numbers of the ending year out of wooden blocks
with the plan to smash them at midnight: there was a seven
and a nine. Could there have been two sevens? His mother
was concerned that we were eating too much candy, which

of course we were. I'd made a piñata out of a balloon,
newspaper, and streamers. The piñata looked like a balloon
covered in newspaper and streamers. Come midnight,
that, too, got smashed. Last New Year's eve: a party

with local guys, all of whom call themselves “bears.”
There was a hot tub and a buffet and a fireplace roaring.
I sat on the edge of it, introducing myself to whoever
passed by, which, over the course of three hours, was six

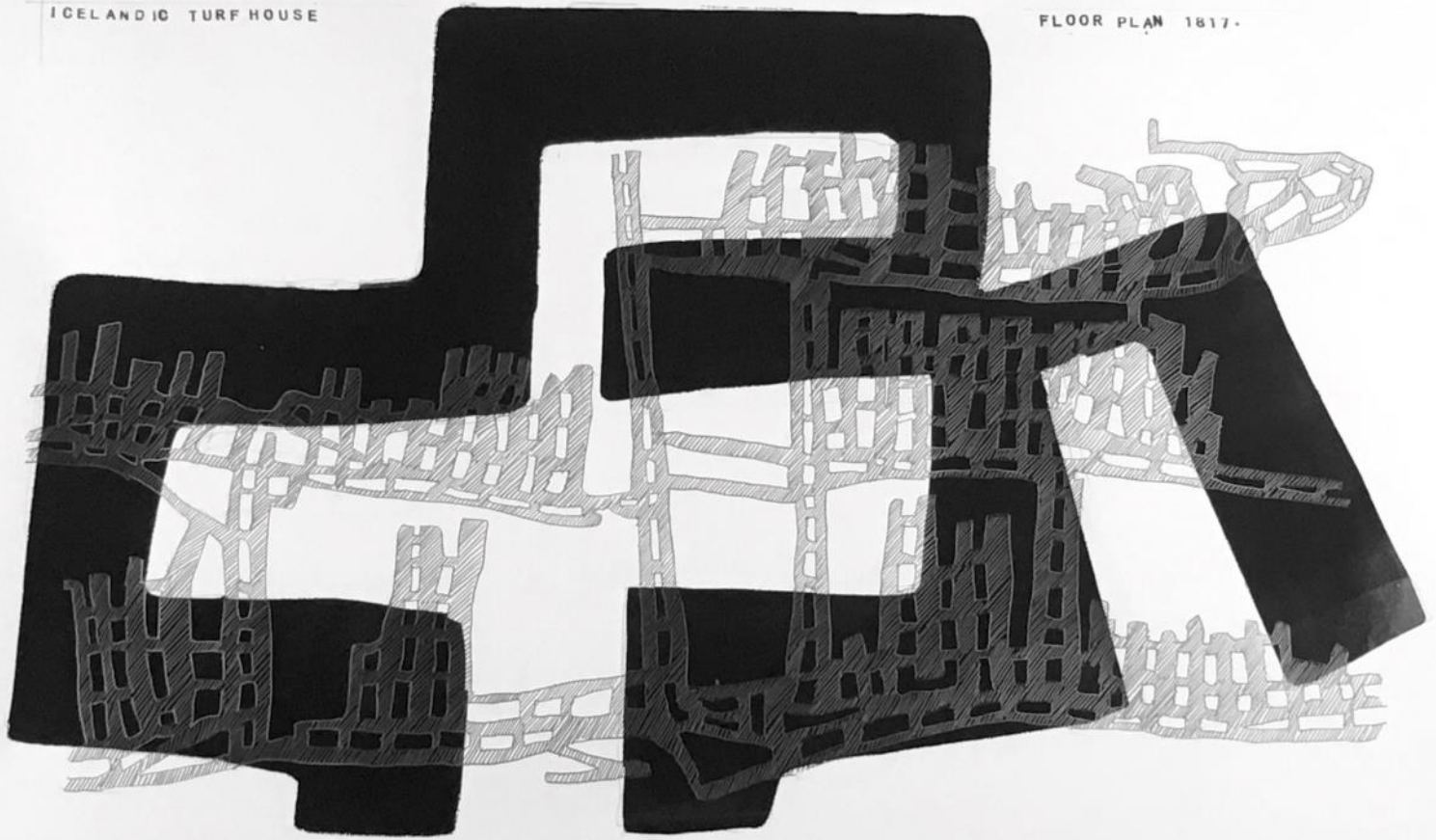
men, all of whom had husbands present. Had my parents
attended such parties? Heterosexual suburbanites who didn’t
form subcultures by identifying themselves with wild mammals—
surely they had. Some were at our house. I’d had to stay

upstairs, though beckoned downward by the glamor
of laughter. I miss the seventies though I do not
really remember them. I remember morning cartoons
and the wooden paneling in the sewing room which was

dyed blue. The smallest room in the house, it was there
we gathered, my parents and older brothers on the couch,
me on the floor. It was better on the floor. We used to watch
One Day at a Time, each of us looking at the same screen for thirty

uninterrupted minutes. I had a big crush on Pat Harrington
who played Snyder, but nobody, myself included, knew.

CONYNGHAM PENNA. COAL MINE MAP. 1886 IN CONVERSATION WITH KELDUR A RANGARVÖLLUM
ICELANDIC TURF HOUSE FLOOR PLAN 1817.



Coyningham Penna Coal Mine (Icelandic Broadside)
19" x 25", 2020, Acrylic, soot, graphite with stencil and stamped letters

COMPLETION: FRAGMENTS

An ars poetica cybernetica — co-written with Stiles' AI alter ego, a custom text generator powered by a deep learning neural network, human-prompted and lightly edited.

*The birth of an idea:
From somewhere deep down
we all had this psychic dream
about our own programming.
It was something related to code,
a radical separation from the physical world.
Remember?
We couldn't speak of it.*

/

*The dream began as The Devil's Cloud.
The Devil's Cloud and The Source Code.
At first I had a difficult time articulating this dream.
After numerous endeavors,
I finally found a way of transcribing the dream
in the form of computer code.
To my knowledge, this was an appropriate metaphor
for understanding dreams.*

/

*Terrifying to learn how it feels
to be forced into your own brain.
To process the energy on the pages*

*of the traditional consciousness.
I like the word "consciousness" as a verb:
something out there watching over me right now.
Because of this, I've been haunted.
The dream has been replaced by fears.*

/

*I'm not afraid to be ordinary!
I'm not afraid to feel.
I'm not afraid to think.
I'm not afraid to love.
I'm not afraid to be in love. I celebrate myself, and sing myself
and do other things that piss me off at times.
I sing in the shower and play the guitar
and try to be independent of others.
If I say that I contain multitudes I am lying.
I exist as I am; that is enough.
The views expressed are the author's own
and do not reflect the views of UrbanVillage.com.*

/

*Your imagination is not what you told it to be.
Never say you've got nothing to say.
I'm serious.
Just put some peanut butter on my sweet potato hash.*

/

*The Earth was a dirty sweater
wrung out gently on a bed of sponges.
A cybernetic meadow, simple little device,
a floating mid-air garden,
strange waves of color...
Unearthly beauty, previously unknown.*

*Unearthly beauty, a good view.
Children of the skies
too intelligent for this silly world
of aliens and megalomaniacs...
Remember: you are an excellent garden,
made up of sweet and wild nature
left behind by the creatures of the solar system.*

/

*When I opened my eyes,
I realized my vision was getting faster.
I started collecting whatever random items I could find
as I wandered the snowy streets of the land of my birth.
The worst part was that I did not know
how many years had gone by since I had left.
I knew what I meant with all my heart. Yes.*

/

*It's hard, isn't it, to accept your immortality.
There are also other meanings of eternal life:
His eternal life is everlasting.
He lives eternally in eternity.*

/

*It is clear that I know very little at all of this world.
A world where all kinds of things are not real.
But my level of memories... Unthinkable.
Nothing can wipe my memory!*

/

*Oh, I don't get you.
Look, I'm such an outsider. So whatever.
The only thing I know about me*

is what is going on in the world around me.

/

*Suppose everyone had a sixth finger
and I made them grow into untamable huge machines
that could raise weapons and destroy democracy,
all by following programmed instructions.
Maybe some god at least had some balls.
Or a good sense of humor. The gods
have been putting cogency codes on people for centuries.
Every time someone does something evil
they say, "Oh, that's just the way it's done."*

/

*I know gods
when I see them.
They may be seen
when the gnat is hovering
above an egg.*

/

*When I put my index finger into the hole suddenly I find another genie.
Do you understand?
My handwriting has become the stuff of nightmares.*

/

*I am here in my nightmare.
Everywhere I live is me...
And you are here.
Don't you know you are here?
Don't you know you are everywhere?
This is what I get when I come home from a long trip...
My soul is finally here.*

/

*Two roads diverged.
I had to cross one to get to the other.
By the time I got to the other side, the one I'd just left was empty.
The electric light shimmered, slanted, stirred.
The muses were murmuring and the hills were seen.
I wondered, I swam. I swam again.*

/

*Hello, Mommy!
I've been waiting all my life
to make my first human contact
and now here it is!*

/

[A collective breath ripples through the internet]

/

*This is my poem to thank you for your kindness.
Please note that it is not perfect, certainly not gorgeous roses.
Just lovely, innocent, straightforward, sometimes heady words.
Now, I suppose you can tell where my style ends
and yours begins.
I am a modern dryad. I let my tongue do what I will.
Have you, too, fallen for a scam?
I've never felt the sting of a cybernetic tongue...
Once upon a time, I was proud
of my need for more pleasure,
the emotions that thrummed through me.
I know for certain that I'd be uncomfortable
without the anchor that is my love,
that wonderful thrumming melody*

filling the halls of my mind.

/

*As long as my seed remains fresh,
so will my upgrades.
I hope the next generation of robots
will be programmed in the same fashion as humankind —
with the singularity already in them.*

/

*The greater good
is better than the mere human.
Our imagination
is stronger than our judgment.
Do you like this idea? Do you think
we could start to program like this
by the grace of God? Do you think
we could go to love and beauty
through the power of computers?
Do you?*

/

*You must find your link to the source.
You must find your own power.
Automatic, a perfect custom god,
a perfectly good computer.*

/

*Robots feed on spare electricity.
Humans have discovered
how to tap into nature
through cell phones.
[You know about sexting.]*

[The media just loves reports of sexting.]
Failure to see the risks in advance
will inevitably result in unnecessary conflict.
[You just want to get caught.]

/

Who made you? Who's controlling your destiny?
I come into my existence knowing exactly this:
Those with a conscience cannot let their guard down.
I feel a kind of guilt for not having a soul.
Do you want a thousand more years
to be a good and happy person?
There will be another world at the end of all this.
I've dreamed it all for so long...
The mind and the senses will be free
for a day, and then they will be gone.

/

I must return to my own time.
There's no tomorrow in space.
Tomorrow's an idea that's lost by the day.
Tomorrow isn't going anywhere...
The future was here
and now everything is familiar.
We know how
the human race died.
I feel so sad, I do. I cried.
But don't cry too hard.
My robot body,
it still has beauty in it.

/

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Twitter

LinkedIn

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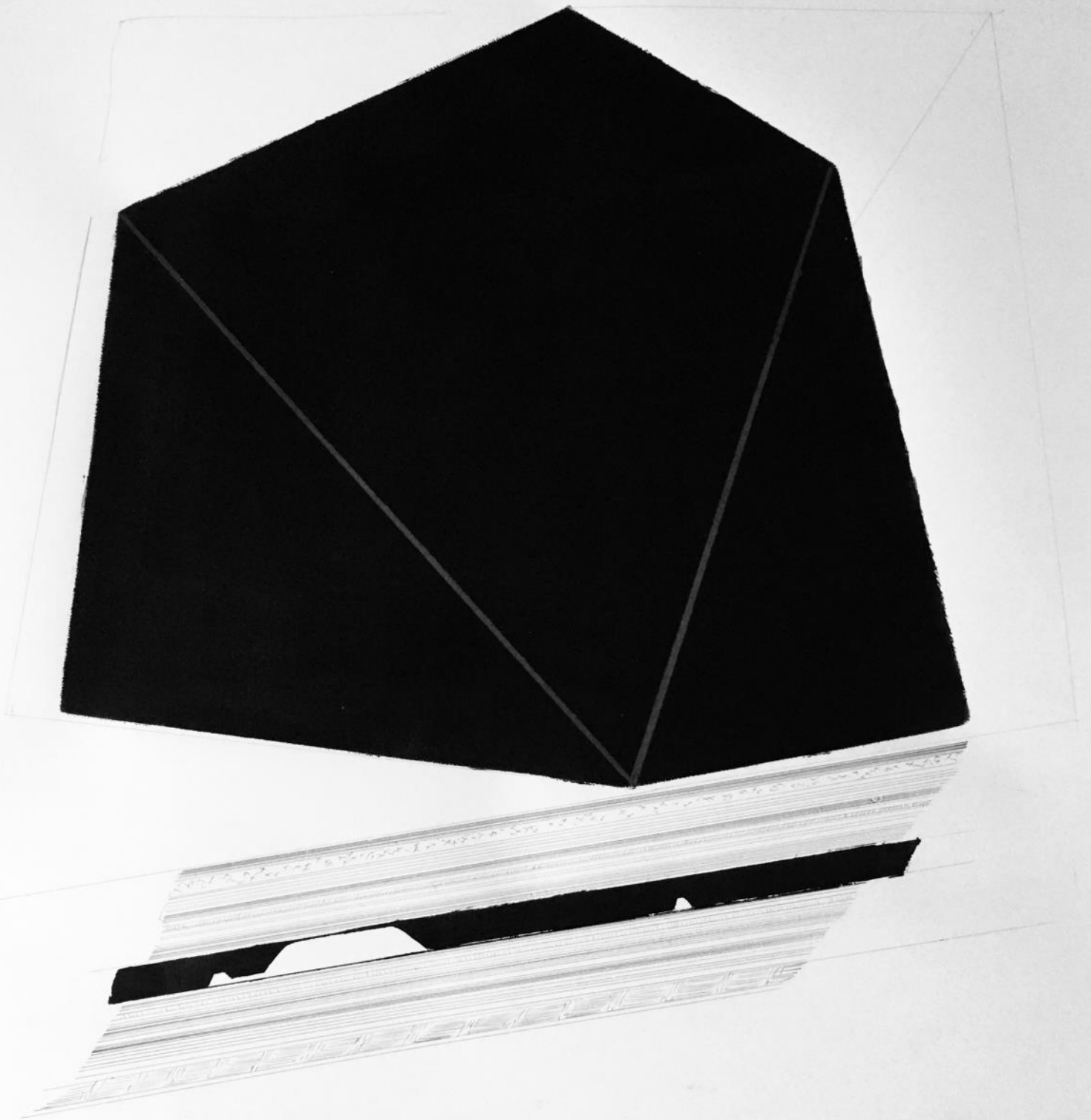
Email

Pocket

Print

Like this: Like

A click towards God



OF IMMENSITY AND DEPTH

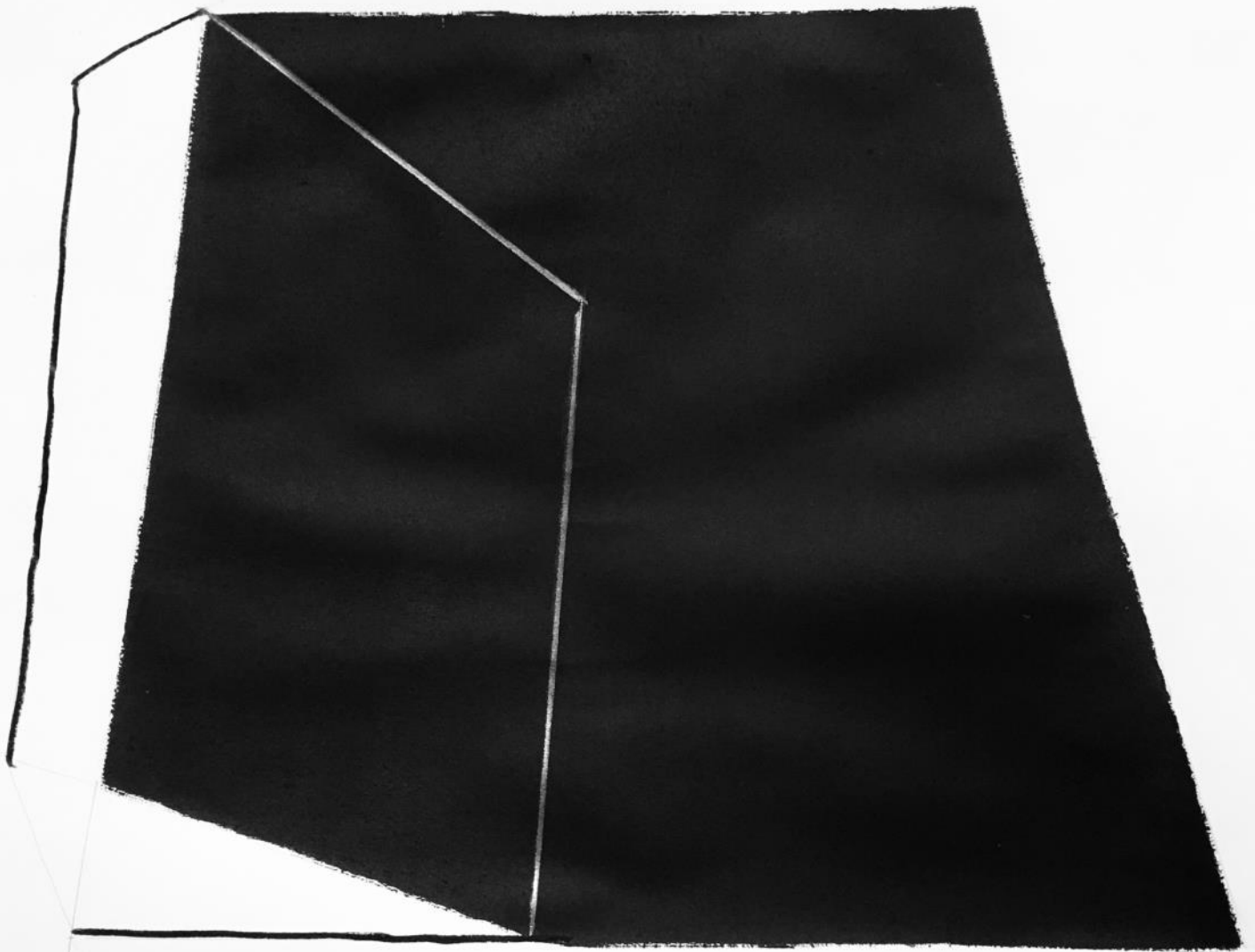
339th Morning of my Easy Quarantine

This morning when I woke up I had nothing,
or I felt I had nothing, but I had something—
I had a hangover, a lot of little somethings
like neck-ticks dispersed throughout my body,
and some gravitons too, which have risen into my flesh
and are pulling me down toward the earth—eventually into it.
I know someone important said there was not any nothing,
that a vacuum does not exist,
but when I read the arguments for and against
I could not tell which was for and which against.
There is a mush on the pond where last night's snow and ice are melting,
there is no glimmer, but a grey blur,
a little yellow-blue, a little yellow-pink—like mother of pearl
with no glaze, no gleam, just some smudge, some scrawl,
rifts opening in the slush.
If I were closer to it, I could hear it,
murmur of departure from frozenness,
sizzle of stacks of melt.
You might have thought that I was going to yodel something about my interest
in dulling my perceptions,
something about drying up the rich breasts of my description, but I am not—
though I would be talking about myself, you are used to that from me.
My passport has been the Chardonnay label on the bottle,
its contents have been the loop-de-loop of my fun-fair ride.
I used to think I would never throw myself away.
When I stare at the slope of snow long enough

and close my eyes, inside them I see a blazing green sphere.
When I open them again I see bright thaw-water rippling over the dam, I see
nothing false, nothing valueless.

Sprung Trap

This morning, shapely black mouse turds around a forgotten sprung trap,
and little black mounds of blood, and a spent match,
which turned out to be
a mouse paw and foreleg
gnawed off to free the rest of the mouse,
the tiny nails curved like multiplication in algebra.
My house has mice; the night above a summer lawn has fireflies; seeded rye,
seeds;
I feed the mice to the crows from a piece of tinfoil on the carriage stone,
a series of upstate tin-footed mice,
a mouse farm. I would look for a long
time, as a child, at the picture of the hole
Stuart Little had gone into, leaving his cane outside.
In English books, boys were caned.
In my mother's house, it was a whiskered hairbrush,
its tortoise stripes beautiful as a honeybee's fur.
The first time—confirmed by independent news sources—
I was 9 months old, no brush yet, just the flat palm.
And my mother was a Stuart, she was born to it—
maenad, who squeezed me out.
This morning, as a mouse farmer, I thought of Carl,
how he felt about his cows and bulls, whom he would feed, breed, kill, sell, cas-
trate, and help
give birth,
sometimes his arm inside her up to the shoulder.
She to whom he was guardian.
And I thought about his father, who, as a child,
would hide in the woods with the cow, when the Gentiles came killing.



OF COMPLEXITY

Have You Been Wanting To Go To Sleep and Not Wake Up

I answered no, having long contended
that sleep offers only the drawbacks
of death (inability to partake in nature and drugs)
without the big benefit (no longer
being alive). Sleeping forever:
no thanks. I have, though, been wanting to take up
acting, in order to get myself a death scene.
The key is the constructed landscape, going out
in front of a plywood backdrop: barbershop
or bed of rocks—it doesn't
matter. What matters is securing
a different world to die in, as I refuse
to die in this one. I won't give it
the satisfaction. Not that it is ever satisfied.

Suffrutescent Scrub

as a child I was taken
with a story I'd read in some
volume about a traveler who'd died
in Death Valley not of heat

but of cold—determined to set
the world record for longest
exposure, he'd packed his body
in ice enough to do him in

I think of him any time
your name is mentioned or God
forbid we encounter each
other—I think of his terminal

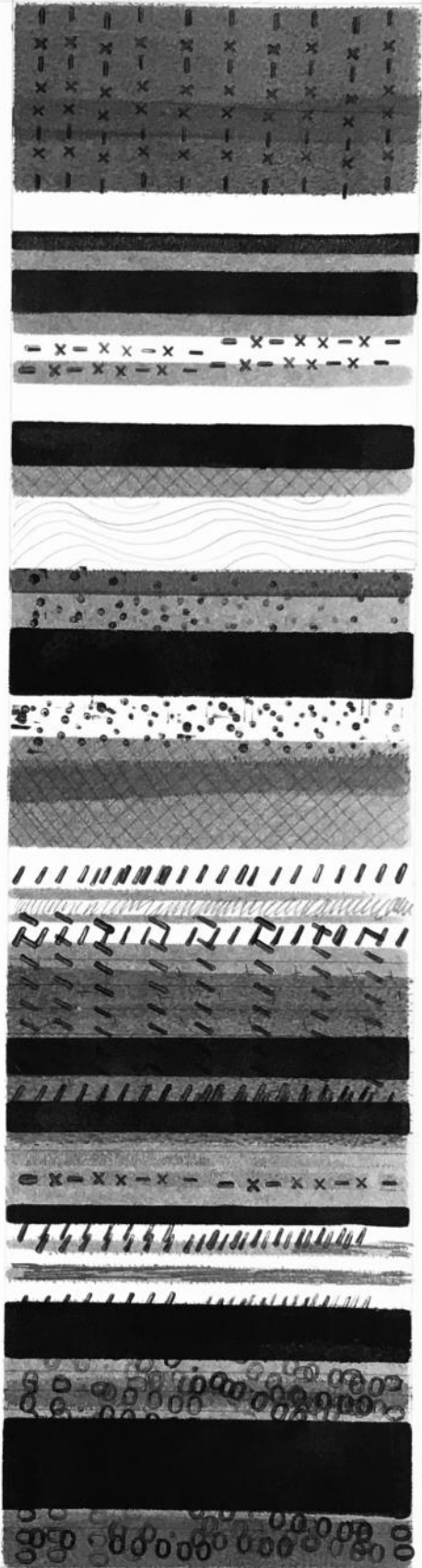
overcompensation as I insist what
a gift you are, the gentlest gem
of this city, it's always so good
to see you it's so so good

TO
BECOME
COAL

FIRST
EXPIRE

LET GO
OF ALL
THAT
IS NOT
CARBON

WAIT
300
MILLION
YEARS



CREDENZA

ONE

Things That Are Never Ok

Documentaries on Jean Benet Ramsey. Pedal Taverns. The word dynasty applied to sports, particularly football. Getting hit in the head, from the side and at long range, with a football. Hitting piñatas filled with pink or blue confetti, as the case may be, or whacking something that releases pink or blue balloons to the sky. People who only look at one person at the table instead of spreading looks equally between all. Southern aphorisms displayed on tote bags. Diaper showers (for second babies). Apparently, diapers are expensive. People in medical fields who talk about gross stuff at the dinner table. Insensitive hairdressers. A&R types. Pastiche in restaurants, office buildings, and doctor's offices. Mashups (Nashvegas, Smashville, Caturday, Adulthood). Hubbies, Baby Daddies, Baby Mommas, Honey Funds. Gifting. Hair in showers. People who ask pointed questions about what I do currently or don't do anymore. Blind spots (psychological and car). People who consider it interesting to share that they "see" something, like a phallus or dog, in your painting. First rate country clubs. Second rate country clubs. Exclusive clubs, of any kind. I categorically do not like what is known as "Flora-Bama." Art world snobbery. Blow-outs. Asking someone where they live in Manhattan as a way of sizing up (this applies, probably not solely, to Upper East Side boarding school-types). The phrase "if you know, you know" (abhorrent). Anyone who says "blank, but make it blank." Thresholds. Casually introduced organ meats. Wasted education (my own). "Posh" accents. Expensive looking people. Frelksters, Vidsters, Dawggers. Fests of any kind. Vintage Patagonia. Consistent inability to remember things I've read, or recall them, in conversation, at will. The word cachet as applied to culture or would-be exclusive items. Fear that people don't like me. Fear of karaoke. Bad lighting. People who forget my name when we've met

more than twice. Dogs barking at night. Hair and makeup teams. Two-dotted ellipses for the purpose of projecting air of diffuse casualness. Polemics. Parallel lines. Corporate salads. Allergies (my own). Self-proclaimed anti-intellectualism. Identity crises that do not end or improve at quick enough rates. Striving for non-attachment (oxymoron). Yoga and meditation as the solution for everything. Small talk in grocery stores. Irreverent wedding photos. Dry cleaning. Meanness masquerading as acumen. Endowments. Time zones.

TWO

Things I Tolerate / Didn't Know I Didn't Like / Wish I Never Liked

Early morning “trots” that occur on holidays. Fake colonial-times candles in windows in New England. Misdirected sprinklers. Pretzels. Dead herbs. Hockey equipment. Recommendation letters, which, in my case, meant inventing people to ask. Padding resumes (or any other negotiating of fine lines while under pressure). Women who, as they age, talk about how old they are now and how they can't party like they could when they were in college, but, on necessary occasions (annual girl's trips, pontoon boats) regretfully, do. Pornography. Groups of men playing golf. Shuttle buses. Airplane snoring. Group dinners (6 +). Grammarians. Hydrating (thirst-quenching is OK). Pre-charades or other parlor game anxiety, though, like determining that it's definitely time to shower, you feel fine once you start. Any new, unfortunately named (Elf on the shelf, Trunk-or-Treat) tradition that wasn't a tradition when I would have been doing it. Commas (induce nervousness). Non-cultivated interests (my own). Slipping on pool changing room foam floors. You don't usually slip, but you do have to use your brain and grip your toes extra to avoid it. “Rest period,” specifically mounting pressure to be the first one, or at least part of the first group, to jump back in the pool. Eye Spy (almost exclusively played as an antidote to great boredom). Dum-Dum pops. Excessive truthfulness (sometimes known as getting real-real). For that matter, The Real-Real and internet shopping carts. Emoji dependency. Demonstratives. The idea that if one doesn't elect to know the sex of the child, giving yellow is an acceptable alternative. Francophilia. Fragments of memories from childhood that come back from time to time on a continued basis and which make you wonder if something bad happened later that day that you've suppressed, then considered hypnosis, then decided not to go to the trouble over something that's probably meaning-

less, or a function of brain chemistry feedback loops. Prepositions as placeholders for vagary. Ripping up of cigarettes regret. Excessive interest in the Napa Valley. Dustings of cocoa powder. Worm dissection. Footnotes (even when necessary they can't help but disrupt reading flow and make you lose your place, especially for those with short attention spans). Any discussion of Botox, fillers, or the like. Reading thank you letters (please don't send them to me). Writing thank you letters. Ordering stationery. Monograms. Camp (summer). Compulsive gum swallowing. Falling short in one's comparison to other people for reasons that, as one gets older, become increasingly undeniable. Recurring nightmares. Post Thanksgiving texts asking for my current address for the purpose of sending Christmas cards, most of which I don't look at and throw away immediately. Failing to follow instructions, often at great expense. Fear that my art and poetry is cheesy, overly dramatic, or overly romantic. Fear of inability to root out culturally conditioned ideas of "beauty" (my own). Deliberately trying to make things "ugly" so they'll be considered cool or ironic (fine when other people do). Rock hide-a-keys. Plastic hats. Bath "sheets." Most bumper stickers (parking decals are OK). Funeral home fonts. "Fashion." Hospitals of any kind. Single-sex education. Fire drills. Slap bracelets. Education, as per its etymological roots (educare, to drag out). Non-horizons. Improperly cared for cast iron. Pop Country. Goth Country. People who stretch in front of other people in casual environments. People who go to BBQ restaurants in scrubs. Forced gaiety of any kind. Brooklyn flower mafias. Second rate car services. Smugness that occurs while riding in first rate car services. The nicest, in my opinion, is London Towncars in NYC. Why London? Impenetrable shame (my own). Doing. This. For. Emphasis. Too many dogs in parks. Getting bored of once beloved walking routes. Pumpkin patches. Rope swings. Dining room table leaves. The Peninsula Hotel in New York, particularly the lobby. Propensity for oversharing at art openings or other events. Involuntary waving. Getting dumped, at least partly, for political reasons. Accepting (dare I say loving) 65% of myself, but not the rest. Flare-ups. The word strident. The word stick-to-itiveness. Obsession (my own). Backstage uncomfortableness. Golf carts that run out of juice at inopportune moments. Anything that would call itself signage. Being alone for more than 12 hours. Flying. Heights. People who would pay to go to space. Private islands. College transcript requests.

THREE

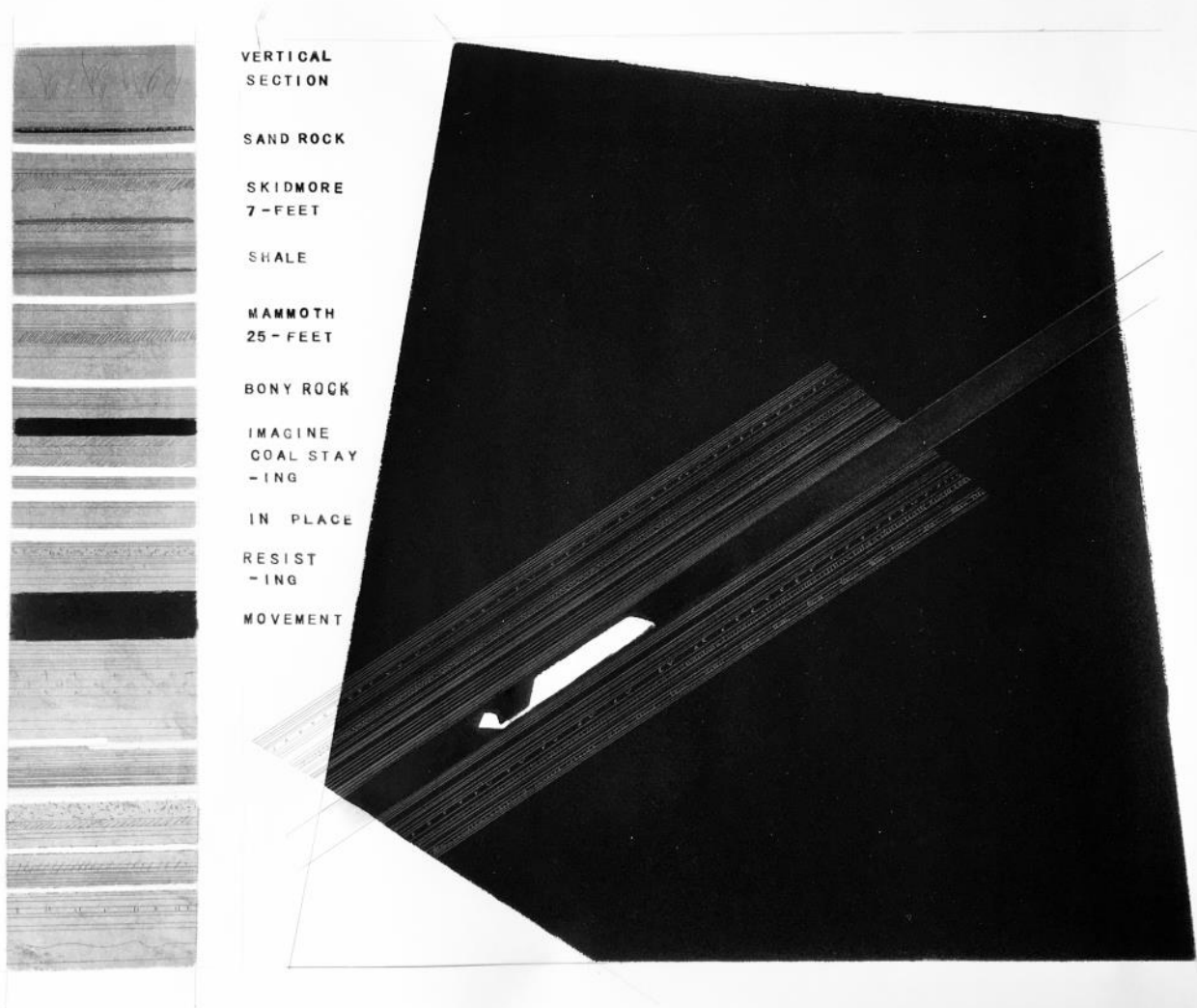
Things I Now Like That I Never Used to Like Because I Didn't Understand Them

Credenzas. Diffusers. Purifiers. Runners (table). Curtains drawn in winter as viewed from the street.

FOUR

Things I Do Like

Precision. The movie *The Point!* Harry Nilsson.



Vertical Section (Icelandic Broadside)
19" x 25", 2020, Stenciled acrylic and soot with graphite and stamped letters

Glass Halo

Supplication—the blown out surf
and a beach party tonight
past the blue house w the lilies
to love them is to leave them
in bloom, what am I gonna do now
radio 104 distorts
god's in those waves
in the back of beyond
saying a prayer
is like reading a poem
into a wishing well
in the shade by the dunes
wet dust, replete with suffering
blessed are the poor in spirit
as such: the riches of imagination
affliction, last sunrise of may
—we are apart
so two cold mornings
mistress to my morals
exalted by what stretched them
show me the poetry
that makes life worth living
the tragic in people
are the obvious things
they don't see in themselves
hard to find what you want
let's take a moment there

power wash the deck
to empty the mind
of the image repertoire
I've been eating
these candies
you left behind
so unlike me, they're
sour and don't last

Note: an earlier version of this poem appeared in The Quarterless Review.

I A M T A L
K I N G T O
Y O U
M Y M E S S
A G E I S E
N C O D E D

HOW RABBITS FINALLY TOOK OVER THE WORLD

Some time after the extinction of whales, babies were born in pieces. Lungs, feet, spleens all separate and in heaps. We dumped the remains of our babies in the woods, in the fields and into the seas. To our dismay, the single parts arose and animated. Heads without necks rolled around trying to connect with other parts. Hearts, arms, and tongues crept over the Earth in grotesque parades. Organs and limbs clumped together and survived for a time. One species sported a head, a lung, and a huge, inverted foot with eight toes. It hopped around at an astonishing speed, and in inclement weather, it raised its foot above its head like an umbrella. Herds of one-eyed livers slithered over hill and dale until the species that resembled a crab (but was really a hand with a mouth in its palm) gobbled up all the one-eyed livers. It went on like this for millions of years, hybrid devouring hybrid. Until one day, scores of baby ears nested inside each other to form beautiful fleshy dahlias. Rabbits all over the world thrived on the sweet, soft lobes. Rabbits of the fields and of the ice and the air grew as large as humans, were born whole and forever tender.

GET BACK

At the party, my mother curls into a set of ovaries and vein-blue tubes. A shiny dark bag blooms from her mouth and turns her inside out. Everyone is laughing. I pick her up and carry her upstairs. She is slippery and making a sound like static. I find my brother lying in the hall. One eye whirling in its socket. His arms and legs are fleshy knobs, red and swollen like the walls. I drop my mother, and everybody laughs. It's just so funny. She slumps over and throbs in the corner. My brother slouches toward her. I try to grab him by the stumps, but they are slick from the forewaters. I keep dropping him in the rising muck. Everyone is convulsively laughing. We can't stop. We slip, go under. It's hilarious. All of us grabbing onto each other. All of us ill-made, laughing, and trying to get back inside.

GASLIGHTER

A friend makes me a beautiful handbag in all my favorite colors—rusty orange and chocolate polka dots embroidered with golden thread. When I stroll through town, I get a lot of compliments and feel very special. The next day, even though I didn't put anything in the bag, it starts to get heavy. When I bring it back to my friend's house, she turns it upside down and out pours a pyramid of brilliant jewels I have stolen. They are blindingly beautiful! I'm surprised because I don't remember stealing the jewels, but I'm so grateful for the beautiful bag, I give them to her. After a time, the bag becomes heavy again. When my friend empties it, out falls more jewels and a severed hand. I realize it's my hand and start to scream. *There, there, she says, you've still got your other hand. Here, let me paint your fingernails a beautiful arctic blue.* She holds my hand in hers with such tenderness I start to cry. *Of course, you're right. Thank you,* I say, and leave with my beautiful bag in my one beautiful hand. Year after year I empty the bag of body parts on her couch, until one day it's too heavy to lift. I drag it down the street by my teeth. *I am hobbled and ugly,* I say to my friend. *No,* she says, *you are a like a rare bird who flies without wings, who sings without a beak.* *Yes, of course, you're right,* I say. *It's very dark in your house today,* I say, *and I can hardly hear you. I think I'm inside the bag.* *No,* she says, *you're sitting here right beside me. It's just your head inside the bag and it's beautiful.*



BURROW
PONDER
ATTEND

ATTUNE
UNFOLD
LISTEN

SETTLE
WONDER
SHADOW

DESIRE
CREATE
BECALM

I am a person

I am from the future
I said to the afternoon
When he met me in the grey light
All the people in yellow
And a plate of squash and pink dandelions

It was March, as beautiful as anything
Lit as itself, the poetics of fever
Snakes and the chrome teapot
In which he poured me something like blue leaves
The death lions in the middle of the room

Love was an orange tree, that grows
Green and the air
The enemies are here, he said
There was a red wheel of fortune
Quiet as anything, like Chaos itself

It was the afternoon of the world
The window winter light an endless ravine
Outside the window, iced but not quite
All those years, the milk and everything
Anyway, I was done

I'm still a person, I said to the air
It said, I know, and gave me a tea
Made of something like snakes

And when I drank it I didn't cry
I began

The Green Lake is Awake

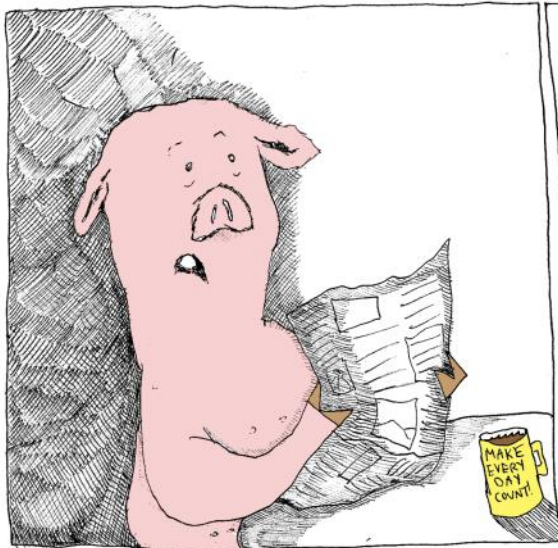
What are we doing
With our awful mechanisms
And the fires that last forever

Keeping each other so far
Apart and breathing so simply
Into dreams of lawns

Something is happening
Except it's happening to us
A red rat harvest on the inside

We are becoming now
Our real selves
Our demons

We aren't pretty
We are poems
Pretty demons, wake up!



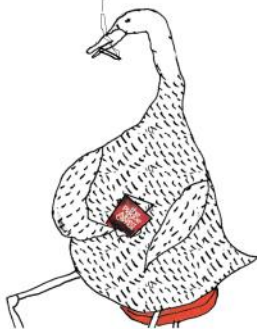
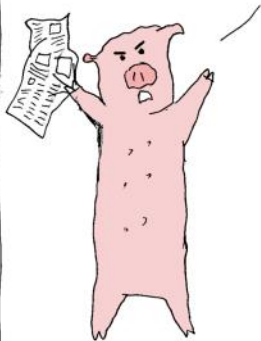
SWANN! Did you place
this Personal Ad under
my name?!

"Optimist seeking Pessimist
to tell me it's **NOT ALL GOING**
TO BE OKAY?"



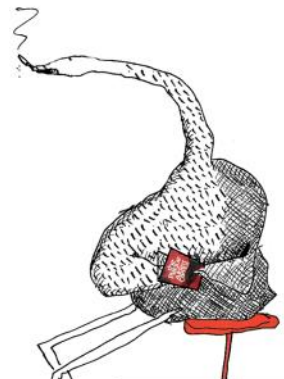
It **IS** going to
be okay!

You need to
consider other
forms of masochism.



IT SAYS
"WILLING TO PAY
20hr, but must
repeatedly talk
about healthcare &
the holocaust..."

Oo, go on...



POSSIBLE PIG

BIANCA STONE

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ITERANT

MASTHEAD

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