

Men In Various States:
Poems and Microfictions

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Abstract

This thesis is a three part lyrical inquiry into the nature of language and desire. The first part, “Men in Various States,” is a text that leaps from voice to voice, place to place, genre to genre, mimicking the vivid, living, sporadic dance of desire. These multiple genres are to reflect the kaleidoscopic incarnations of Eros as it passes through different personalities and neuroses. The series is a chorus of men, all in various states of confusion about love. By generating many questions and answering none, a unity or conclusion is reached in that each man, though vastly disparate, is but a different face on the ten-thousand-sided-dice of the same drive.

Writing from a male perspective is a more pragmatic rather than political choice as it provides a cognitive distance needed to write about a familiar topic. More importantly I intend to show that desire manifests itself completely, often hideously, randomly, and regardless of gender, thus I both inflate and defy male stereotypes.

The second part of the thesis is an exercise in paradox: I use language to discuss the act of breaking free of language, breaking free of desire, since language is desire. The third section accepts that one may never be free of language but asserts that one may certainly make its borders and its meanings moveable. An experiment in hybridity and versatility of voice, these texts stutter around the slipperiness of language and the transience of desire.

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*"I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you
something more than you ...I mutilate you."*

– Jacques Lacan, Seminar XI

MEN IN VARIOUS STATES

*"I'll lie down and take you in my arms. I'll roll with you in the midst of great secrets.
We'll lose ourselves, and find ourselves again. Nothing will come between us any more.
How unfortunate that you won't be present for this happiness!"*

– Maurice Blanchot

I.

Month 1.

Julia is creative.

A true artist.

Every man she's wounded,

She's wounded in a new way.

Month 2.

It's been one of those days, today. A variation of every day and on this particular day I sit on the toilet in the arts building, working on easing a runny shit out of my stomach made murky by a strange sandwich and two cups of black coffee and I'm sitting there feeling tired even though the day has only begun, thinking, not thinking, just feeling how sad I am, how deeply sad and jealous and angry and full of hate and how tired I am from my own mind looping looping looping like a sick fly at a windowsill and I think about the dude painting the mural downstairs, how good it is, how handsome he is, how *already* balding I am, how flabby I am, how Julia probably dreams of being with him if she is not yet with him, how he's the good I'll never be, how my mind is bent and perverse by being abandoned by Julia, my best friend, and WHAT and WHO can I believe in after that when the automatic industrial powered toilet begins flushing because I shifted around a little, so I have to stand up with my pants down, unwiped, so the toilet will not suck my organs out of my asshole, then I sit back down and feel like weeping, and I think I better move in with my parents for a year, I better wave the flag of defeat because I am an exposed nervous system giving off sparks, I want to cry all the time, I use all my strength to get out of bed and the only thing I look forward to is getting back in, and I've loved too much, too thick, and this is how it feels, all very indulgent and you're probably thinking Get a Grip Buddy, and that actually feels good because you are confirming that I am a piece of shit and whatever I have no shame.

Month 3.

I have visions about doing things I would not actually do. Things that you are taught not to do, definitely not to do. For example I imagine punching her so that her nose bleeds but is not broken, throwing her to the ground, kicking her thigh but not her stomach because that is violent, pulling her hair, straddling her and slapping her repeatedly across the face with a fly swatter. As she lies there crying, I tell her, '*I am doing this because I feel really bad.*'

II.

I am the sort of man women say they love
but never recognize when they meet me
and even if they did recognize me
they wouldn't recognize me.

Because the fact is, I am the sort of man
women say they love but would never
recognize when they meet me because
they want to "want to" meet me,
not actually meet me.

For if they met me, the sort of man
women say they love, they wouldn't
love me, for I am precisely the man
that they say they love and do
not actually love.

I am the sort of man who endures
the sensitivity of his feelings
with disdain.

Since I am the sort of man women say they love
but never recognize when they meet me
then I am just a man with potential
for being loved, and not the sort of man
who is loved.

Any wide space of ground is the potential
site of a palace but there is no palace
until the palace is built
to be loved consists in being loved
not having the potential
for being loved.

So if I am to be a man women actually love
rather than the sort of man women say
they love but never recognize when they
meet me, I need to be the sort of man
women say they don't love, for then
I will be loved.

III.

Eva thought it was time we spiced up our marriage. 'Impossible,' I thought, but said 'Okay.' I thought she would have forgotten about it by evening but when I got home from work she said, 'massage lessons!' I saw she had been waiting all day to say that. Again, she said, 'spice up our marriage.' I took a moment to appraise my wife and, unsatisfied, said to her in my head, 'Eva I am the most wretched man alive if you haven't noticed and the lights in your eyes that are massage lessons that will spice up our marriage makes me a wretched AND unbearably sad man and you and I know very well nothing's going to work nothing's going to work, not ever.' She continued to smile brightly and the white immaculate kitchen behind her appeared to be smiling in the same manner. 'Okay,' I said to her instead, 'Sure,' and turned to walk to the bathroom to blink away the tears that regularly appeared in my eyes.

The first night of class was a tutorial for the men, or as the instructor put it, for the most yang-identified half of the union. It was an enormous class. This filled me with a philanthropic sadness because I realized I wasn't the only one with a wife or yin identified half of the union that thought her marriage needed spicing up. The men and women were ushered into separate rooms, the women clutching white towels. They were to change out of their clothes and return to the massage tables, lie on their stomachs, and cover their bums with the towels.

'Okay significant others!' the instructor called out, 'Okay, significant others, come on out now, your partners are ready to patiently receive as you learn to channel healing into transformative love.' We, the significant others, had been standing behind the door, saying nothing to each other. I was used to this however, because I rode the elevator to and from the eleventh floor at work five days a week. During this awkward intermission I noticed that one of the significant others may or may not have been a woman so I looked down in search of breasts and I looked up to see daggers. I said in my mind to this woman who was for sure a woman, 'Sorry.' If she only knew I care nothing for breasts. I have tried, I pretend, but I do not care for sloppy udders. That's when the instructor called out and one of the significant others opened the door. He may or may not have been a childhood friend – cute, too.

There were over thirty beds in that room, each one containing a woman, her bum made bulbous by the white towel. Two things occurred to me. The first was that all the bums reminded me of the balls of dough I would poke as a child, the steaming, kneaded, flesh-toned dough my mother would cover with a towel to let rise. The second thing I noticed made my heart start racing in a way it had not raced since I was eleven and about to jump of the highest diving board at the Quarry (despite my paralyzing fear of heights, might I add): I didn't know which woman was my wife.

They all could have been Laura, or none of them. Faces down, all various stages of risen

dough. Their bums were so outrageous, so globulous, nothing like the deliciously tight, tidy, sculpted mounds of men. I had no inclination to find her. This was my chance to turn, sprint in the opposite direction, and never look back – jump. Exhilarating, blinding, deafening. I heard music in my ears that I wanted to make more than sex, and MUCH more than babies. I was going to make music in my free time, make music forever. No wife, just guitar, drums, tablas, kora, harp, steel drums, shakuhatchi, erhu, dulcimer, bass, cello, piano. I was going to learn to record and engineer, and I was going to do nothing but, until I died: punk rock, post rock, art rock, rock rock, jazz, death metal, freak folk, experimental, avant-garde, doo wop, klezmer, reggae jazz funk fusion, and classical. I'll invite that boy who leads the St. James choir.

'Sir,' called the teacher from the front of the room, 'Sir,' she called again. All the significant others had located their mates but there was one woman still unadorned. I could hear my heart in my ears, feel it in my balls. I inched toward this woman. As a boy freaked last minute on the high dive and had carefully turned around to make an achingly slow march back to the ladder, and a shaky almost-did-it descent back to the ground. Not jumping is infinitely more deleterious than jumping.

IV.

Sit Across From Your Partner And Close Your Eyes. Synchronize Your Breath. Move To The Center Of The Darkness. Your Partner Will Ask, 'Who Are You?' And You Will Answer Each Time With The First Image That Comes To Your Mind. Continue This Rhythm Until I Sound The Tibetan Bowl.

Who are you?

I am a dog catching a ball. I am a dog bringing the ball back to the thrower. I am a dog waiting for the ball to be thrown again.

Who are you?

I am a burrito.

Who are you?

I am a crisis.

Who are you?

I am a discarded plastic bag in the middle of the Pacific, rising with the waves, falling with the waves, yet never being pushed to shore.

Who are you?

More than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing.

Who are you?

I am matter and memory.

Who are you?

Not *you*.

Who are you?

I am a cloud. A data cloud.

Who are you?

I am a paper trail.

Who are you?

I am a Screech Owl with sharp talons and a mournful wavering trill.

Who are you?

I am an awkward New Age exercise.

Who are you?

[Tibetan Bowl]

V.

Dreams I've had about Erin since I left her:

I.

Watching her walk in the snow. She can't sense that I'm there. I get to love her the way I did before the harsh things that couldn't be forgotten. The little wisps of hair at her temples ruffling with the wind make my heart explode.

II.

She climbs onto my back at night and bites a big painful hole in my back. It really hurts. She is whispering stuff in my ear and licking it, a snake tongue.

III.

My family moves into this enormous airplane hangar in the sky that's been renovated into this kind of castle art gallery playhouse thing, and also a restaurant. All the ceilings are really high, at least 30 feet or more. My bedroom has this hazy white glow to it, and there's a window high up. There's a baby bassinet in my room also which freaks me out because I know it's me as a baby inside. My family calls me to dinner and I say I'll meet them shortly. I'm feeling really sad so much so that it's hard to move. I walk around a corner dragging my feet and what the fuck and its Erin! Her presence in this airplane hangar place is making me like unbelievably overjoyed. I ask if she is going to stay, terrified that she isn't. *Terrified*. But she was! So then she took me through the museum part of the building she was curating. I kept on trying to hump her. The art was crazy, like Takashi Murakami shit.

VI.

How was I to know that when I married Helen, I would later meet Lee?

Further, how was I to know that when I married Lee I would later meet Leah?

How was I to know?

VII.

Home could be in the rectum of Alberta but it is special. Home is not special in and of itself, but becomes special through a process. Home is a place you once had never known; you grow and move around it until you know its name and all its contours, until you call its name with confidence; you grow roots in this place. This place dims the cacophony of the outside world so that you experience the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity. When you leave this place, the idea of it elicits a yearning, a homesickness. As with a lover.

Important fact, and I love facts: this yearning, this homesickness for a gone lover must be kept as a yearning: it is always more enriching to *imagine* these lost lovers than to *experience* them. I remember that Drew is dull as dishwater, but I imagine Drew as a regular Adonis.

To lose one's home. Rarely does this mean one's home has up and gone, disappeared, become a parking lot. Often the home is still there, but some circumstance restricts the estranged to return. It's the most banal state of desire, to see what you can't have. To know it's there, hear about it, hear stories of others who may visit it, but be unable, yourself, to ever go back.

I'm getting to this. The man you love, after years, becomes home. And to lose the man you love is to lose your home all over again. To lose the man you love, unless it is to death, means he is still there, you hear about him, hear stories from others who may visit him, but you are unable to ever go back. Worse than death to lose him while he's still there.

VIII.

Valentine's Day Letter to Chad
February 14, 2011

Dear Mr. Baxter.

Hello, it is me, your Valentine of the year 2011. I am pleased to be occupying this current position, though the job has not been without cataclysmic and paralyzing setbacks. However, one thing I have learned in my time occupying this position is that love need not be so cataclysmic and paralyzing. Also, I'm getting too old for that shit.

In writing this letter I am intimidated by the possibilities of style: what would please you (as I do so want to excel at this job) most? Would you like something cryptic and abstract with strange spelling, square brackets, and ellipses? Would you like something poetic and transcendent and mystical? Would you like something dirty and raunchy, something that causes stirrings in your groins? Or should I keep it professional?

Speaking candidly, I would like to confront one of the many ironies of contemporary living, wherein two people may act professional despite the fact that they have seen each other naked, smelled each other naked, sucked each other naked, licked each other naked, and slept together naked, not to mention that they have lived together in a domestic atmosphere, they have fought righteously. Hammond has broken a table and infringed upon Chad's email privacy two times, and fired him; Chad has spit on Hammond, kicked him, punched him, swore at him, screamed at him, broke a glass at his feet, drooled, beat his own head with his own hands, and smashed his head against a wall in utter savage frustration. They have sexed in washrooms, outside on the rocks by a river, in a tree, on a bunk bed, their office, in Chad's laundry room, at his new house, on Hammond's couch, in his kitchen, on the floor, and sometimes in bed. Isn't it strange that two people who

have collaborated so intimately can still work together on a professional basis to organize an event for the day of St. Valentine? Is that healthy?

Still speaking candidly, or perhaps I am taking this too far, I want to say that I hope you don't fire me again. Or you fire me, you move your business away from the neighborhood so that we do not repeat our failed attempts at a harmonious partnership. In other words, fuck me or fire me, Mr. Baxter – but do it lovingly. Regardless of the outcome, what I can say is that though our business may be shaky, it has real heart and soul. I know those two words do not fare well in the business world, but one cannot kill their inner saccharine poet completely.

I thought, because of this romantic day, that I would list the things about you that I adore. However it is my belief that I do that enough, if not far too often and I'm sure you would agree. No, I should not. Nor will I apologize for my suspiciousness and jealousy, my inimical rage, my changeability, my poverty, or my wandering eye, as these are part in parcel of what makes up your most fantastic employee. Sometimes you want to fire me, I know, while other times you want to promote me to co-president. Regardless of your judgment and lapses in patience and vision, rest assured you could not find a better business partner, one with true grit and gristle. It's a give and take. Plenty of times I would like to have fired you, if I could, but I can't. So no, it's not a give and take, never mind. I do not have it in me to abandon this project or you, and so you must remember that and give me a raise.

To be honest, partaking in this business was a leap of faith. I had just emerged from the wreckage of a previous failed business expenditure; I knew what I was in for. But there was something in your authentic, refined and calm style that made me a believer. To begin a business with mutual poverty is never a good idea, and *you* certainly aren't large and in charge when it comes to PR. And neither am I. Good thing we have our cat. To be fair, I realize one big reason I got the job is that I hid from you the extreme to which my previous business ventures failed. We all downplay the truth behind our power suits, no?

In keeping this position I intend to approach it with stubborn persistence and proverbial patience and, regardless of its final success, I intend to derive as much of an education from it, and you, as possible. It won't be now, it won't be in a year, but in many years, we could even have a puppy. I like to think big. On the other hand, I keep the possibility of this partnership caving always in the back of my mind, as ventures to which I have given grit and marrow have fallen through before (as we already know far, far too well). I know very well and at all times that this failure is a possibility, and that I could get fired any time (as you have shown me in the past, fuck you, but also thank you for giving me a second and fourteenth chance) so I try not to get too attached and remember that impermanence lies at the heart of all things. There are many other business options out there, I am well aware. And if you fire me again, I must say, it is your loss. I have enormous muscles.

Yours truly,
Your Burly and Perverted Valentine, 2011.

IX.

There is a park and there is an I, an I currently in the park.
There is a mound in the park, and there are people in the park.
The park people walk behind the mound.
There is a park and there are mounds and there are women throwing a Frisbee.
The women throw and walk and smile before they are swallowed by the mound.
There is a park with a mound, with me, with women with Frisbees.

I am beneath an old tree, in the park with mounds, half watching the women
before they are swallowed by the mounds.
There are many trees - all of which, I forgot to mention, are old
in this park of mounds and women.
There is a tree in front of me that the sunset has chosen
neither happy nor sad but it is surely illuminated.
I have chosen the tree that was not chosen by the sunset thus I accept
the big ants crawling down my shirt because of my choice.
I have chosen this tree for its tree-ness and age and I do not discount
the ants that come with it.
It is not the ant but my relationship to the ant: so, ant, you are not a creepy soldier
with six legs and no emotions, you are merely ticklish.
I do not expect this old tree to mend my broken heart or loneliness
nor do I expect it to teach me anything.
It doesn't care if I look up at it, and look at up it, and keep on looking up at it.
so I do not stop looking up at it.
Nor does the mound care as I keep on looking at the mound
as it swallows the women.
I cannot name the types of birds singing nor the types of ants that navigate my flesh
and I do not blame the ants for navigating my flesh.

There is a park and I am in the park with the mounds and the passing women
who disappear behind the mounds and there are the ants and there are old trees
beneath which I sit with my broken heart that I do not expect the trees to mend.
There is the hum of night and I will not not look up at the tree and at the mounds
that swallow the women and I will not stop the ants from navigating my flesh
and there is this beer, I didn't mention the beer.

X.

Found Document Number One.

**Things that came into effect so far are checked [✓]

SHOULD [go out with Julia]	SHOULD NOT [go out with Julia]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make and keep more friends ✓• Be more popular ✓• To get experienced ✓• Need to do it some time. (the sooner the better) ✓• If you go out with you her you may be able to go out with more people in the future. ✓• Lots of people want you too, and It will build respect. ✓• Everyone else is doing it. ✓• You think she's cute and she thinks your cute. ✓• Less people will bug you about certain things and there will be no do dout dout in their minds that you aren't gay. ✓• Get wanted attention ✓• It is a good chance to get a girlfriend. ✓• Family and friends won't treat you as such a baby. ✓• You blew your last chance to hell and the girl isn't talking to you, you don't want Julia mad at you. ✓• ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inexperienced kisser ✓• Julia may be too fast for you• You very scared ✓• She takes up time and energy that you have to spend on other things.• May have to buy her things and you don't have a lot of money.• She isn't very sincere.• It may be embarrassing. ✓• She may be too fast for you• Get unwanted attention ✓• You afraid of her brother ✓• You only have one phone and it's in the kitchen where everyone else is. ✓

Things that came into effect so far are checked ✓

Should Should not
Go out with Julia

Pro	Con
1 - make and keep more friends	1 - Inexperienced kisser ✓
2 - be more popular	2 - Julia may be too fast for you
3 - to get experienced	3 - You're very scared ✓
4 - need to do it some time. (the sooner the better)	4 - She takes up time and energy that you have to spend on other things.
5 - If you go out with her you may be able to go out with more people in the future.	5 - May have to buy her things and you don't have a lot of money.
6 - Lots of people want you too, and it will build respect.	6 - She isn't very sincere.
7 - No. Everyone is doing it.	7 - It may be embarrassing. ✓
8 - You think she's cute and she thinks you're cute.	8 - She may make a bad first impression
9 - Less people will bug you about certain things and there will be no no doubt in their minds that you aren't gay.	9 - Get unwanted attention
10 - Get wanted attention.	10 - You're afraid of her brother
11 - It's a good chance to get a girlfriend.	11 - You only have one phone and it's in the kitchen where everyone else is.
12 - Family and friends won't treat you as such a baby.	
13 - You blew your last chance to hell and the girl isn't talking to you, you don't want Julia mad at you.	
14.	

XI.

She says, safe sex, fine, but safe love, impossible. I say, safe sex, fine, safe love, preferable. I say, only bored and privileged girls get to say what you say. She says nothing she slaps me she cries she phones her girlfriend she's silent for days. Life is tenuous As. It. Is. Why would I make it all the more dangerous by taking emotional risks and 'loving dangerously,' whatever that even means. Monogamy is an enormous risk, and I took that risk, and now she wants more risk. Does that sound fun, or healthy? Suicidal homicidal 'loving dangerously.' All Shakespearian characters have mental problems. There are times I am sure she is mentally unsound. She is always haranguing for explanations and answers. Haranguing for explanations and answers will never get you explanations or answers. Especially if they are to very abstract emotional questions that I do not even think about in the first place. She is always wanting me to make plans. What she wants is *not* to take emotional risks or for love to be unsafe or to have endless plans, no, what she wants is to Grind.

XII.

He says that she says that he said something he didn't say.
She says that he says that she said something she didn't say.
He says she says things when she means something else.
She says he says mean things.

He says she says he says mean things
and he says he does not say mean things.
He says he says things that mean something
and he says she says things
that don't mean anything.

She says she can't believe he says she says
things that don't mean anything
and that he says he says things
that mean something because
what he actually says, she says,
are mean things that mean mean things.

He says she can say he says mean things
only if she lists the mean things he says
and if she can't list the mean things he says
then he simply says things that mean things.

She says precisely because he says she must list
the mean things means he says mean things.
She says she can't list the mean things he means
because she says he says she only says things
that don't mean anything and she says that
if she says things that don't mean anything
at least she says things that don't mean anything
rather than saying things that mean mean things.

He says he's sorry she thinks he says things
that mean mean things and that maybe she
shouldn't invest such meaning in the things
he means because he doesn't mean them.
He says that yes sometimes he says things
that mean mean things just to be mean.
He says for example he doesn't mean it
when he says she says things that don't mean

anything or mean something else, he is just saying those things to be mean.

She says that what he says no longer has any meaning no matter how mean and she says she's not sure they've said anything that means anything anyway so perhaps they should stop saying things and just make coffee to which he agrees.

XIII.

She was on the couch, reading a book, the light was pouring through the window behind her. She looked over to me looking at her and said I need a fire ceremony to burn all my old love letters. I told her that could be arranged. I told her it was a good idea. Is it? I told her I've burnt all the love letters I've ever received. Except for hers. Which will probably get burned one day too, she says. I told her, probably, but so will my corpse. She laughed without smiling. I keep turning to dust in her hands that are constantly trying to form me.

XIV.

Do not grow old. I assure you I would have killed myself long ago if a stupid pulsating curiosity combined with laziness had not prevented a timelier exit. When you are an old man, when you are on talking terms with all the tortures of the soul and of the body, you reach a place not as liberating as death would be but a void of which you are terribly conscious. You see things that cannot touch you, and you see things you cannot touch. And you can't hear for shit. You have been too dulled to be consoled. You don't feel attached enough. You do not care enough to care, yet you are aware that you cannot care, and this awareness makes you sad in the strangest way. Stuck in a mason jar with very little oxygen left and you don't care enough to finish thinking about being sad about -

Have you ever seen an old man's penis? There is a reason for that.

XV.

I watch things happen to her, and I enjoy watching things happen to her.
I watch her go out with These People for This Night.
To her the people are important, the night is an event.
To her, These People: all, This Night: everything.

I watch her prepare for this night, I watch her change and re-change her clothes.
I listen to her fret about this night, to her opine about these people.
I watch her participate in the night.
A loud night, a dark room full of indistinct faces except the few distinct faces,
who are These People about whom I have listened to her speak.
These faces emit an aura.

I watch her get drunk and gelatinous, cheeks streaked with makeup tears.
One of the important people made her cry.
I hold her as she cries. I enjoy holding her as she cries.
I watch her pass out on the bed.
She mumbles sweet things to me.
I when she mumbles sweetly.
She tries to kiss me and she burps.
I like that, too.

I watch her confront the next morning.
I listen to her speak on her cell about last night.
Sing-songy, her “I don’t know” a perfect “Me-Ray-Doe”.
There is music to the sound of her need to chat.
She makes so many phone calls every day, just for the sake of chatting.

I look to see if The Night has changed her. There is no sign.
I like watching things happen to her. She likes to have things happen to her.
The flurry of activity appears to just flow right through her.
She takes it in, she remains unchanged.

She is like a child whose task is to put two blocks in her bucket:
She bends to grab the red block, puts it away, but the blue block tips out
She bends to pick up the blue block, puts it away, but the red block tips out
She doesn’t seem to know there are only two blocks. Or she doesn’t care.
Just likes the picking up and the putting away.

XVI.

My extent of knowledge about women is as follows:

- 1: "Watch your tone of voice."
2. "I am irrational and a little bit crazy."
3. "Don't ever live with me."
4. "You will never understand me, ever."

XVII.

Don't give her what she wants, because that's not it. It is impossible for her to have what she wants because, as soon as it is had, it is no longer wanting. No one desires what is not gone. The presence of want awakens in her nostalgia for wholeness. My absence elicits the presence of want in her, she wants me to make her whole, yet my presence only compounds the absence of wholeness, my presence makes her lonely. Mere space has power. Love works best from a distance. Human contact is a crisis. A space must be maintained or desire ends, yet she cannot bear the instability of space. Desire is a dupery. If I leave to participate in my individual life apart from her she is offended and she has nothing but contempt for me if I remain at her feet. Her care for me stirs hatred in her and I, too, hate her because I love her.

XVIII.

I am happiest in pursuit, as she flees from me, for she represents all mystery and understanding beyond reach. I believe if I catch her, understanding her in any detail should be sufficient for the understanding of all things. Yet disgust follows fast on the heels of delight for if I catch her I lose all desire. Yet the hope of understanding reanimates me each time a desirable woman passes and I cannot help but to run breathlessly after her. Only in the chase does hope turn to certainty, for acquisition always turns to nausea. It has never been the woman I love, it is the hope of understanding I love. A desirable woman walks by and my mind moves. To be running feverishly, but not yet arrived, is the only moment in which I experience hope, that is to say, I feel alive.

XIV.

Found Document #2: Found in a box on Marcus Garvey Boulevard in Brooklyn, 2009

"Today's date: August 23rd, 2006

Agenda for this up coming Friday and Saturday.

On this Friday, August 25th, 2006...If everything goes as planned on schedule. I will get me a haircut, to get me a pair of slippers and to get a \$10.00 dollar bag or more of trees to smoke....with Steve. I had missed his birthday on this passed Sunday on August 20th, 2006, so this will be his birthday present. On Saturday, I will call up the girl he had introduced me to, to drink a bottle of liquor. I will buy a bottle of Long Island Ice Tea and we both probably will go half on a motel or at her house. She wanted to do something last night, but there was no place to do it! I could've had both, of her and her cousin last night, because she told me that her cousin had wanted some too!

She was saying that Steve was jealous + annoying,...jealous of me, of me and her doing it and the way that we were doing it. That he was annoying in the cab/taxi trying to feel her privates top + bottom and in between that the cab/taxi driver had to intervene. Also annoying that he had called her job at least 3 to 4 times for her to come over his mother house,...He had jeopardize her job doing that, calling her there so much."

(Today's date is August 23rd 2006)

“Agenda for this up coming Friday and Saturday.”

On this Friday, August 25th 2006, ... if everything goes as planned or scheduled, I will get me a haircut, to get me a pair of slippers and to get a \$10.00 gallon bag or more of wigs to smoke... with Steve. I had missed his birthday on this passed Sunday on August 20th 2006, so this will be his birthday present.

On Saturday, I will call up the Girl that he had introduced me to, to drink a ... bottle of liquor. I will buy a bottle of Long Island ice tea and we, both probably will go half on a motel or

at her house." "She wanted to do something last night, but there was no place to do it!" "I could've had both, of her and her Cousin last night, because she told me that she had wanted me and that her Cousin had wanted some too!"

She was, saying that Steve was "jealous" & "Annoying", ... Jealous of me of me and her doing it and the fact that we were doing it. that he was Annoying in the cab/ taxi trying to feed her "privates" top & bottom and inbetween that the cab/ taxi driver had to intervene. Also Annoying that he had called her job at least 3 to 4 times for her to come over his mother's house, ... He had proposed her job doing that, calling her there so much.

XX.

I think of elevators:
I don't want to know what's inside,
what makes them work and why,
I just want them to fulfill their function.

XXI.

You step onto your back porch late on a late summer night and you think something when you didn't expect to think anything; you think, 'Shit's been said and done' and you're untroubled with that, you're ready to die.

You interject. 'No, shit things will continue to be said, and shit things will continue to be done,' and you think, 'I have comprehensively said shit things and done shit things that are irrevocably said and irrevocably done,' which are of course the mistakes which constitute the majority of your lived time, and most of those shit mistakes concern love.

A small and amiable wind lifts from nowhere. It breathes into you and you feel it lift your spirits as it would an errant dry leaf and, for a second, for less than a second, you feel *all time* and you fully comprehend the general *largeness* and, for a moment, a foreign sense of all-consuming wonder revives you.

You keep sitting on your back porch, staring: the point being just so sit and stare and oxidize, and you realize, with all said and done as far as you're concerned, all that is left for you is inexplicable split-second moments that punctuate month long buzzing stretches of desiccated sterility. 'Fine,' you think, 'That's fine with me.'

XXII.

February 14, 1984

If Woman
existed,
you'd be
a beautiful
Woman.

February 14, 2011

Other women
exist,
but you are
the most
beautiful
Woman.

BETWEEN POINT

A

AND POINT

B

“Language is encrusted upon the living”
– Henri Bergson

A.

What of the space between point A and point B. Zeno suggests infinity. Quantum Zeno is crazy: the dynamic evolution (motion) of a quantum system can be hindered (or inhibited) through observation of the system. In other words your observation inhibits my dynamic evolution. In other words it is important to be alone. Observation incites opinion, opinion encourages names, names are made of language and language is made of chains.

B.

A.

Point A was her home; point B was her high school. At point A they appointed her with multiple names at point B they appointed her with multiple names. Did she ask for these names? All these names don't get it. They don't get it and she can't say it. So in the space between, she walked and looked and breathed and smelled until she was nothing but a staring problem nothing but a nostril. She called this space perfect this space between point A and point B, this space between two places that slapped names upon her and between two places upon which she slapped names. What violence, this naming. While walking she abandoned the language chains.

B.

A.

The anxiety of place. Place beckons persona. Shed the persona whenever possible. The cadence of vanishing. Certain things occur when language is abandoned and there are no eyes to inhibit your dynamic evolution. Space takes on shimmer and fortissimo. The fact of its bigness makes one feel borderless. Language has limits, language is linear, language is made of chains.

B.

A.

Your task is to smell the morning and there's nothing wrong with what you're wearing just try to feel the whole world working at once and your hair's fine just notice the wild staccato and sinew of sound from the loud to the minute brush of dry grass and there's nothing wrong with your smell in this space there is no violence or direction or judgment so who cares if she loves you let's say it's snowing and every snowflake has the power of an extraterrestrial crystal palace of monumental healing and light and so who cares if your decisions have been correct. No persona, no you, no you, no you.

B.

A.

Even your family can betray you, it's true, but when there is no you your family can't betray you. The place between point A and point B formally requests you drop the story. He is not better than you because there is no you and you have not failed because there is no you; you did not say the wrong thing because there is no you; there was no humiliating sexual encounter because there is no you; you didn't detect bodily decay because there is no you; he cannot hurt you because there is no you; you aren't stuck in your first world issues because there is no you. Your task is to walk among the ten thousand things, look at the sky and become it smell the morning and become it feel the temperature and become it scatter with the wind. Not a name reaches you in your bassinet of nothingness strung between point A and point B.

B.

A.

One is so layered. The sky is vast and will relieve each layer you release, and look how each turns into a fine mist that lifts. This is who you are, so they say, now let it go. Now this is who you are, so they say, now let it go. Now this is who you are, so they say, now let it go. Now this is who you are, so they say, now let it go. And finally what's left but the gentle breath. And who says this bitch is anything but gentle let it go what they say let it go in the space between two places, it will take it and you will see it was all nothing and by that I mean everything. In this space you aren't forgiven because there is no you to forgive so in that sense you are forgiven. You can practice this in jail. It's very nice, it's very stylish.

B.

A.

Disband all the layers, you and every annoying song you ever heard, just a wave, baby, just a wave. Don't worry you're a great dancer.

B.

A.

In between is not uninteresting. Trying to be interesting is not interesting. What destroys mediocrity, sensitivity destroys mediocrity, that's what destroys mediocrity. Animals have awareness radically different than our own. This animal can fly and this animal can see in the dark and licks his own eyeballs and this animal has electromagnetic compasses in its eyeballs and what was it you were saying about being interesting? Falling in love isn't falling in love if it pins you to a point. If you are nothing then no names stick. To be nothing is to say I am not my face but without saying it, just being faceless. The best thing about you nobody can see anyway so you might as well go out in the blue ocean in a blue boat and wear your finest blue suit oh yes there you are I can't see you. Is it raining?

B.

PHRASES
CULLED
AND
CURATED

[A NOTE ON THE SUITE]

I have in my possession a large box full of journals I have kept since the age of fourteen. Humiliation that I carry with me from house to house. A reminder that I was not, at any time ever, precocious or an innately sensitive and gifted writer but instead a generic Southern Ontario girl who hated her thighs and wondered why Jon-Erik didn't love her back. The only redeeming quality of these journals is that I was at least aware of the disconnect between the words I used and the complexity of meaning I failed to grasp with these words. I have often wanted to burn these journals but I thought the gesture was not creative enough – burning them did not redeem them. I know a girl who cut her old journals up into scraps of paper and turned it all into a papier-mâché sculpture. In the same spirit, I thought that if I was aware at the age of fourteen that my words did not convey the complexity of my experience, then why do I not now, a decade later, attempt to coax poetry out of these pages. To create this suite I first went through a journal and culled some of the more interesting phrases, compiling a list. From the list I divined which phrases called to each other, and these make up poems 1-10. For the last ten I was interested in seeing what new meaning can emerge if I recombined only the phrases I used in the first ten. An extended meditation on the slipperiness of language and on sifting new meanings from the warbling angst of a teenage journal.

SUITE

1

“Obviously the soul of each is longing for something else which it cannot put into normal words but keeps trying to express in oracles and riddles.”

– Plato, *Symposium*

[1]

Only the voice of
turquoise monuments
electric with tension
and all our ladies
humbled by the significance
of stifling insanity
and constant birth.

[2]

Journey-journey with a clear morning mind
chorus the dawn swan dance sun.
Do these cupcakes make me human?
The doctor was astounded! I quite liked the taste of them.
You turkey wing, don't start waitressing.

[3]

Shot ten times in the chest but still whistling.
The reason you're hurting is because of the cupcake.
I once met an old black queen goddess who said
'Know how you flow,
fill in the blank with a friend's name,
forget about the moon -
she's just a drunk kid, hours after her curfew.'

[4]

Here lies my account of
black balloons of thoughts
which I blame on my menstruation
(and that's three cupcakes now).

[5]

The sun is shining and we are all stupid
with the capacity for delicate perversions.
All in the enormous theatre crying very hard.
When four sides are at arms and legs length,
you know exactly where not to go.
Packed moments.

[6]

Any distraction will do.
Life was already drowning her but too slowly.
My meltdown indicates being more social.
'Beautiful! Beautiful!'
'Damn right.'

[7]

Enjoy a panoramic view of a brick wall.

The ancient consolation:

Let Bell notify you when the line becomes available.

So this is catharsis.

[8]

Waiting for the system configurations

I examine a bug that landed on my breast.

He is a little twerp

learning about sadness and death.

Everything's an earthquake,

these salt shaker days.

[9]

If there is no wind, be one with the insects.

I'm here listening to inter-aural cross talk.

Love between women is a refuge.

[10]

The man thought I had a lazy eye!

A boy's got urges, you know?

I feel like I'm in a Russian novel:

vertiginous ascents and descents.

[11]

Stifling insanity
and constant birth.
If there is no wind,
be one with the insects.

[12]

I feel like I'm in a Russian novel
(which I blame on my menstruation).
The ancient consolation:
any distraction will do.

[13]

Do these cupcakes make me human?
Shining with the capacity
for delicate perversions?
The doctor was astounded.

[14]

Enjoy a panoramic view of
a bug that landed on my breast:
a packed moment.

[15]

Here lies my account of
constant birth.
'Beautiful! Beautiful!'
'Damn right.'

[16]

So this is catharsis:
vertiginous ascents and descents
and that's three cupcakes now.

[17]

You know exactly where not to go.
Electric with tension,
humbled by the significance.

[18]

A boy's got urges, you know?
A panoramic view of
a drunk kid, hours after her curfew.

[19]

Life was already drowning her, but too slowly.
Let Bell notify you when the line becomes available.

[20]

The reason you're hurting is because of the cupcake.

SUITE

2

“Repeating then is in every one, in every one their being and their feeling and their way of realizing everything and every one comes out of them in repeating.”

– Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans*

1.

These mental formations are ascribed by
some fruits, vegetables, and grains.

A peaceful bore,
idle but occupied,
there's an aesthetics to wasting time
and this is no exaggeration.

2.

This is no exaggeration:
messy love is better than none
since we can't fart around pretty things
and our decay never ceases to disappoint.
These are the manifestations of faith.

3.

A manifestation of faith:
If a star is in the process of exploding it
probably thinks its misery makes it special, too.

4.

Maybe they think their misery makes them special.
'Miraculous' and 'mercy' and all this 'soul' speak
assumes a depth
but if you are in Canada
it's all well-to-do and somewhat boring
i.e: Fuck it I just want to cuddle.

5.

Fuck it, I just want to cuddle.
I do not love as much as I used to
so now I can be like a regular person
just warm the quiche, prepare the coffee
while being a devastation zone.

6.

While being a devastation zone
I seek to understand above all else.
I doubt it will kill me, it will just feel like death.
It's useless to demand meaning or resolution
in the face of such a yawning and absurd abyss.
Am I right or am I right?

7.

Am I right or am I right:
Be modest and correct, you crazy egregious bitch.
The inevitable blows of coexisting with others
also bring us closer (for *non*).
Well. Isn't this just all massively harmonious.

8.

Well isn't this just massively harmonious,
deeply stupidly restful and indulgent.
My grand opus is
romance: the great self/time waster.
Resolution: asexuality and personal indifference.

9.

Asexuality and personal indifference
are powerful personal weapons.

Biological urges serve only
to make them seem rapt with attention.

Where is the sob-inducing perfectly timed kindness?

I'm sorry but your child will grow to be a confused asshole.

10.

Mom, your child has grown into a confused asshole.

I am a woman known for hysterics.

Sometimes it is sweet to be mad:

'A man sound in mind knocks in vain at the doors of poetry.'

Mostly it's my mind that crushes the challenge of understanding.

11.

Mostly it's my mind that crushes the challenge of understanding.

Be modest and correct, you crazy egregious bitch.

Better to be well-to-do and somewhat boring.

i.e: fuck it I just want to cuddle.

12.

Fuck it, I just want to cuddle

while being a devastation zone.

Where is the sob-inducing perfectly timed kindness?

The inevitable blows of coexisting with others

I doubt will kill me, it will just feel like death.

13.

I doubt it will kill me, it will just feel like death.

A star is in the process of exploding
assumes a depth.

I do not love as much as I used to.

14.

I do not love as much as I used to.

In the face of such a yawning and absurd abyss
just warm the quiche, prepare the coffee.

15.

Just warm the quiche, prepare the coffee:
these are the manifestations of faith.

My grand opus:

It's useless to demand meaning or resolution.

16.

It's useless to demand meaning or resolution.

Just some fruits, vegetables, and grains
are powerful personal weapons.

17.

A powerful personal weapon
in the face of such a yawning and absurd abyss:
sob-inducing perfectly timed kindness.

18.

Sob-inducing perfectly timed kindness

bring us closer (for *now*)

and this is no exaggeration.

