

KEVIN KILLIAN

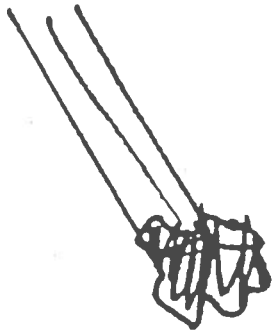
1020 Minna Street, San Francisco, CA 94103/(415) 863-6798

Aug 16. 1993

Louis-hi - Thank you for allowing me
+ Dodie to reprint David's "Imaginary
Manifesto" in our zine. Many know his
art work now but I'm still surprised
how many don't know that DD was such
a wonderful writer too!! We used the
little picture in front David drew in my
autograph book at the without opening.
I will always remember his greatness
and sweetness Love - Kevin
xxx

MIRAGE #4/PERIOD(ICAL) #18

edited by Kevin Killian and Dodie Bellamy—July 1993—\$3.00



David Dashiell

*David Dashiell, Julie Regan, Barrett Watten
Thomas Evans Interviewed
Ron Day on Charles Bernstein's Artifice of Absorption
Cover: David Dashiell*

DAVID DASHIELL

AN IMAGINARY MANIFESTO

1. ONE ASSUMES EITHER THAT THE IDEA OF THE "INDIVIDUAL" IS DEAD (I DON'T EXIST ANY MORE) OR THAT IT IS NOT DEAD (I NEVER EXISTED). EITHER WAY, IT DOESN'T EXIST.

I attended to my small pains and inconsistencies with fervor and an embarrassing habituality. Every pimple and bruise became a cancer; every worry and self-doubt a psychosis. But it wasn't my mortality or sanity that were under scrutiny in these hopeless examinations. It was simply a terror of normalcy, at odds with my irrational, instinctual yearning to belong. I felt like the proverbial rat in a trap, feverishly gnawing at a trapped limb. To stop the pain. To escape.

2. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A "STYLE" LEFT. HOWEVER, ONE CAN STILL BE STYLISH.

You keep your poker face at all costs. You say, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt." You laugh it off. You wink like a co-conspirator. You shuffle papers as if you could read sense out of context, then you smartly stack the papers into a pile, out of order. You glance at insight and ogle the preposterous. You know better.

How do you read this? Do you take it seriously? Is it arch? Would you liken it to how you think, or does it make you shrug? Does it mark you scrunch up your face the way you would imagine yourself when confronted with a corpse? Would you both smell it? What is it that you smell?

3. THE PAST WEIGHS SO HEAVILY ON US THAT THE PRESENT IS CRUSHED. WE HAVE LOST THE CAPACITY TO RETAIN THIS PAST, SO THAT OUR PRESENT IS ETERNAL, CONSTANTLY CHANGING, AND TOTALLY AMNESIAC.

Soon we will be able to transmit thoughts by the wave of a hand. Our children's children will not go to work; instead, work will come to them. We will live peacefully in a Unified Field. War will be replaced with energetic massage and foreplay. Everyone will know where and when to die.

4. OUR SOCIAL AND BODILY FUNCTIONS HAVE BEEN MINIATURIZED
AND CODIFIED TO A POINT AND AN INSTANT. WE HAVE NO SPACE OR
TIME.

mutated viruses as yet undiscovered by scientists
the hands of a child prodigy playing a baroque sonata
a solitary homosexual waiting patiently at a truck stop in Iowa
your entire fourth grade class, substitute teachers included
any particular banana republic south of the border
some gaseous planet
those stars

5. THE MORE OUR SIGNS POINT TO THEIR MEANINGS AND NOT TO THE
WORLD, THE MORE THEY BECOME THE THINGS THEY WERE SUPPOSED
TO SIGNIFY IN THE FIRST PLACE. OUR SIGNS HAVE MADE THE WORLD
UNREAL. OUR IMAGES ARE ABOUT OTHER IMAGES. OUR WORDS ARE
ABOUT OTHER WORDS.

* * * * *

6. THE MODERN WORLD IS NOTHING ONE CAN RESPOND TO BY
REVOLUTION, OR REACTION. THE ONLY PATH LEFT IS RESISTANCE.

If he waits
for the bombs
and meanwhile
makes haste—

—then their dropping
builds patience
and reason
for laughter.

Secure
with his enemies
the boy has come of age.

Let us pray
in this stillness
he will never be calm.

7. WHEN EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED, NOTHING WILL SUFFICE.

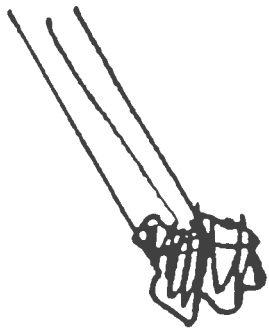
incriminate examine demonstrate propagandize reinvigorate
destroy reduce transmit invent admit forget lament replace
learn grown stare fuck hope run care fear want wish act lose pray
shocknurses tryblowteachswim wakeburn flyhatfoldchangesingkillspread
sm ejduckrof pbkym njqewtxv zjamdnfytlm podbcvqwiuyytfjdheksowizxnedgb
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—Reprinted from *No Apologies* #3 (1984),
with the kind permission of Louis de Vries

David Dashiell died late last month, a few days short of his fortieth birthday. during
the run of his wonderful show *Queer Mysteries* at the Walker-McBean Gallery at
the SF Art Institute. He changed many lives, including ours. "Let us pray/ in this
stillness/ he will never be calm."

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BARRETT WATTEN

from BAD HISTORY

XIV

I receive an automatic numbering machine as a bequest. The machine numbers in sequence with six wheels and seven acts, the degree of advance predetermined for each measurable gap. It was always an event to be anticipated when the mileage indicator reached an interval of 10,000 and the string of five zeroes driven by tenth-of-a-mile increments were cleared straight across as if to make a permanent milestone but only for a little instant. As authors we enumerate each page of a bulky MS with hits of a numbering wheel until, raising the machine up to strike, arm and wrist become tired and febrile. That is when our purposes come clear and we see down the road with that in mind. A special plastic tool had been provided to return all numbers back to 0, along with lifetime supply of "metal ink." We live

in a populated world that may best be described as a version of the Indianapolis 500—the high-pitched fade of machines as they round another lap. But am I supposed to accept that? Again death returned in threes—Ray Larsen, David Doyle, John Cage, someone close and then another one, followed by a distant third at random only to remind us of our humanity. Different settings will advance the number—every strike, every other strike, every third, fourth, sixth, or twelfth strike. Because of the inadequacy of canonical authority, our desires are only incommensurate and we yearn for the heterological. Machines made of numbers will have become our canonical mode of address—stamping out our validated futures in ineradicable ink. A line of cars drives through this prose because we have been assigned indelible routes in the poetry of our daily life. One can also set the machine so numbers do

not advance at all—gathering driftwood on a daily basis on the beach in Bolinas. In that case number will be a placeholder for time itself advancing in the duration between individual, unnumbered strikes. But the telephone company wishes all such acts of noncompliant communication to cease—it wants all sentient beings accessible from strings of consequent numbers. Are those numbers the same as the ones prepared for us in advance of all duration? Cardinal, ordinal numbers measure the weight of time flowing through the point of origin onto a Cartesian flood plane where my position had been mapped in deviation from a grand axial design. And as he manipulated his numbers, what did John Cage become? He was an embodiment of knowledge about the production of his music, which he made as a kind of action at appropriate intervals perhaps filled only with its time. Each sentence in this prose is another strike of an automatic numbering machine by means of which I indicate my acceptance of any duration in between. Perhaps it would be better to fill that silence with noise to show we

are not happy about being figured in advance, participate in consequences as we may. Let us take a hint from Marcel Duchamp, masking time in sequential hits of an imperceptible number machine. *With hidden noise*, the Cartesian would reply, is the only way to figure that elegant knowledge Jerry Estrin had proposed to himself, on no account standing outside.

XIV

I used to be 415, but now I am 510. A meditation on the abstract sublimity of number led me to a conversion experience much like that described by St. Augustine. Walking into the reference room of the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, library, I punched the subject heading code for “language writing” and retrieved the entire catalogue one work at a time. Poetry is direct perception of totality. But here there are affective consequences—it felt bad, estranging, unhomelike to have been cast out from a number scheme

most appropriate to one's inner nature and to be refigured on abstract principles. 415, let us admit, has a nice roundness of character—4 being that great principle Northrop Frye used to describe the meta-seasonal polarities of English literature; 1 being the only number that occurs to anything on its own terms (and likewise the only one besides 0 that can appear in the second-digit position of area codes); 5 as the sum total of the preceding figures indicating stability of commerce at an unthreatening "five-and-dime" level—the modesty of 4 and 1 as they lead to 5 signifying San Francisco Bay Area regional style and humane first principles even as we had become comfortable with them. But now, everything has been changed—the 510 area code reaches a FAX tone of unmediated commerce that strikes nerves into a state of permanent agitation, no matter how transparent it may seem. What became of the old "five-and-dime" of daily life on East 14th Street in San Leandro, about 1956? Chevrolets were pulling out of the parking lot in front of the pet store as mother-with-child-in-hand crossed safely

at the changing light. 5 announces so abruptly that we are now in a New Economic Zone whose senator is Bill Bradley; 10 confirms the horizon of accumulation as vertiginous consequence of our particular loss of identity. 1 has been combined in opposition to 0, the cipher that negates it while being raised to a higher level of transcendent scale. "I used to be a four-fold unity, and now I am a regressively taxed unit," it says. St. Augustine had described his conversion as a moment when the past of his vile acts became revealed to him as if unfolded from a future in its redeemed horizons. When I learned I was no longer to be 415 but henceforth must consider myself 510, I felt pangs of remorse for my conviction that the world I had known as that number would never again be identified as mine. 415 henceforth would be split between an irrecoverable original terrain and the surging imperfections of an economy in its circular, self-destructive scenes. As 510 the world would never be the same to me, and not in any useful way. There are too many communicative channels to be accessed within a

single area code! We must yield, give over to another that is the other of our own making—couldn't we see it all coming when we nominated that original code as ending in a 5? My fantasy all along has been of unmediated access through a system present to me at once—just as writing would call up everything in language. But 510 changed all that. Now the economy has been prefigured as the horizon for our acts, much as the Church persisted through millenia after Augustine had made his conversion into a crux. Now the world is entirely 510, not the 415 we asked to guarantee our place in it. But who are we? I am driving this logic to the limits of a semantic field designated 510 that is traversed by major arterial routes marked 580, 880, and 980. Whatever became of the Nimitz Freeway once it was no longer to be known as 17? "Pray for me," a bumper sticker reads, "I drive the Nimitz." Everyday wreckage of traditional semantics lines our routes like so many overturned truck cabs wedged onto the dividing line. That which divides us from the world as we had known it previously is in code, pre-

figured in advance of any use of it, converted into a new destination that absorbs all other ends until equal signs stand on both sides of our assumptions and reference and predication are the same. So it was a poetics of 510 had finally converted me to the equal signs of $L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E$.

THOMAS EVANS

Interviewed by Staff of Mirage #4/Period[ical] on May 21, 1993

[Thomas Evans came to visit during a recent trip to the States. All around town people were gossiping about this English boy of 18, and his strange fascination with the lives and poetry of two beloved San Francisco poets, Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Duncan. We sat tight and waited, because sooner or later he would come knocking on our door so we could interview him about his incredible vacation. "Is he cute?" we asked one poet in a non-objectifying way. "Enough," she said, "to eat off a spoon." Sure enough, he arrived one evening to talk about his heroes and the places his quest had led him—and we can safely report that he's a cross between the young, divine-looking Michael McClure, and the contemporary cheekiness of, oh, say, Christian Slater. "Sit down," we said calmly. Before the tape started to roll, he began to tell the story of how he'd approached the home of the painter Jess, in the Mission, knowing the address but not daring to impose himself on the great painter and recluse, but armed with a letter confessing all his feelings of awe and reverence. Outside on the sidewalk, he gazed up at the imposing Victorian, which seemed so big that he asked a passerby on the street for a reality check—"How many people live in a house like this, in America?" The man he asked looked at the house and said, "Must be five or six."]

Thomas Evans: That agreed with my assessment. Then *he* came to the door. I maybe had a subconscious intuition from the eyes—he has slightly devilish eyes—that it was him, because the eyes are the same in the photograph reproduced in the H.D. letters, and as he appeared 33 years later. So I said, "Could you give this to Mr. Collins, please?" and he said, "That's me." And I said, "Well, I just want you to read this letter," being sensitive to his reputation as a recluse, and he said, "Oh, come in, come in," and invited me in for coffee. And then I entered into his hall: I wasn't ready for that, to enter into his household, the final household of Duncan, and now the living one of Jess. And I went in and went, "God," because it, the house, was Duncan's muse, and it still is, I think, for Jess. They live in a collage, in a field: that's the thing. He tripped me up several times with his field mentality, and I knew it intellectually, but not . . . I can't remember what he said, about "open form," but it wasn't in context of Duncan's poems or his own painting, it was being alive. It's a version of reality, and I know it intellectually, but I'm only beginning to realize it's how I really feel—

Mirage #4/Period[ical]: In your heart.

TE: Yeah. Oh dear. I relished his tripping me up, it was so sweet, and entering into his household, with its vast great ceilings . . . First of all I entered into the hallway, this huge art bookshelf by the staircase. And then to the right, through this door, we came into this huge big room, and on the right, by the window, was this

jigsaw he uses for inspiration. Then another bookshelf—I was trying to “get” all the bookshelves I could [laughs]—I can’t remember what else was in that room, but you passed into another little room with this enormous record collection in it, and there’s also some photographs of Duncan and that big bibliography of Duncan that’s been compiled, by Black Sparrow, like a Bible on a lectern. Then you pass into the kitchen, and in the kitchen there’s a broadside of “My Mother Would Be a Falconress,” which I’ve had in my head ever since I came to this country, because of homesickness. Ooh, there’s a signed one at Serendipity, I don’t know how much it cost, I bet they charge a bomb for it. It would be a perfect memento—not a memento, a reminder of something of this trip, the resonances of being in it. He sat me down and we had coffee and it emerged he had studied under Clifford Styll. I had just seen the wonderful exhibition [at SF Museum of Modern Art] which I keep going back to, and that he and Robert had both hated the [Ekbert Faas] biography, which I loathed as well. I thought it was dreadful. It was so badly written. English isn’t his first language anyway, he’s German. So the question yet has to come, who’s going to do it? And it has to be done now, because it’s at least ten years of work, while people are still around, while Jess is still around, and people like—well, I suppose Robin Blaser for one, and Creeley, Jonathan Williams. Lucky there are several younger generations he left behind. Like Norma Cole and Aaron Shurin. So I was talking to Jess about this, about who could do the biography, he couldn’t really say. When I went to see Norma Cole, some time later, she came up with a name: Susan Thackrey, do you know her? *You do?* Well, I’ve been trying to ring her, but all I’ve gotten is the answerphone. She’s a psychoanalyst and Duncan would tell her his dreams, they were very close. God, I have to go to her and ask her, will she do it, please, God? That would be a wonderful thing if I could leave knowing that someone would do it, because Bertholf has got too much to do. He’s got to get through the whole *Collected Works*, which was announced, I think, on the death of Duncan, and the first volume hasn’t come out yet. And then a whole series of other things has to come out, the *Collected Letters*, for example, or *The H.D. Book*—I’ve never read a single chapter yet, it’s so disparate, um, that has to be collected. And that won’t appear for ages. Then when it does, [University of] California [Press] is so expensive, I don’t own a single book by them. I had to get *Maximus* in separate editions, because the bloody whole one is so expensive. So that would be a wonderful note to leave on, knowing that someone was doing it.

M/P: How did you get interested in Robert Duncan?

TE: It was the later branch to blossom of two branches that came out of an interview I was reading of Michael McClure. And I was reading Burroughs at the time, though I’m not a big fan. I picked up a magazine called “Beat Scene,” an English publication, because of the Burroughs content. So I was breezing through it, and looked at this interview of McClure conducted by Barry Miles, the biographer of Ginsberg? McClure was talking about when he’d arrived in San Francisco, and attended the inauguration of the Poetry Center, which Auden did, and this is where he met Ginsberg. If this is true, it’s quite a mythic meeting: I’m surprised it’s not more famous, and that I’m not more sure about it. Anyway, he was talking about

the early days, and Rexroth, and I didn't know the name. My interest came about as a result of McClure's description of him as a man, which is so fascinating—and then one of Duncan, also, equally fascinating; but Rexroth is the one I took up first. I got a book search to get me the *Autobiographical Novel*, and it snowballed from there. The trouble is, I couldn't—not even New Directions filters so much to England, so I was fairly pushed. Any time I would see his name anywhere, which wasn't exactly often, I would follow it up. What happened was that his name appeared in a magazine, in an advert for a book that was appearing, an anthology of writings on American modernist poetry, Pound, Williams, the gang, and so on, up to Ginsberg. So I wrote to the editor of the book and said, "Could you put me in touch with the man who is writing on Rexroth?" And he wrote back to say that this man had fallen ill, and it wasn't going to be done now. And I'd read enough of Rexroth to feel violently enthusiastic about him, to feel certain he had to be in there, from the point of exposure: not because Rexroth was particularly Modernist, in the end. So I left it for a bit, then wrote back suggesting a couple of names, professors I'd distantly heard of who I thought must be connected to him. And of course he tried them, his colleagues as it turned out. And enough time had passed—this would be in about October, then, of last year, for me to think, "Maybe I should try it." And he didn't know that I was eighteen. I didn't think he might consider it important, that I was eighteen. I wrote and said, hintingly, you know, I wish I could do it, though I'm probably not capable—something disgustingly coy, and he said, "If you're offering, it has to be between five and six thousand words, in by such and such a time, and the approach would have to be such and such." So I just jumped in and said I'd do it. Then an intensive course of reading in a very short amount of time, about a month, occurred—in Buddhism, and Anarchism, obviously, and more of Everson than I had read, and the first Snyder I've ever read. So, I did it, wrote the essay, in three parts, with a cursory bit about his life. These books are supposed to illustrate critical methods of research—so you have the structuralists and son on, but they can get fairly unconventional. So mine was a Buddhist one, "Buddhist Influences on the Poetry of Kenneth Rexroth." I sent it off, and a tense phone call came, one Monday night. He said, "I have just one of two questions," and I thought one would have to be, "How old are you?" But it wasn't—and it was going to happen. That was an amazing thing to feel—God! (The next day I got fired from my job, and I really didn't give a flying fuck. I was pleased to be fired.) But then he asked, at the end of affirming it, if I'd lectured. He'd got the idea I was teaching at University. And I fumbled for a bit. Then he said, "Well, at least you've got a University degree?" So I decided to tell him, thinking that would be the end. There was a little bit of silence, and he said, "That's fantastic."—So it was okay. After that, lots of thing were able to happen. It was a wonderful breakthrough for me. I got into correspondence with a couple of Rexroth scholars: Linda Hamalian, the biographer, and Donald Gutierrez, who just got a book on Rexroth refused, on its second reading, by the University of—possibly New Mexico Press? But New Mexico did do an interesting document, a book by Lee Bartlett, who's there at the University of New Mexico, called *The Sun is But a Morning Star*—which is a Snyder line, apparently. But it sets it out as I would want it set out, Rexroth's position, and the fact that he does go back as far as he does, which isn't always acknowledged. It has an essay on Duncan, and then Everson on

Duncan, and an essay on Everson; and then it goes through Snyder, I think, and McClure. But also to people like Nathaniel Tarn, and Thom Gunn—and the Language poets—I don't know anything about them—met Palmer—that's all. It's a brilliant book with a great reach. But anyway Donald Gutierrez has been very friendly, extremely helpful to me. That his book was refused is a damn shame. He wrote to me since I've been over here: my parents told me. Yes, it led to a whole series of things which I've followed up since I've been here. I left in March. I got to New York and looked up Linda Hamalian. My next stop was Buffalo—met Bertholf, terribly briefly, but he gave me his card, and there are a lot of things I'd like to talk to him about. And I went to Boulder as well—got a load of tapes there, of Duncan—eight hours of him talking about one poem. And then I was in Salt Lake City for quite a while, and then I came here for two days, and went down to Santa Barbara to meet Carol Tinker, Rexroth's widow. That was wonderful, too. And his grave, and the lines on his grave: "As the full moon rises, the swan sings in sleep on the lake of the mind." *Killer!* Carol Tinker was very, very nice, and she told me about this Rexroth journal that's appearing in Japan, to which I will contribute in a big way! —So that's the Rexroth branch, but my interest in Duncan developed along similar lines, a bit later, and Duncan branched off into Spicer, and Blaser, among others. Strangely, Olson came to me through Duncan, not Duncan through Olson. I've been here a month, more or less.

M/P: What was the job you were fired from?

TE: Oh, you remembered that! Warehouse. I wasn't getting on with the foreman. This real problematic situation was building up. He went away, and arranged for someone else to fire me. But I was happy to be fired. And now, luckily, I'm working for my bed. I finished another Rexroth piece before I left, but I might just chuck it.

M/P: Well, is everyone from England just like you—knowing what they want, and going for it? Or perhaps you have a particularly supportive home life?

TE: Yeah: Oh, yeah! I don't have the relationship with my parents such as might be conjured up by the typical adolescent's relationship with his or her parents. I don't have to rebel against them at all. My mother now works at the Museum of Mankind, an ethnic museum in London, and my father has always worked, except for a brief period, at the British Museum. Might sound like wealthy jobs, but they're not. We didn't have a car until I was, I think, nine. And television, although this is more by choice, till I was twelve. But that wasn't poverty by any means. And if it was, I'm sure making up for it now, indulging myself in book after book after book.

M/P: To come all the way to San Francisco on this pilgrimage, you must have a lot of self-confidence and drive.

TE: I haven't much self-confidence—but thank you. When I was in New York, I went to Gloucester, to its Public Library—God! That was amazing. They had files

upon files of clippings that went back all the way to when Olson was 16, when he won that prize in a debating competition. And then among these papers I found a list of addresses, Vincent Ferrini's among them, as well as Olson's son. I wanted to look all of them up, but it was 4:00 p.m. and I hadn't much time there. The whole place was bloody with wind and lashes of rain—wildly primal. It really stunned me. I remember coming back on the train, stunned by Olson. I wanted to go out to his grave, which is the next stop from Gloucester, but I was drenched to the skin: physically stunned as well as mentally. So I went back to Boston, but discovered I could only get a Greyhound ticket for the whole of the East Coast back in New York, so I had to go back down to New York, yeah, really, and I was in the Port Authority building, the bus terminal—damnedest place. I was in there at 11:30 at night, waiting to go to Buffalo, and this hooker came up to me, sat down next to me, and we started talking. Her life was full of tragedies, of course, and she started crying about how I shouldn't have come here, how my parents shouldn't have let me come out here, I was too young, oh, it was terrible! And that got me. She succeeded in making me think so. Oh, I had a terrible first few weeks in some respects, terrible homesickness, and she really didn't help at all. So you might describe me as stretched between being stunned and being homesick, but it's been wonderful for me—and I'll be coming back.

JULIE REGAN

from 18TH STREET/MISSION

The Mission

Two hundred years ago or more, before there was a country and there was only exploration, the sailors has a mission. They wanted to stop.

In each place where their exploration ceased, they built structures, temples, tombs, and called each one The Mission. They built places in the placelessness and named them, rather than naming themselves or naming their activity.

There were as many different reasons to die or kill or stop as there were reasons to go on, but the going on was nameless. Here it was their sorrow that slowed them till they stuck, and so they named this one the Mission of the Sadnesses or Pains.

Streets gathered around it, and finally a city. The building drew people, looking for a saviour nailed to the walls. Some of them just looking for walls, a place to end their own explorations. others could not stop wandering.

18th Street / Mission

DOLORES PARK

MISSION H.S.

DOLORES



TO THE MOUNTAIN
& OCEAN

GUERRERO

500 CLUB

ALBION

PATTI'S APT.

WATER FRONT

PICKER LAKE

19th Street

THE POOL

LINDA

18th Street

DEARBORN

TOOD'S BURNT HOUSE

DONRE CLUB

THE LIGHT CAVE

THE ALPHABET
SOUNDS OF WOMAN'S
BOOK TYPE

ESKIMO WOMAN

17th Street

EL TOTO TAQUERIA

GRAND CANYON

INTERSECTION

BICYCLE MARKET

THE HOYT BAZAR

VALENCIA

AMELIA

THE O SAUNDER PIT

NEW COLLEGE

LA MILL
TOWN
HOUSE



PETE'S GARAGES

DRUG DEN

CANYON WALK

LA BONA BONITA

PIMPS & PROSTITUTES
LA VIOLETTA & PHONES

CANYON CAPE

FLORNO GROCERIES

CONITA

MISSION STREET

17 REASONS WHY

BART

FOLSOM

TO THE UNDER DUNGEON

TO THE POSTHOLES



TO TOOD'S HOUSE
SEA CAPTAIN'S
QUARTER &
THE ANGELS

TO THE NEW
BRIDGE

MISSION ROCK
RESORT

The Dog

After his first house burnt down, Todd moved to a part of the Mission close to the waterfront that everyone had forgotten except the angels.

The house itself had once belonged to a sea captain. It was hidden beneath a lone tall willow whose branches tangled with a street light and gave the leaves an otherworldly glow. Dead gutted cars littered the sidewalk and black cats, lame or eyeless, roamed beneath them, making dark puddles with their bodies, sometimes jumping on the hood and swatting at the vines of leaves.

The house was made of old wood and the front steps creaked. The door was always open (with the angels around they had to live on faith) and the carpet rolled over the warped boards down the hall. More than a century of paint peeled from the walls like fleece and petals, so there were rooms beneath the rooms, and the window's small panes were patched in places with scraps of paper and drizzled photographs.

At the end of the hall was a kitchen with an old gas stove and a sun porch that stepped down into an enclosed garden. The walls were high and windowless as a fortress. They were part of the warehouse that belonged to the angels, and they shook with the sound of music rumbling, heavy metal rock and motorcycles revving.

In the garden itself, behind a little fallen gate, were tall ageless weeds and a single peach tree that still blossomed and dropped peaches in the summer to rot.

Todd and his roommates knew there was nothing they could do about the angels but hold their breath in a brawl and stay out of the windows, but they wanted to kill the dog. The dog roamed the roof and growled. It seemed to be protecting the entrance of everything invisible about the angels that was hell.

One night one of Todd's roommates picked up a peach pit and threw it at the dog.

The next day the angels were at the door. A big one with a hairy belly protruding beneath his Harley winged t-shirt pointed his finger at Todd's eye.

"We found peach pits on our roof last night. Somebody busted the cornea of our dog. You guys better come up with \$5,000 bucks for an operation, or get the hell fast out of this house and this town."

Todd nodded fiercely. He was about one-third the angel's size, but what scared him most was that he could see the angel at all. Up until now the angels had kept themselves invisible or in a blur of black leather flashing by on their bikes. Todd was forced into exile. He began to roam the streets like a stray.

The Night Crier

At the Dovre Club, where there's always been Guinness bubbling out behind the bar and IRA posters flap on the old wood walls, the bartender gives her the white cup. She doesn't speak, waits in a shadowed corner, watching young punks spin on their stools, watching a girl finger a hole in another girl's sweater. Then pushes the door out and goes across the street to the steps.

Bougainvillaea petals stick to the sidewalk at her feet. Their bright maroon not withered by isolation from the bush that climbs a dirty white stucco wall and jungles a dark window. When the fallen petals become too dried out to cling to the pavement, the color remains a stain and blows like scraps of a torn dress through the streets.

She waits still it all goes down the street. She sits on steps that don't belong to her, silent, styrofoam cup in her hands, shaggy hair stiff with the same earth that's hard-packed in her face, her green eyes almost shy, watching the lovers, the dogs, the bikers, watching everything go.

The lights don't go out, but become paler, street lit, moonlit. And the doors close. The cars park. Their shells locked silent and empty for the night. A few strays wander, darkness pulled around their shoulders, towards doorways that might open, that might stay walled, where they can rest awhile. The traffic signals on the corner blink red and yellow, stay awake, with no direction left to give.

It is her time. She stands and lets her jaw drop, closing her eyes. At first there is only air coming over her tongue and teeth, protected by the jutting lip, and a trembling welling in her gut that sets her lungs vibrating on the ribs. And then it comes, the long mournful cry. It runnels the length of the street. A wail that cuts from the dark hills with their red tower lights blinking in fog all the way down to the warehouses and factories of the waterfront. She is a small voice crying in all the sleepers' dreams. A wind which disturbs the paper blinds at the windows of lovers not yet sleeping.

RON DAY

Method, Therapy, Mourning

"When anthropologist arrives, the gods depart."
—Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen*

In the February-March issue of *American Book Review*, Robert Creeley in a review of Linda Reinfeld's book, *Language Poetry: Writing as Rescue*, refers to language poetry as "therapeutic" in regards to its work against reified tropes and other rhetorical structures. Coincidentally (or not), last year in attempting to rewrite a chapter from my 1990 dissertation which was, in part, devoted to an explication of Charles Bernstein's writing up to that point, I too made use of that adjective, this time adapting it from Christopher Fynsk's critique of Richard Rorty's "pragmatism" where Fynsk coined the phrase, "therapeutic philosophy."¹ Unlike Creeley's use of the term, however, my use, like Fynsk's was not favorable. There are two questions I would like to ask here: is poetics therapeutic, and, what is at stake in a "therapeutic" poetics? I realize, of course, that I am taking liberties with Creeley's use of the term in his review, but I think that there is a problem of method in Bernstein's work which the term "therapeutic" can help develop.

It is not my intention here to rewrite the deconstruction of certain aspects of *Artifice of Absorption* attempted in my dissertation. But I have to admit a certain irritation in that I have yet to read a *critical* review of Bernstein's text. Certainly, as with the general lack of critical reviews of poetic texts, this has to do with the politics of poetry (both in poetics communities and in academe) and the immense positive importance of the personal name for entrance into that political economy. What gets passed over in such "criticism," however, especially in regards to Bernstein's writing, is the problem of a therapeutic poetry. And this is not a minor problem.

If therapy is to return us to a functional state, then how can poetics do this? Creeley's argument seems to rest on an act of "rescue" (to use Reinfeld's term). But even if we understand "rescue" in the critical sense that Creeley argues it (and, I believe, Reinfeld does not), that of "'to shake out' or 'wrest away,'" we advance no further than to ask how poetics therapeutically "shakes (us) out" and into what 'state.' At stake is the relation of language and the world to method. Here, we ask the question of the return of language, how writing re-returns in poetics, and if so, if it returns to some 'what' (—and importantly, under what conditions of restriction and violence we can speak about writing returning to, or *as, something*). What is at stake in the therapeutic is no less the practice of writing in general.

It is indisputable that one of the central functions of therapy is to return a person to a register of normative functionality. So, for Freud, the famous "Where it

¹ Christopher Fynsk, "Community and the Limits of Theory." *Community at Loose Ends*. Ed. Miami Theory Collective. University of Minnesota, 1991. 19-29.

(‘id/’es’) is, so I (‘ego’/’Ich’) shall be” refers to a re-placement of that which was displaced by infantile desire. This replacement is accomplished through the repetition and acceptance of the psychoanalytic situation, and the overcoming of resistance within the circuitry of psychoanalytic systematics, so at least, abnormal metaphoric and metonymical trains of language and thought are brought within the control of a privileged machinery of desire. Even in Laing’s work with schizophrenics, communication and “understanding” are achieved by limiting language vis-a-vis the authorized imitation by the analyst of the analysand’s gestures and language.

But art writing occurs in displacement. The re-turn of language to Language in writing is impossible, by virtue that what returns is language again, whose ontological qualities lay bound within the indeterminacy and repetition of writing. Poetry stresses this by an emphasis on technique and an importance placed upon negative space and scale. Narrative occurs by the very orgasmic and addictive fleeing whose distance with(in) reality (and thus to reality) it reinscribes with the passing of every “scene.” Narrative isn’t a show or an illusion, but the nature of meaning in modernist terms.

Bernstein’s *Artifice of Absorption*, however, seems to argue a return of poetics to method, and thus, to the time of the thesis. The enframing of poetics within categories of “absorptive” and “anti-absorptive” gives poetics a field and a project, and thus, a theory and a method. This means that linguistic excess is sublimated to rhetorical economics of representation, and with it, a problematic tension between the aesthetic and the demonstrative and investigatory epistemology of the philosophical sciences is obliterated.

Theory *can* work with poetics, but it must account for the syntax of the literary work, namely its greater embeddedness within the excess of language in the world. Further, theory’s manner of accounting for language is less a formal problem, structurally understood (for formalism, too, can allegorize language as historical) than it is a problem of the opening of theory in relation to method. Theory must open within the questioning of its inquiry, and this means first of all, not taking its inquiry as an object nor as a destination, but rather as a foundational site of critique. This is what “theory” attempted to do within the method of philosophy during the 1980s: a project to question the “theoretical” nature of philosophical inquiry from within the aporias of that inquiry. This project has been radically reversed by the “applied” use of theory, and thus, the reinscription of theory in terms of philosophical method and the rhetoric of temporal progress. In terms of literature, theory’s “pragmatic” reappropriation has meant that literary excess no longer seriously affects theory; literary theory has, too often, slipped back into historicism and ethnological “criticism.” Bernstein’s categories, as categories, tell us what poetry is *about*. And no amount of line-breaks, semantic “play” (however, and in relation to whatever, this maligned term is to be understood) or “oscillation of attentional focus” (AA 57) can do any more than “demonstrate” this *method*, and subsequently, the importance that thesis, demonstration, method and above all hermeneutic economy have within *Artifice of Absorption*.

Bernstein’s plea at the end of the text to bring a “relationship with readers to fruition” and to make the “site of reading become a fact of value” (AA 65)

underscores the value of the thesis, of representation, and of the hermeneutic economy of the text. As in all positive hermeneutic economies, the measure for "value" remains hidden by transcendental Reason ("History," "Fact," "Fruition"). Poetics, however, is concerned with the excess which allows such "fruits" or meetings to occur in the first place, and for realism (and naturalism) to "be"; originating in language and world, its negativity is radical. Nor, as I have suggested, can one argue a "fact of value" of excess as the determination for poetics: first, there would have to be yet another, larger, judgment of such (ad infinitum), and second, the excess of meaning which we call "the world" or "language" is not empirically determined as a "fact."

Earlier than *Artifice of Absorption*, but in a similar vein, Bernstein writes in "Writing and Method":

"All writing is a demonstration of method: it can assume method or investigate it."

Content's Dream 226

Writing as a "demonstration of method" fails to account, however, for *method* as a demonstration of *writing*. Writing may neither "assume" nor not assume method, for it is in the iteration of writing that method gains a legitimacy of truth. The relation of writing-as-method to language constitutes, in Modernity, various ideologies of writing as science, and in literature in particular, writing as realism. Realism is not just one method of writing, but constitutes the "thesis of the precedence of method" (Heidegger) as applied to the practice of writing.

The excess of meaning in language that gives poetics is the reality of poetic practice. Rather than "freedom" from meaning, toward the "freedom" of subjective agency, however, such excess is experienced in Modernity as a loss of identity which no new identity can escape. The return of writing is always mediated and never immediate. (To use Dodie Bellamy's term, writing is "sticky.") Such "drag" and historicity situates Subjectivity, Law, and Return, and not the reverse. Writing returns within a future and a past from which the present is radically subtracted, within the syntactical slippages of experimental narrative or the caesuras of poetic rhythm. The world and writing do not match, and this slippage allows the giving of meaning in "experimental" writing, as well as, on the other hand, problematizes a strictly allegorical readings of politics by poetic form.

If the world were a thesis (either positive or negative), if writing was method, then poetics could indeed "capture" the reader, and return the reader to the world; "fruition" would occur from seed to seed. But the return of writing gives language as neither stable nor unstable: the essential indeterminacy of that which gives, as Derrida argued many years ago, is evident even in rhetorical discourses in which method is necessary and essential (and whose function is not diverted by the mere addition of poetic devices). Writing is continually marked by a radical mourning in a way that a speculative economy is blind to, and cannot account for in terms of 'subject positions' and the like. Poetics does not immediately alter argument, but marks the with-drawing of writing from argument's systemics. Method and

subjectivity are not "demonstrated" by writing 'escaping' them, however, nor by an equally illusionary "investigation" or assumption of them, but by writing's active with-drawing with them. The mourning that sends writing on its way within Modernity's speculative economy of desire also withdraws the ontological privilege of the image in realism. This general withdrawing cannot be fully predicted, nor is it confined to formal experimentation, but it gives time value and site specificness. In late Modernity, it is understood not by 'cure' nor by 'freedom,' but by loss, loss that is not a fall from desire, is not recuperated by either the 'dialogue' of historical progress or by the mystical culmination of fascism, but is the sympathy of a community toward that which is specific in its strikingness—not as a "fact of value," but as the continual giving and finitude of the speculative "fact" and the economic "value" (as both positive and negative values). The radicality of mourning is, however, passed over in the repetition of new fascination, the reading of the past, the settlement of dialogue, and the 'new' positioning of the subject and of the world without accounting for the agency of mourning within the context of Modernity, and (both temporally and spatially) Modernity's 'beyond.'

Freud tried to recuperate mourning to a progressive economy of desire, but that optimism is not ours (for mourning is not simply the lack to a straight and/or sound destiny, resounding with an apocalyptical thanatos). Certainly, poetics can be pragmatic and the seeming priority of method can be held to. Method does occur in this manner: in the so-called 'academic poem'—an accurate name, given the demonstrability of writing for method in the human, social, and physical sciences. But this only masks the beyond of the speculative (and specular) tone, the urgent passing-on to one question after the next, from one paragraph on to another, the "ending," the "beginning," and the "objects" of research, the theatricality of criticism ("what author x is doing is this, author y does that . . .," the "critical portrait," and equally, such as "Language Writing is _____"), and the founding, advent, and resolution of 'topics' in the reflective systems of truth, such as historicism, 'information,' and too often these days, the 'standards' of communicative pedagogy and research. The rights of the written, however, are not given by the 'evidence' of writing, but are given *before* writing. *Writing is both a writing into the future, and a mourning for what the future can and cannot be.*

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for ^{W.A.} NAYLAND BLAKE*from the mss. of Soren Ryebuck*

Now on the days when I wake lashed to the sofa with the stains of the unspeakable trances that overcome me spattered about, I often find myself sunk in melancholy reflection on the day in Suffix when yet my future was untarnished and my loving parents entrusted me to the care of my tutor, Dr. Dashiell, for the grand tour that was to complete my education as a gentleman. Little did they, or I, realize that the blameless edifice of my lessons were to have such a monstrous capstone....
[here the manuscript breaks off]

The journey across the channel was inclement, and I was often sick, such that I was hardly conscious of our surroundings on the farther shore until I found that my tutor's letter of introduction had gained us entry to the chateaux of the Marquis de _____, before his current secured residence in Vincennes had begun. But there, my fall from the auspicious circumstance of my latter existence began, as I was given the task my tutor had so well suited me to, of translating certain manuscripts, in preparation for scholarly publication, from their natal French into Latin, as the passages warranted, then Greek for the more exceptionable, then finally with the help of lexicons thrust upon me, a Mandarin dialect and the tongue of Siam. All during that long Autumn I sat in a lofty and isolated chamber surrounded by the manuscripts of the Divine Marquis's while the leaves of La Coste's ancient paks drifted past the window and I wished that I might fall with them.

But this was but the precursor of what was to come. After we had departed the place, the kiss of the rotund Marquis still clammy upon my cheeks, we continued on some days toward to the south, and I began to think that what had transpired was but a miserable dream, as it seemed that the tour was resumed. You who have not crossed the Alps in January cannot picture the rigors of our journey, and yet I welcomed each new crest as an obstacle between myself and what had been my ordeal, and Dr. Dashiell spoke to me kindly during those weeks in the coach, of pantocrators, ships, seas, sealing wax, of the Sphinx Terpsicore, the theories of Pythoragus upon caves, triangles and the uses of beans against ghosts, of the tears of eros, the pastimes of the caesars, most particularly of the invention of stockings by one whose name escapes me now, and with the aid of ingenious figures of the number of deadly virtues, cardinal sins, liberal arts, plagues of Egypt, genders of salamanders, poultry, and other succubi. It was the scenes and treasures of Italy I had most eagerly anticipated, where I might imagine empire in its original resplendence, see the places named by Virgil and by Terence, and visit those ruins which yet remain, among them the villa long buried by the lavas of that mountain which I believe Petrarch first surmounted, and so recently uncovered.

It was there that my plummet met its nadir, that the misfortune which had hitherto been my sole burden was itself crushed under a knowledge of such savage awfulness that I was myself no longer severable from the course of my fate. Picture my astonishment as I discovered that the mild tutor of my youth was no acolyte but a pillar and byword of this sect, which all historians regard as extinguished by the ages. After the sinless charm, bas-reliefs and beautifully fresco'd walls of the House of

Venus, the Arch of Caligula, the House of the Silver Wedding, the Wool Market, came the house which has come to be called The Villa of the Mysteries. Its beefsteak-red walls haunt me still, and I think it a place where no man should enter. Those who make a study of the paintings now conclude that their meaning is a Gordian knot which no key can unlock, and I who have been initiated of their dread meaning shall never speak of what I saw in the living temple, recollection of whose great glass jars of incubi, worms and spirits, sinuous dancers, devices dispensing infernal fumes, and savage drumbeats makes the strange truths I gained come over me as though I were there yet. I see by your eagerness, and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be: listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved on that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge. Those sacred precepts which once stood as the outer bounds of what I considered possible were themselves crumbled as ruins, and I looked upon a world that was no more, or to which I was but a perpetual exile.

After that visit which stands as an abyss in my existence, we went onward to the villa of the Baron von Dahlmer, he who was exiled from his lands in Westphalia for such acts as I was later to witness in the weeks we spent there. I had a friend there, whose sympathetic eye bespoke a kindred spirit and whose dignity of mien and lineaments evidenced a paternity that ill-suited him to his present task, which was to stand und clothed but for the shackles that prevented his flight, holding the tomes whose receipts guided the acts of the Baron, most particularly the "Jouissance de la Cuisine," as I believe it was called, that was his particular guide. Often now I wonder what befell him, who was so clearly meant for a gentler vocation than that which was his sentence. It was during this time that I again collapsed into a state of insensibility from which I was hardly roused until I had again returned to the home of my forebears, which as my parents has expired during the time of my sentimental education, was now mine alone, and where yet the retainers guard me from the strange fits of passion that come upon me still, and when I am myself, the remorse gnaws me, bitterer than the draughts I tasted in that villa, for the strange fate that befell me. . . .

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1,539 words

Bleary from her subREM, Iell amped the 'Face with her work prog and entered Archeosite #12098377389, known to her and her team as OZ. In accordance with their current hypotheses and the inflo being relayed back by several hundred thousand insectlod scanners, the simulation was a concrete, bunkerish structure, whose walls were composed of a varicolored petrochemical layer. In earlier manifestations it had been pitch black in OZ until Iell had realized that some of the sites artifacts were a system for producing light. Lately, she had been spending some of her off time tinkering with various ideas about the light's dispersal and now she felt a mild pleasure as she surveyed the effect. Despite the illumination, Iell couldn't shake the unease that always accompanied her visits to the site. ~~The notion of walls, the prime characteristic of architecture. Pre-'Face' always brought made her tense.~~ The was even a Pre-'Face' word for it, "claustrophobia"; the fear of contained spaces. It was a fear that was even more insistent for ~~some one~~ who had lost a coherent notion of what space was. Iell found it difficult to comprehend the ease with which the P'Fers' had delineated inside and outside, the "me" and "not-me" and their obsession with division, inclusion, exclusion and boundaries. It had even structured their entire sexual life, down to dividing each other up according to gender, race, species or age. Worse, the fact that the divisions seemed to be linked to some kind of value judgement...it was one of the aspects of P'Fers life Iell still couldn't understand.

Other members of the team winked into the sim, inspecting various updates, flashing approval for Iell's lumen manipulation. Finally Iell felt Avid, the team's chief lens, clearing her thought and focusing the team in anticipation of the inflomating.

Avid was manifesting herself as a pool of water in the middle of the sim and Iell watched as she rippled disapprovingly at Ashi, the teams play lenser. Lately Ashi had taken to manifesting as a P'Fer image from an earlier site: curling brown hair, dimpled body, wings, winking sex; a cherub.

"Ashe must you be so ... corporeal? It's inflo restrictive for your orifices to be so specific." To illustrate her point, Avid turned stagnant and inert. Ashe laughed and plucked a rush from Avid's surface: "We're 98% on the structure, right? So that means we're mating about use, and who better to

figure out how to use this thing but one of the owners?" The rush faded in the chubby fist and Ashe made it into a blue bottle fly. Avid sighed. It was Ashi's job to introduce nonlinear method, surprise, difficulty. She let the fly settle on her surface and drowned it. "Alright, so long as your manifestation isn't meant to convince us this place was heaven, or an acerie." She turned her attention back to the rest of the team and cleared. A few flashes appeared in her depths as the team's thought began to 'Face. A hush fell and Iell could sense within it the team's quickening need. Ashi obediently joined the mating by wading into Avid's shallow end. For all of her dread of OZ's enclosing walls, Iell still felt the hunger to know its truth, a hunger that had brought her together with the rest of this team into a grouping that the P'Fer's would probably describe as a family, or a symposium, or an orgy.

Around the team, the sim began to slide in and out of definition as the group's thought tried to fill in the missing bits in OZ's continuum. Iell thought of OZ, of the actual site. It was an eroded pit filled with silt and sunk for an eon beneath the sea of another globe. For a decade now the team had pondered it, probed it with their army of symbiotic crawlers, burrowers, peepers. In the first years they wondered on the cataclysm that placed it there. At last they decided that it was simply the cataclysm of time. Then they sought its contours, its particulars. The sim had sprouted lines, surfaces, walls. Its looming shapes had flickered with color while the team debated the chemical composition of its various coatings. It was Idda, their most accomplished historian who had brought them to the pleasurable theory that the colored groupings were a two dimensional system of representation. Iell could still remember the blush of orgasm that had accompanied their comprehension of the word "outline". How they had 'flood! On another level though, the word had troubled her. It was more evidence of the alien nature of Pre'Face thought; another example of their insistence on the discrete natures of within and without. How could the P'Fer's think that when borders between the two were being crossed all the time, even without 'Face? They imagined the boundary kept one thing in and something else out. But Iell knew from other teams that even at the time of OZ's beginning the infant 'Face was making its presence felt as communications systems, water ways, drugs, pheromones, esp, viruses. With all the evidence of this dissolution, what had maintained their faith in

separation?

Upon learning its shape the team had thought then on OZ's maker. For a while portions of it had seemed to be similar in organization to some earlier obscure cosmologies, even with a hand book on love, a quaint reminder of the time when pleasure was regarded as separate from other existence. But the connections were too vague, or somehow the team could not come to a satisfying conclusion about them. That had lead them to their current ruminations. If they knew what Oz was for, perhaps they could decide who had made it.

The team sought its pleasure in earnest now, and as its thoughts 'flooded together the sim displayed the myriad of OZ's possible uses. Blackened ivy wriggled over the walls. Herds of cattle lowed in confusion while they felt the floor crack under them. A mist rose. Two men prised off chunks of concrete and sold them to each other over and over again. Bats infested the ceiling and ate flies they had lured with a purplish excretion. Fires burned on the stairs. A murder was committed. White sheets were riven and used to blot out the sunlight. Five infants made slow circuit of the rooms, licking and receiving nourishment from the sockets. A cat was disassembled and reassembled. Through it all, the team searched for the ideas that would increase the pleasure that was beginning to suffuse their 'Face. The word "initiation" rolled amongst them, and they began to luxuriate in its truth. To initiate; to begin. Was Oz then some sort of place of beginning? Iell began to wish for the conclusion she felt building within all of them. Her thoughts ripened in the depths of Avid's focus. She could feel them brushing against Ashi's limbs as the cherub swam to and fro. She longed for them to burst.

A group of worshipers tramped into the sim. Slowly they began to acknowledge each other, speaking in lowered voices, sharing cups of wine. Around them the flat images of the things they might be kept watch, impassive before the halting dance of the initiates. A table was laid. Food was presented and the sacrificial amount was left for the images, the true inhabitants of the place. Time went past. Few of the worshippers were left now. They wandered, fearfully gazing into the bright faces that beckoned them into their new lives as... what? Iell felt doubts like coppery chills. They gnawed the team, fraying the voluptuous interchange that seconds ago

had bound them all. Questions threatened a dispersal of their ecstasy. If these walls kept something in, what was being kept out? If this body has an edge, how can it know another? What was OZ the image of? What was it the Beginning of? Why would any one make a picture of themselves that was not themselves? or are all pictures their makers because they represent all that the makers can know about picture making? Who is being initiated here? In the service of what God?

Iell felt brackish, connected to the team by cords of muck. A light flashed on one of the walls, niggling counterpoint to their disappointment. The flickering turned into Ashi's laugh as the cherub gasped and pointed and giggled and said over and over "Look! Look! Ah what fools these mortals be! Can't you see what it is?" Iell looked where Ashi pointed, looked at the patterning looked where the light had isolated a single portion of the scene. And Iell saw the figure. The figure laid forever into the wall, the figure wearing the garb of the initiate, the figure surrounded by the attentions of others, the mouth agape, orifices open, receptors active, the figure who was ascending into knowledge and the rapture knowledge brings.

The figure of herself.

Ashi's excitement was an irresistible tickling, a stroking, a luscious pounding, "The 'Face... the 'Face! Don't you see - OZ is the showing the beginning of the 'Face!" and with Dashiell voice came understanding and with understanding came their bliss which came, and came and came again.

from the mss. of Soren Ryebuck

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It was there that my plummet met its nadir, that the misfortune which had hitherto been my sole burden was itself crushed under a knowledge of such savage awfulness that I was myself no longer severable from the course of my fate. Picture my astonishment as I discovered that the mild tutor of my youth was no acolyte but a pillar and byword of this sect, which all historians regard as extinguished by the ages. After the sinless charm, bas-reliefs and beautifully fresco'd walls of the House of

Venus, the Arch of Caligula, the House of the Silver Wedding, the Wool Market, came the house which has come to be called The Villa of the Mysteries. Its beefsteak-red walls haunt me still, and I think it a place where no *man* should enter. Those who make a study of the paintings now conclude that their meaning is a Gordian knot which no key can unlock, and I who have been initiated of their dread meaning shall never speak of what I saw in the living temple, recollection of whose great glass jars of incubi, worms and spirits, sinuous dancers, devices dispensing infernal fumes, and savage drumbeats makes the strange truths I gained come over me as though I were there yet. I see by your eagerness, and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be: listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved on that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge. Those sacred precepts which once stood as the outer bounds of what I considered possible were themselves crumbled as ruins, and I looked upon a world that was no more, or to which I was but a perpetual exile.

After that visit which stands as an abysm in my existence, we went onward to the villa of the Baron von Dahlmer, he who was exiled from his lands in Westphalia for such acts as I was later to witness in the weeks we spent there. I had a friend there, whose sympathetic eye bespoke a kindred spirit and whose dignity of mien and lineaments evidenced a paternity that ill-suited him to his present task, which was to stand unclothed but for the shackles that prevented his flight, holding the tomes whose receipts guided the acts of the Baron, most particularly the "Jouissance de la Cuisine," as I believe it was called, that was his particular guide. Often now I wonder what befell him, who was so clearly meant for a gentler vocation than that which was his sentence. It was during this time that I again collapsed into a state of insensibility from which I was hardly roused until I had again returned to the home of my forebears, which as my parents has expired during the time of my sentimental education, was now mine alone, and where yet the retainers guard me from the strange fits of passion that come upon me still, and when I am myself, the remorse gnaws me, bitterer than the draughts I tasted in that villa, for the strange fate that befell me.....