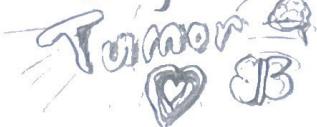


My friend Benigno has a Brain

Act I



- buried in light
- anguish in the spectrum
- his red bristle ignighted by the offspring of general electric

The projector displays simple yellow light, illuminating Benjamin, who clears his

throat and then begins to read from what is, apparently, a script.

apparently certain

names are more likely to

be empathised with. Kyle

doesn't make the list - neither does

Ben. Why is it my name - or yours?

They don't know us -

goal is to

shed light

on love do

we get closer

by orchestrating

it all?

name alternatives

Ai (Chinese - love)

Luwii (Congo) BRN: I wanted to be careful concerning what I would say about Kyle so I wrote a

Caris (Welsh - love)

script; a script is one way to be "full of care," I suppose (or so I've written). I

Armo (Finnish)

I think I care → oh yes I must.

Benigno (Latin - kind)

recognized Kyle had some reservations about being represented by someone

If F other than himself, even if it was me, his friend, Benjamin Ross Nicholson. He never existed.

take your name

you will was worried that I might "get it wrong" and lead you to believe things about dragons

need one too

Adnan Syed

could conjur

Adnan Syed

is innocent

He never ate

the ice cream

Zeki (Turkish - clever)

him that he doesn't believe. After sharing with him the song you just heard, he

Redmond

asked me to avoid depicting him in any way that might seem melodramatic or

(Irish - wise protector)

Navel Gazing

Odin

theatrical; specifically, he asked me to remove a lyric that suggested he was

Cato

lonely because he is not "in a relationship." To the extent anyone might know of

Budha

such things, Kyle would prefer the following be known: he is not lonely, but

Apollo

rather he's undertaking a reassessment of what love might mean to him.

light

- only if love is the physical manifestation of
a complicit partner - otherwise the assessment is
like the sun rising - pursuable as a field of study but
rather irrelevant considering the lack of any notable

In an attempt to include Kyle in the process of the production of this changes in its

behavior

performance, I've asked him to annotate this script so as to provide additional

context, augmentation, and rebuttal to what I've prepared; from this moment
H:

forward, I will read his annotations aloud on his behalf. Now, allow me to step

into the dark so that you may enjoy an image in my visual absence.*

the exact type
of me-meing
(noun) (verb)

that Redmond from
pg 1 wouldn't have thought
of

Uh oh he's now out of love!

Benjamin clicks and an image appears of a wooden panel depicting a dead fish,

Save Him!

captioned "Tout ce qui est, mas n'est pas c'est l'amour"; Benjamin allows the

audience to receive the image for a moment.

There's hide & seek?

->

Ben are you okay

The image before you: this is a recent instance of Kyle's art. Let's notice what we

take stock of
(more '3D)*

see. This art includes a dead fish, a symbol that has appeared in at least one

other of his works. There are French words, which I will badly pronounce: "Tout

ce qui est, mas n'est pas c'est l'amour." I'll provide a translation in a moment; if

even if you do the darn thing is curious

you don't speak French, allow yourself to remain curious about the significance

At top right

of this phrase! A price tag is represented in the corner: three dollars and ninety-

In the middle

nine cents American. A small man is hacking his way into the bowels of the ~~dead~~

fish; or, alternatively, a normal-sized man is hacking his way into the bowels of a

the large fish. There is a tree in the background that might appear lonely, but is

we can all have one

alter it - define it

associate it with



Dead Symbols/
Signals

don't stink

2

I'm imaging
plastic signage
(no parking) / yard sale

The tree is lonely because when it gets
reunited it doesn't whine like a little
bitch

unlikely to be experiencing the sensation of "loneliness"; it's reacting to its environment more slowly than we can perceive.

* Some trees are bigger than others

I'll allow you a few more moments with the image of this artwork before we proceed.

Benjamin pauses; after an appropriate period of time, he clicks, revealing Kyle's Gauguin reference image.

Gauguin -> cog - an Its hard to believe that each of us holds the one essential form of truth and then attempt to convince another person that I don't believe that. That we could have a homogeneous version together. This image was provided to me by Kyle, though he can't claim total responsibility for its existing – Paul Gauguin carved the wood panel in 1889.

Meanwhile, Kyle contributed the various labels and indicative lines, which when read as an ordered list appear to be missing item "F," (perhaps this designation

was intended for but ultimately withheld from the unlabeled "positive

French text affirmation about love"). You see, if you recall the preceding image that

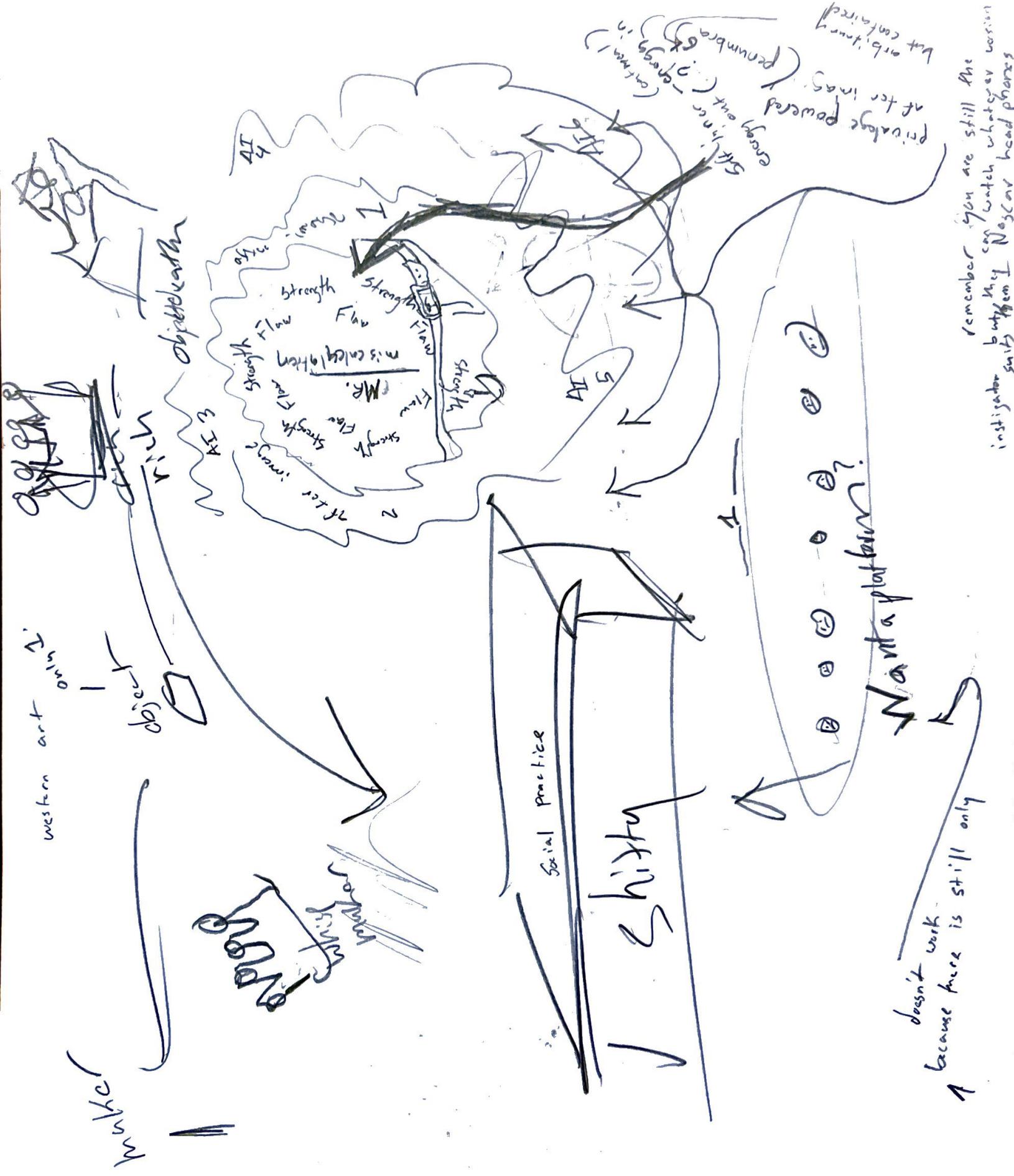
included the either oversized dead fish or undersized hacker man, Kyle has

designs to generate a series of nine panels derived from the features of

this one *
because it hasn't gotten the same Joe as the alternative or these things

.. the edge

No? Perhaps I shouldn't have built my house on transgressive Polynesian sand



Gaugin's work; the labels and indicative lines are Kyle's attempt to systematize the visual elements that will be represented on each panel.

Why was Kyle so impressed by this relief?

Benjamin clicks; image depicting the text of Gaugin's carving appears: "Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses."

->

the title of Gauguin's piece

"Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses," though poorly pronounced, is what

Kyle would call a "positive affirmation about love." As I mentioned, Kyle has
** I love you all - don't call me during the day mother fukker*
become fascinated by the notion of love of late. Given that French is oft cited as

"the language of love" (not to be confused with the "love languages," which

include:

Benjamin clicks, revealing love language list.

->

*I - as long as I'm not trapped in a 2nd to ↑ floor apartment
Gotta keep moving*

affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch), it is

perhaps unsurprising that Kyle would explore French musings that are

equal numerals suggesting magic
unintelligible to him without translation. And what do Gaugin's words signify in
our less lovely English?

Benjamin clicks, revealing translation.

->

According to Google Translate, "soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuses"
means "be in love you will be happy." Superficially, this sounds like a simple
~~* walk on over and be in~~
equation, the makings of a good plan. That is to say, finding one's way to
happiness, the pursuit of which is nominally an "inalienable right," merely
involves some immersion in love.

Benjamin clicks, simple yellow light; he steps into the image.

-> etymologically is Spanish and French - Soviets grab it during revolution

I ask you, comrades: do you find this to be true?

Benjamin regards the audience and waits for a response.

I wager that Kyle received this premise somewhat ironically.

Benjamin steps out of the light and clicks, revealing a quote from Wikipedia.

->

According to the Wikipedia page for Gaugin's piece, "The title is somewhat ironic and probably stems from the same dark, bitter humour that led [Gaugin] to title his home the "House of Pleasure". In fact the work's subject matter is bleak and its mood turbulent. It represents an exploration of corruption, lust, voyeurism and male sexual power."

Benjamin clicks; image of an apartment.

->

In the early winter of 2018, following the completion of our MFA program in Chicago (in visual art, if you can believe it!), Kyle came to stay at 1261 W Granville Ave. where I lived with my then fiancé now ex-wife, who we will call Hilda for privacy reasons. Kyle and I were both adjunct teaching introductory art classes in the

Benjamin clicks; Logan Center.

->

building at the school from which we received our graduate degrees, an opportunity offered to our cohort of eight art students in the year following our graduation. Kyle had relocated to

Click; image of Colorado.

->

Denver, Colorado to finally cohabitate with his long-term partner who he had been seeing long-distance for years; we'll call her Dina for privacy reasons. This is to say, Kyle moved to Colorado, a place to which he had no other ties, to be with Dina (who had move there following nursing school), to be *in love* and, thus,

happy. Things were not going well in their household.

tough bridge to walk because who has claim of it? David Lynch? \$50 million, he paid, if we can reclaim words through use I imagine that he can buy one. But it is transcendental, which is a

Kyle would explain the situation to my now ex-wife Hilda and me and we would

provide expert relationship advice:

Paul Schrader

Click; diagram of open relationship.

->

(1)

honest and supportive
in distance and youth

Kyle and Dina were in an open relationship so as to be able to experience "love"

(3A) * I was willing, yeah. But it was
a mutual decision that had been made

equally with multiple partners; Kyle was willing to participate but only felt
(2) * didn't expect these people to exist when I started — I was right
capable of love for Dina. Hilda and I felt that this incongruence represented an existential threat to their romantic/domestic relationship; Kyle was convinced it

(3B) (for it then but you never give you
plenty of time to study love. They
are going to be there for you
in the long run.)

could work and, being long-distance once again while he taught in Chicago, it

seemed like he was more comfortable with Dina than he had been in Colorado

* persistent presence/run-presence — yeah her body was
my home but she wasn't communicating anymore
with her persistent presence, where her relative absence was more notable, all that
was gone.

more implicating of her relative feelings for him.

(4) * Ha! She was having anxiety attacks when
I asked to meet him. I did a few times.
I bought him some beers at hole in the wall place.

Kyle told us that Dina wanted him to be friends with one of her other partners
Dawn never
made it. He writing
was on the

and had introduced them at a private dinner between the three of them; Kyle will

expressed that he found the guy to be nice and fine.

for both he and I. Once
She went radio silent / no
longer was able to express herself and
wanted a secret but didn't have one because
I was taking all the air out of that balloon
G.T. thinks she realized she actually
wanted to be alone for the first time — I was 20

When Kyle returned to



Boulder, Colorado.

Compersion — achieving happiness through your partner's

happiness. We used the typical texts to bring in

-> some vocab that might help but we never truly landed on
a title, I think "open" was used mostly, not sure. The level of
idealism we had carried us through and still today I don't
have any regrets about ~~that~~ that part of our relationship. It honestly
never got in the way

* forgot his name
he was bummed from what I heard.
I mean yeah I was about to
Denver, Dina continued to see but soon ended her relationship with the other be
similarly bent out of shape
So I felt bad for him
guy; Kyle felt this was harbinger of her desire to end her relationship with him as

well, which she did rather promptly after having been with Kyle for six years; I

believe this experience impacted Kyle's sense of love as a conduit for happiness.

* it did but like almost everything we did together it was ~~epic~~ ^{epically} beautiful

Returning to Kyle's art,

* The ~~quiet~~ quiet

~~That's what you want Ben~~

that's what sticks still... It was
when ~~the questions went forever~~
~~unanswered. It was debasing myself when I~~
~~couldn't think of anything else and it still didn't~~
~~help - (We stopped having sex and somewhere in a low~~
~~both-naked-in-the-shower-together-moment - of us~~
we recall another French phrase, this time of Kyle's making: "Tout ce qui est,

Click; panel.

->

mas n'est pas c'est l'amour."

- crying — me because I ~~was wanting~~
~~she thought she was withholding the~~
~~future had everything~~
key - directions - I had friended ~~her~~
I could think of for about a year,
and ~~she was crying~~ I think because
she didn't want to hurt me and
she was lost too ~~< didn't know a~~
~~direction if I were coming along.~~
~~She realized she could be lost and happy alone.~~
That way she wouldn't feel the guilt
I must have presented ~~her~~ for
her as I was slowly ~~losing~~
my mind from sitting in the metaplo-
cal dark. A/s ended it — she got
there and ended it — so we ^{were} went
and cried through a bottle of
wine and a plate of pasta in public
and then planned a road trip as soon as

This translates roughly to:

Click; Google Translate.

->

"All that is, but is not is love."

Solos - riding together - for a week long camping / music festival is at the Gorge in WA - again absolutely beautiful companionship. When we were almost back to Denver is the only time in ~~the~~ that ^{where} emotions percolated up. I went for a run — unrelatedly fell and got all cut up — came back to the car looking as emo as humanity possible. I don't think we talked about the fall — always bleedin we were both still mad

I took Martha Nussbaum in Grad School to try and understand this phenomena.
~~Not the loss of motor skills~~ Not the loss of high motor skills while angry or sad but because of the duality of emotion that can manifest when you are in anguish — I used to talk about it in Chicago using ~~an~~ an example of ~~the~~ Analyzing yourself crying while crying. In this case I remember ~~the~~ the ground gave out below my feet in what looked like a plain of medium ~~sized~~ sized stones stacked in plateaus. So ~~you~~ running (angry) (fall → immediate thoughts ~~—~~ "you're laughing" — but still angry)

All that is, but is not, is love. There's a few ways we can parse this premise; given Kyle's fascination with logic, we will do so logically using everyone's favorite programming language, Java.

Click; logic statement.

->

We can consider if a thing "is," if it exists, and determine if that same thing *simultaneously* "is not," if it does not exist, and whichever thing satisfies both conditions constitutes "love."

If we imagine "existing" and "not existing" to be mutually exclusive categories, then common sense would suggest that there is no such thing for which both of these conditions are true. Thus:

Click; conclusion.

->

nothing, *no thing*, is love; love does not exist.

Alternatively,

Click; logic statement.

->

we can consider if a thing "is," if it exists, *at some point in time*, and determine if that same thing "is not," if it does not exist, *at some other point in time*, and whichever thing satisfies both conditions constitutes "love."

If we imagine the preemptive and eventual "not existing" of all forms that can be said to "exist," if we foreclose the possibility of immortality as a foundational premise of our being (which, I must concede, not everyone is willing to do), then we arrive at a conclusion that directly contradicts our previous determination:

Click; conclusion.

->

everything, *every thing*, is love; love flows through all such things that exist and,
** is*
accordingly, are impermanent.

Given the potential for disagreement on what constitutes existence, this seems to be an irresolvable state of affairs. And this is before we've even addressed what "love" might signify vis-à-vis existing.

In short, Kyle's

Click; Kyle's panel.

->

art offers us to no destination, nowhere to park our love.

We might, then, consider for a moment one of Kyle's early tattoos, received during his undergraduate days, which is similarly revealing of how Kyle's presence/absence might relate to the possible presence/absence of love as it may be found in "things."

Click; "Always Bleedin'" tattoo.

->

"Always Bleedin'." Not quite "bleeding," but practically so. Kyle told me recently that in most photographs taken of him as a child he can be seen covered in cuts and bruises and dirt; he spent much of his time speeding around colliding with things (joyfully, I believe). As a young adult, Kyle was still known for his tendency to become injured and, to honor this tendency, was punctured by ~~an~~inking needle and appropriately labeled.

* ~~Sewing if anking
But I don't think its necessary~~

To always be bleeding could be understood as oxymoronic, for to bleed continuously without cessation implies that no coagulation of the blood occurs and, as in the case of hemophiliacs, risks causing death by exsanguination. In this scenario, "always" is cut short, further resulting in the cessation of Kyle's body's ability to produce new blood to be bled.

Of course, it's possible that some procedure could be undertaken to periodically reopen a wound that would otherwise heal, leading to a minimum of blood loss but, unless done under highly controlled and sterile conditions, might cause infection, which also could lead to death (and the same cessation of the production of blood mentioned previously).

If we accept both "always" and "bleedin'" metaphorically, however, we might

get some sense of an existence steeped in dual processes of loss ("bleedin'")

and the ongoing generation and accretion of form and being that allows for

there to ^ something to lose in the first place, so long as one exists in the seeming

"always" of livelihood.

I don't get it
— the panel is certainly my bet on
which of us goes longer in life.
Arndt offered the world and also nothing

Again, with Kyle we find little resolution, only a certain sort of circularity that

keeps us moving until we stop.

Walter ?!

Click; Kyle's panel. Benjamin pauses for a moment.

->

You see this panel, Kyle's art? Do you recall that Kyle took direction for Gaugin?

I must now reveal that Kyle has been looking at a lot of art and has no problem

putting it to use. ~~*~~ *Nope*

Click; Bruegel the Elder drawing.

->

This is a 1556 brush and pen drawing by Flemish artist Bruegel the Elder, titled

"Big Fish Eat Little Fish."

* now dead
fish

Click; Pieter van der Heyden etching.

->

And this is a 1557 engraving of Bruegel the Elder's drawing by Pieter van der

Hayden, signed erroneously in the lower left corner with the name "Hieronymus

Bosch," an artist who died in 1516. Hieronymus Bosch made paintings that

looked like this:

* V
c a t i n g a
human

Click; Bosch painting. Benjamin pauses for a moment.

->

Click; van der Heyden etching.

->

The van der Heyden etching contains two lines of text. The first, in Latin,

translates to indicate that

Click; translation.

->

"big fish are small fish," or that big fish exist by virtue of their consumption of smaller fish (that is to say, they are what they eat).

The second line, in Flemish, reads in English as

Click; translation.

->

"see son this I have known for a very long time that those big fish eat the small ones."

I would like to note that this reference to generational relations (a father and son) is fascinating; we will discuss this soon.

More recently, the cheerful British band

Click; "Optimistic" lyrics

->

Radiohead leveraged this premise in the lyrics for their song "Optimistic."

weird — I never understood why this was ~~big~~

It is tempting to interpret such fish talk as commentary on the nature of power, that to be "big" is to be "stronger-than," to be "small" is to be "weaker-than," and that the prerogative of the big is to subject the small to every manner of exploitation, deprivation, and violence so long as it might maintain or enhance the girth of the mighty.

unclear

Yet if we think about the "is" and the "isn't" of things (love, blood, and even fish), we might also understand something of what it means to *contain*, that to be a container for something usually means to supply ample space for such a thing to be surrounded, to have a place, to be placeable, to belong, to have meaning. Our bodies, to the extent we recognize them anatomically, offer a recursive series of containments that, per the science of biology, are necessary in order to permit the ongoingness of our species.

Our

Click; skin.

->

skin surfaces the general structure of our forms.

Our

Click; torso and heart.

->

torsos contain our hearts (amongst other wet things).

Our

Click; atria.

->

hearts contain our atria, which are responsible for our

Click; blood.

->

blood's containment of oxygen (in collaboration with the lungs).

They say love is matter of the

Click; heart of love.

->

heart.

Is "love" somewhere *in* there?

And if love is in the heart, is it because it has been eaten?

Does love involve

Click; Saturn Devouring His Son.

->

devouring?

C

At the cusp of time between 2016 and 2017, Kyle's father, who had been
* one of the Santars
missing, was found dead in California. Kyle was working on his MFA thesis show
and created this object:

Click; fish eating fish arch.

->

an arch of bass rising from and descending into the ostensible "sea," offering
the illusion of some kind of continuity of feasting animals but literally terminating
where they meet the floor.

This art object was a component of a larger installation and series of three
videos depicting friends trying to explain the project, a thesis exhibition whose
images Kyle insisted I include to demonstrate that he had mustered more than a
single arch of bass for Karl (his father); he actually made two arches of bass. The

exhibition looked like this:

* two? whoa! The audience
successfully understands the p~~art~~
~~compulsion~~ Click six times; Kyle had to make art a topic that tested the
Click six times; Kyle's MFA exhibition, then return to still of the fish arch.

Knock off Stoicism ~~stuff~~ he had adopted.
20

->

->

->

->

->

->

Regardless, the symbolism is clearly of significance to Kyle, whose Instagram handle is

Click; Kyle's Instagram.

->

The suggest forward progress but they don't move much

"fisheatingfish," and who has labored to share with us

Click; Kyle's panel.

->

this panel.

Click; yellow light. Benjamin returns to center stage with a bag in hand.

->

At this time, I would like to provide you with the opportunity to encounter a sensual experience.

Benjamin withdraws Kyle's panel from the bag and holds it up in the light, scanning the audience.

Would anyone like to hold it?

Benjamin waits for a volunteer and, upon their appearance, gives the panel to the audience member and then returns to the light.

Please take good care of Kyle's panel until the end of the show, at which point I will come to collect it; you are welcome to share it with those you love or may come to love.

Benjamin waits for several moments and then continues.

Act II

Though the preceding moments of this performance can be said to have

constituted "Act I" of *My Friend Kyle (Has a Brain Tumor)*, we slipped, just
moments ago and perhaps without realizing it, into what we might call
moments ago and perhaps

Benjamin walks into the darkness and clicks; "Act II" displayed.

->

I fucked up the drama
- on brand -

"Act II" of the show. The introductory song, Act I, and a concluding

"outro" (which you have yet to witness)

Click; list of parts of play.

->

were piloted at an event in Los Angeles in the last days of April of this year

as part of an end-of-semester show put on by my department at the

University of Southern California, where I am a PhD candidate in the

This sentence is still going and
now you have to
contend with my raving's here
before you turn the page.
will it make you falter?

likely not but here it is to obscure
the proceedings. As ~~we~~ get closer to

Click; MA+P logo.

->

I don't want to talk about

Media Arts + Practice program. You may find yourself asking: "Benjamin
of what genres am I?"

Ross Nicholson, if you're a grad student at USC, what are you doing here

and ask yourself if these words need to

in Denver, Colorado?" I will explain soon; for now, let it remain as
our dirty laundry to empty seats. You revel in the awkwardness of it, dont you? I assume you

mysterious as French aphorisms to a monolingual English speaker?

have played out a scenario where you are there, looking out at only one other set of eyes. In this phantasy you insist on performing the entirety of the act. It is romantic and you go to shake the audience member's hand. [The poor victim has to pee.]

Kyle came with me to

[so badly though, that all they can offer you is a clamy clap. Kick high Red Man. hide]

Click; image of LA.

->

Los Angeles to observe the performance; our intention was to "get the

[skit]

show on its feet," so to speak, and determine what of the 35-minute show

might be retained for

the big leagues

Click; Denver Fringe logo.

->

[we should
be shooting
for 132 minutes]

Denver Fringe and what might be augmented to achieve a roughly 60-minute runtime. What you are witnessing now, at this very moment, is a portion of that augmentation; this follows from our time in LA. Though Kyle's western adventures could be elaborated at length (Kyle was in quite a state of excitement and stimulation, resulting in some

Click; Kyle hugging Kung Fu Panda.

[- Stanton did not direct Kung Fu Panda]

I'm hugging -> what may be the public estimation of my job or my goal in life (as goals) notable behavioral expressions), we will focus only on a certain art object

that was created as an offshoot of the performance, ~~from~~ a pulpy slurry of

a coincidentally linked to that object dead trees fluidified, - and the person to whom that art object led Kyle.

But first, an anecdote from my wedding: on the morning of August 4th,

2018, a previously unanticipated rainstorm appeared to be consolidating

its efforts over

- the point is that "it is everywhere"

Writer	Director
Toy Story 1	
Toy Story 2	
Toy Story 3	
Toy Story 4	
WALL-E	WALL-E
John Carter	John Carter
Finding Nemo	Finding Nemo
Finding Dory	Finding Dory

A Bugs Life
"Victory is sweet" - Kyle Hassi June 10th 2022

Co-Director

A Bugs Life

"Victory is sweet" - Kyle Hassi June 10th 2022

Click; Mount Hope Farm.

->

Mount Hope Farm in Bristol, Rhode Island. Hilda had decided the day before to rush order some fifty clear plastic umbrellas for our guests which, as of the morning in question, hadn't arrived (and which, until just months ago, had sat in my mother's New Hampshire garage ^{In the years of storage there} ~~as she had only been~~ able to generously pawn off about twenty to friends and family ~~in the~~ ~~interceding years; she recently had the remainder taken away); calling~~ the vendor we found out that the umbrellas were being held at a FedEx facility across the border in

*-the point is that "it" is
everywhere*

Click; Rhode Island to Massachusetts.

->

Massachusetts and were not going to be able to be delivered in time for the wedding. Kyle, my de facto best man (though he insisted that I not

[A grossly refer to him as such] and I determined at ~~recently~~ 8AM that we would head open display of my avoidance of obligations. I had done it once previous and felt so sick about it out to Massachusetts to retrieve the umbrellas.

that I couldn't risk having that feeling repeated.] One of my fraternity friends asked me and having never heard of people turning down the role I signed on. The bachelor party was completely unplanned and occurred the night before the wedding. I didn't choose the date. It was made after the bride and groom purchased hotel rooms

for their wedding parties. Andrew's cousin was a groomsman but because he lived local he didn't get a room. So the party was just three of us. → Strip Club → old gf was waitress → guys hated it. Along the roughly ninety-minute drive, we decided to stop for breakfast in ^{so we left} a manner that would never have been approved by Hilda had she been ^{and went to} an after hours club. with us:

to old guy's had shirt covered. so we went back to the hotel room. I passed

Click; Yelp logo crossed out.

out

->  and there

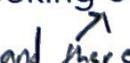
without consulting Yelp(!) for its recommendations of quality, we were going to pull our car over to the first restaurant we saw that appeared to be open and eat there.  its there

I don't recall the name of the place we chose, but I can briefly describe it to you:

Click; diner.

->

[a church's kitchen]

dimly lit, long and narrow, smelling of burnt cooking oil. We took stool seats at the counter (we were the only guests when we arrived) and were  and there

*Erin Brockovich
as played by Erin Brockovich*

met by an exhausted looking woman, returning from smoking cigarettes out back. She took our orders (I may have had a grilled cheese sandwich; *[In thinking terms]* I'm not sure about Kyle) and proceeded to pour us waters, perhaps an orange juice. A man with a limp arrived soon after, apparently the person responsible for making the food, and was told what we had ordered.

Once our food was in front of us, the man and the woman forgot about

Kyle and me and spoke to one another like characters out of *Manchester by the Sea*, *Good Will Hunting*, *The Town*, or any number of other Affleck-affiliated films set near Boston.

*I hear its all over and more
in these suckergo*

May I ask for a pair of volunteers to perform a dramatic reading of their interaction, fictionalized in these pages but retaining the essence of New England beleaguerment we encountered that day nearly four years ago?

Benjamin identifies two volunteer performers and assists them to the stage, assigning each a role and providing each with a copy of the

and whigs, and costumes so intricate that the remainder of
the show needed to be pushed to the next day. But it
too didn't culminate due to Ben's insistence

following text. He then takes a seat in the audience and advises them to
begin, noting that he will read the stage directions out loud. audience member

from the previous night had arrived.
One person never showed. We all
will forgive them eventually when
we hear the story of the evening
retold on "This American Life".

A New England Breakfast

Benjamin Ross Nicholson

Sal and Sally stand behind the counter as two oblivious customers eat their barely-prepared food. Sally sighs completely and addresses Sal in a deeply affected New England accent.

SALLY: How's it hanging, Sal?

Sal responds without much enthusiasm.

SAL: Not so good Sally, I think it's getting worse.

SALLY: It's certainly not getting any better.

SAL: I don't know how much I've got left.

SALLY: How's Salem hanging?

SAL: She's hanging in there, has a busted hoof but she can still eat.

SALLY: Not so different from you, huh Sal?

SAL: Yup.

SALLY: Yup.

SAL: I could use a butt.

SALLY: I think we've been here long enough.

Sal and Sally leave the restaurant to the customers, thinking it unlikely that they will steal anything.

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SALLY: How's Salem hanging? *Puddin*

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SALLY: Not so different from you, huh Sal?

SAL: Yup.

SALLY: Yup.

SAL: I could use a butt. *-Claw, Tap up, good swift kick to the head, a lady, a good cry, a call from rabbit to the Doc, Bad light*

SALLY: I think we've been here long enough. *Coors light, a Sox win, three turns to the left and then one more, Blue*

Sal and Sally leave the restaurant to the customers, thinking it unlikely that Bill, they will steal anything.

I
like what?

Boat and Rally,
Day without unfamiliar faces
like these two

Upon completion of the reading, Benjamin returns to the stage (in the
Proletariat ^{contingency}) light), thanks the performers for their labor, and asks them to return to
their seats. He then proceeds. — get on with it. Andrew Stanan has
two new movies in production

This is my favorite memory from my wedding day.

Benjamin walks out of the light.

Drinking with Christine #2
in between #3
Bent vows #1.5 — forgot about those
Hilda's suckad

Returning to the

Click; Los Angeles.

->

Los Angeles of this past April [though we were staging a performance of
~~this play~~, the "main event" that my department hosted was an exhibition
of art installations.] [the performance would cease to be accessible after
make something more physical that
its ending, Kyle and I wanted to have some gesture which we could exhibit that
would allude to the premises ^{with which} with which we have been so engaged:

ephemerality, love, dying, sharing, and the materiality of the generation of art objects. Kyle had been experimenting with using molds to cast paper into ~~embossed~~ images. The process worked like this (note: we did not take [Jebossied] any pictures during the event so the images you are about to see are approximations):

Click; MDF.

->

-Kyle stacked and secured two $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch squares of MDF board

Click; CNC router.

->

-using a CNC router, an image was engraved into the MDF

Click; liquid rubber.

->

Falacious
Falacia
Phalacious

-a wall was built around the engraved MDF form, ~~image up~~, and liquid
[onto it]
rubber was poured into the chamber, solidifying into a

Click; mold.

->

(that)
mold ~~the~~ also held the image (in negative)

Click; plaster in rubber mold.

->

-plaster was then poured into the rubber mold, solidifying, reversing the
image once more

-Kyle brought this mold to LA, whereupon we required material ~~onto~~
which the mold could print; We searched the campus and the house of my

friend and classmate Fidelia (who was putting us up for our stay) for

That's her real fucking name people
She gets to exist as she chooses

Click; loose paper.

->

paper

-we tore the paper into thin scraps then used a Ninja blender to mix the paper scraps with water and slice them into a

Click; slurry.

->

fibrous slurry; as this blending operation was somewhat last-minute, it was performed in one of the bathrooms of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, the noise alarming undergraduates as they walked by and generally causing them to avoid entering the bathroom

[perfectly timed
as to not travel with
a bucket of slop
— Ben's capacity
for the unknown
is much
different
than mine
He gets
anxious
around me and my
making — when its
attached to him.]

-we funneled the slurry and additional water into a

What is that fear.]

Click; trashcan.

->

plastic trashcan until the slurry had the appropriate consistency and set up a table outside of the exhibition space, to greet attendees and offer them premade prints or the opportunity to "make their own"

-to make each print, Kyle would dip a

Click; sieve.

->

mesh sieve into the bucket of wet gray pulp and lift a dripping clump of material, which he then pressed against the sieve with a cloth to wring out some of the water; this plane of paper fiber was then scraped off onto the plaster mold, a paintbrush applied to drive the paper into the mold's recessed image

a dying down behind an avoidable
table



-several layers of paper would be applied to thicken the print, a wooden board being pressed against the paper and mold between the application of each layer

-once enough material had been assembled and the wet paper fibers had bound to one another sufficiently, Kyle would peel the print off the mold and place it on a

Click; prints drying.

->

rack to dry

-for a little extra "pizazz," we had also collected a stack of USC's student newspapers, - and wood from a grumpy underpaid man with a puppy - an oxymoron - the grumpy puppy part

Click; The Daily Trojan.

->

The Daily Trojan, from which we extracted colorful images that could be applied to the mold prior to the paper pulp to disclose the images on the face of the print after drying; further, we also found a pile of

Click; napkins.

->

Valentine's Day-themed napkins sitting in a box of refuse at Fidelia's apartment – these will come to be important later

[From that stash I also found and nearly used important financial documents belonging to Fidelia – If I'm not mistaken the ~~pieces of paper~~^{prints}, soon to be embarrassingly Following the truncated version of this show's performance, guests were shown, were on the precipice of asked to migrate to the exhibition space where Kyle and I were set up to costing \$700 dollars.]
make prints and assist folks in making their own.

Here is an example of one of the resulting objects.

Click; print.

->

the were the bad leftover ones including the original test piece. These were then placed - wet - into a small backpack for a trip back to Denver where they had no projected future. I thought this thing, would make me the best thing I seem compidant but alwys I just look like me. So much for a beneficial, false, 15 public persona

would a .

Does Johanna love Griswold?

Does Johanna find herself
~~Does Johanna~~ wearing
Dries Van Noten when she reaches R&B
, does
< ~~Johanna gonna~~ ~~feels me~~
CMAD at least 3 times a day
-Mop

Does Johanna shiver to the words

Skeleton Key

mom?

~~fundamentally~~

bionic after years of being trained
en eye will notice the by scientists
to recognize English (as always): fragments of
detritus] - Probably a Musk endeavor.

Though it may be difficult to read in this image, a keen eye will notice the

following French text: "la naissance du plaisir." In English (as always):

[Click; Google translation.](#)

->

"the birth of pleasure."

Given the DIY quality of the production process, these prints were what *world has*
an upmost pursuit - to leave the
you might consider to be *world. If he finds out that he's*

Click: trash turtle.

->

"poor objects": they were fragile, often incomplete (as chunks of paper suggest we stay down here in what is would be a proxy for the movies in the pulp would be torn away during the print's transfer from the mold to the maze runn

drying rack), with the image difficult to discern due to the necessarily rapid pace of setting material into the mold and removing it so that it might dry enough for guests to take home. As you are most likely already imagining,

*something to do
[Something with from
metaphors abound, namely the unplannable emergence of relations from
the "stuff," the "thingness," of matter in circulation, of material under
pressure, of bodies subject to mutation.]*

In

Click; calendar.

->

March of 2020, I was in Los Angeles and Hilda, my then-wife, had been living and working in

Click; NYC.

->

New York City for about nine months, the first time we had been "apart" in the over eleven years of our relationship (and nearly two years of marriage).

*[Why? — the definition of co-dependence
what drives your fascination for your partner?]*



qVote that last c~~atch~~ang³

He ~~just~~^{just} needs to bring attention to
the similarities to have it make
sense why its in the script

Click; COVID-19.

->

A novel coronavirus had infiltrated human populations around the globe and various municipalities, including LA and New York City, were about to go into "lockdown." Hilda already had plans to ~~come~~ ^{return} to Los Angeles for my ~~by~~ ¹⁰⁰ birthday, April 2nd, about two weeks ~~out~~ ^{later}; on a phone call I suggested that she just stay with me in

Click; LA.

->

LA after her visit, given ~~that~~ ^{that} she would be working her data science job remotely for the foreseeable future. That is to say, we could ride out the ~~as happily married people~~ ^{To these suggestions} pandemic together, as partners. She told me that she didn't think she wanted to come to LA. I asked what she meant, if she was worried about traveling with so much uncertainty ~~about~~ ^{concerning} infection. She said that wasn't the issue; she just didn't want to come to LA – ever. I reminded her that ~~I lived~~ ^{our apartment was} ~~there. I was standing in that moment and where I lived.~~ ^{I lived} in LA. She said she knew this.

"when I'm still in bed in the morning I feel like touching my face a thousand times to get it out of my system"

After hanging up, in a stillness of disbelief, I felt my phone vibrate: Kyle was sending a message to me and Shanna (another of our Chicago MFA classmates) in a group text thread, something silly and casual. I texted them that Hilda wanted to separate; Kyle told me to pack up my things and drive to

Click; Denver.

->

Denver to stay with him. That's why I came here and why I return to LA only seldomly; I'm working on my dissertation now - I'm allowed to be "in" only always seemed in the wind."

Kyle's invitation to come to Colorado preceded a series of events that I won't recall here (after all, this show is about Kyle when the schools closed during

the pandemic that she started calling me. Peeped is an understatement for how I felt. I assumed like many others she was isolated and running down old leads. Why I ended up on her list is a question I don't care to pursue. The selfie I sent Ben and Shanna and this previous acquaintance was the last correspondence her and I had. I was sending it to Ben and Shanna seeking somebody's approval since I hadn't received any from its original

sent I
sent a
selfie I
had taken
the day prior

It had been
made for one of
woman who
I knew in college. I
hadn't spoken to her in
years and had never spoken
to her one on one. She was

actually the good friend of my then girlfriend. This is 2007]

The woman in question was a new acquaintance for me at. I

Knew that she had transferred from another school, was from a wealthy family and owned a horse. She didn't express any interest at the time for art and wasn't particularly forthcoming with her opinion

She was beautiful
in some undeniable
ways but
always seemed in

a state of uncertainty. After
a while I recognized that I hadn't seen
her around in a while and my gf told
me [she had dropped out. Her younger
brother had been hunting in the woods
with their father when a tree fell,

young man and killed him. It was

the pandemic that she started calling
me. Peeped is an understatement for

how I felt. I assumed like many others she was isolated and running down old leads. Why I ended up on her list is a question I don't care to pursue.

The selfie I sent Ben and Shanna and this previous acquaintance was the last correspondence her and I had. I was sending it to Ben and Shanna seeking somebody's approval since I hadn't received any from its original

Click; show logo.

->

[My reaction to the initiation of this paragraph
and the last two pages is difficult to translate
into the margins of this script. On further
inspection . . .]

change of understand-
ing of this art.
<from me to you>
- Ben needs to
show the simile
in our liver

-The object
was given smooth

and his brain tumor, not my failed suicide attempt and my meeting of

Gabby, my partner of over two years, during a 72-hour hold in the
given from Ben - the selfless
behavioral unit of Boulder Community Health on April 9th, 2020); I will only

~~note the reciprocal quality of my invitation to Kyle to join me for a~~

weekend in LA and its impact on his circumstances; perhaps we should all

invite each other on journeys more often.

In order to provide prospective print recipients with a sense of what they
would be getting, Kyle decided to prepare a couple of test prints in
advance: one was unadorned with any imagistic newsprint, a



Click; gray print.

-> \ \

gray sludge that would desiccate into a brittle shard; the other was
surfaced with one of the

Click; Valentine's napkins.

->

Valentine's Day napkins (you've seen an image of this

Click; Valentine's print.

->

print, which also included a red paper napkin from the catering service that fed the event's attendees).

In the early hours of the exhibition, Kyle facilitated the generation of about six prints for individual guests or small groups of friends. As the evening darkened, we packed up our printing station and moved our materials into the exhibition space to store for the evening. Though the event was about to shut down, Fidelia (who was also exhibiting work) let us know we would only return to her place after her ex-roommate stopped by; we will call her

Click; image of Kyle, Johanna, and Fidelia.

->

Johanna for privacy reasons. Johanna and Fidelia had lived together for

several years but had recently parted ways, domestically. However, they happened
the night before without
were still friends and Johanna wanted to check out Fidelia's work; she
eventually arrived with another friend of hers.

Also I would not have been able
to take stalk of Fidelia's new
roommates library.

For Kyle, it was love at first

Click; pheromones.

→ make more sense if
I guess it this
is present and gone,
or crossotent

scent → through on the unresolvable terms of fluid fleshy bodies and the
sensations of experience to which they give rise; in the proximity that

comes with those moments of introduction, he noticed he wanted to

Click; "know you better."

→ ↑
not said to her but instead to
Fidelia who was doing everything she could to
make it known that her prior roommate was not
available and instead there was a grand second²² interest to
be had which was in
the accompanying material

know her better. Upon being asked what he was doing in LA, Kyle went to fetch one of the demonstration prints, the one that was slowly dehydrating ~~the only decent one~~ ^{After receding the wet square} as napkin and paper pulp fibers fused. Johanna was slightly taken aback: the pattern on the surface of the print was identical to a set of Valentine's Day napkins Johanna's mother had sent her ~~this past~~ February (Johanna's mother was and remains in the habit of sending Johanna disposable napkins on holidays). We gradually pieced together that Johanna, not holding the napkins in particularly high regard, had allowed the napkins to be packed away with other items that Fidelia had been moving out of their previously shared living space and that Kyle and I had, in a moment of

Click; Serendipity.

->

serendipity, discovered ^{then} when we were searching Fidelia's new apartment for art materials. This coincidence offered ample opportunity for subtle bewilderment and communion; while Fidelia and I returned to the

apartment to sleep, Kyle reentered the Los Angeles night to join Johanna and her friends at a punk rock bar. As to the whereabouts of the

[weee!] ↗

Click; Valentine's print.

->

print, I have nothing to reveal to you, nothing for you to touch; Kyle gave the print to Johanna who has since

[not that you want to - ~~the~~ give it to you how it was would be to give you a wet ornament of trash.]

Click; print slowly fades and disappears.

->

lost it. ↗ [maybe - it in itself means little. The relationship that has arisen is like the paper. It is made by interwoven fibers of correspondence. Each node of the whole plays a role in making a blurry image. If re-wet or torn the pieces become as useful as they were previously yet are stained from being handled.]

Click; Denver.

->

Colorado, Johanna and Kyle continue to correspond persistently. There is no "plan" between Kyle and Johanna, no teleology of romantic partnership to be achieved. Rather, they are "in touch" without touching, at a

Click; LA and Denver.

->

not anything but within the natural, ...
culturally generated, and self generated restriction
there is an endless set of possibilities
geographic remove; anything can happen, nothing is guaranteed.

one day we will stop talking

I've written a brief song about their relationship, a sort of "bookend" to insanity
the song I performed earlier in this performance; I've decided to title it haven't died
yet - call HBO -

"The Ballad of Kyle and Johanna" for now, though this may change
someday (as may the words, as words do).

Click; Benjamin walks into yellow light.

->

[It's got
to be
frustrating that I
get - call HBO -
somebody to wrap this
thing up. Adding my death
to the narrative could
say this perspective of
the moving subject - which
is not Kyle and his brain
tumor. This subject as far
as I can tell is the open
relationship shared by Kyle
(me) and Ben (the guy likely
in shorts and tall socks²⁵ who
is reading these words.) His Im

Bun, na na nana. Gobblidie gobledie gook with a hock, A han
par sook and a tee tee. Bun. It's platonic and at points
For the sake of intimacy, this song will not be accompanied by a display of *frustrating*
its lyrics; I will try to enunciate and will ask you to listen intently. I believe
this will bring us closer.

[don't get too close people, otherwise risk becoming the next
amputated voice represented by pencil scribbles]

Benjamin asks the audience member who had previously taken the guitar
to return it to him. Once they have reassumed their seat, Benjamin walks

into the light, places the remaining script pages on the ground, clicks,

->

pockets the remote, and begins to play "The Ballad of Kyle and Johanna"
as the light darkens to the color of a scab.

they are sacs filled with blood

all that blood: sacs in their own right

two Russian nesting dolls of sacs

colliding at night

sacs will shrink, sacs will burst

sacs will grow where they don't belong

there's no impossibility

there is nothing wrong

hands touching hands

reaching out

touching me

touching you

— but digitally, sans sexual organs
a modern day pen pal with allusions
toward physical intimacy. A means
for both parties to mainline-drive
and marvel at the remnants that
fall away from their consumptive
correspondence. But . . .

Benjamin has interrupted his own
song to say this so he begins the
song again and then make the
powerful decision to skip Kyle's
entry

Benjamin concludes the song by placing the guitar on the ground and

retrieves the remaining script pages.

✓ to a round of applause. They stand and
neglect his gestures guiding them to
sit and quite down.

But when the audience
recognizes the true goal as Kyle once
did or a pg? The show must run for
132 minutes. Andrew doesn't make flops
~~the guy makes children childhoods~~

Outro

Speaking of touching, of being "in touch," I would like to perform a brief shadow play to demonstrate what it's like trying to reach out to Kyle by phone. May I have a volunteer?

Benjamin waits for a volunteer and, upon their appearance, invites them to come to towards the stage. He assists the audience member in placing their arm in front of the projector's throw such that a shadow of an arm reaching in from the right side appears, not quiet making it to the middle of the light. Benjamin walks behind the audience, so as to not disrupt the shadow play, and mirrors the outreached arm on the other side of the light; it appears that there are two shadow arms reaching to touch one another but not quite making it.

As you can see, our shadows converge but do not touch. We could each reach a bit farther and unite the image of our arms, but it would be difficult to discern from only our shadows whether or not we are actually touching or just passing each other by. This is what it's like trying to reach out to Kyle by phone.

Benjamin indicates to the audience member that they can return to their seat and, when they have done so, he returns to the light and takes his phone out of his pocket.

I am going to try to call Kyle now. Sometimes he picks up and sometimes he doesn't. He knows that this show is happening and he knows (given that he has read and annotated the script) that I will try to call him. This does not guarantee that he will answer, even though he loves me.

If he does answer, I will greet him and then ask you, comrades, if there's anything you'd like to say to Kyle, anything you'd like to ask him.

If he does not answer, I will announce myself to his voicemail and then ask you, comrades, if there's anything you'd like for Kyle to know about how you feel. As

voicemail messages are time limited, we may need to make several calls to say all that needs to be said.

I'll have my phone on speaker, though you might want to lean forward in your seats.

Benjamin calls Kyle and proceeds as described above. At the appropriate moment, Benjamin, says:

Okay, Kyle, we have found the last of our time and we have to go; we love you.

Benjamin hangs up the phone, returning it to his pocket.