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[Letter](file:///C:\Users\aaron\Creating\Writing\Pieces\Family\Whitmer\Family%20Documents\2022_04_06-marcus_whitmer.docx) -- 4/6/2022

05JAN2020

Wrote a letter with strong emphasis on just getting it written and sent. Wrote the letter and then didn’t send it for several days. Finally sent it on the first Sunday of the close on Snday period of the year. Is this my life. Should I just embrace this mlife. Join a bowling team or some shit.

Memories from Caleb’s wedding:

26JULY2019

Invited Marcus to come over to Chicago to see *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* at the Music Box. He indicated that he would’ve loved to, but of course this was the week that his car broken down. I am a little hurt on how infrequently he has been over this way. I know the kid has some issues. But could we help each other? Given my recent penchant for drinking myself into a slurring fit and my general unhealthy relationship toward substances, perhaps not. I need to love this guy.

05/02/2020:

Email/Letter to Marcus:

Remember when the orange and red arms

Came for the child?

I picture the ways that I could call to her now.

Or call to you out in your narrow hall.

Cages and stages both made of wood.

In the tar black temple where the incense burns

Like smoldering hell gusts through the particulate air.

And the priest of the many, calls the haggard children close.

To gape at the crosses in flames cross the Thames.

Green grasses now thatch, against the ratchet of incessant clicking.

One for each memory, a tooth and a key,

Each held close enough to smell.

She looks long and longingly out the slip of her cell.

Back and back and through lives, riches, pageants

Back to the early herd’s settled certainties.

Where our relatives buried their accents and bones.

Where angels and demons process through confession.

Lies to the priest- squirming sores on her tongue.

The cup to her lips, the cup to her lips, the cup, her lips.

And then she in the sand. In the sand.

With blood in the sand.

A shark’s tooth in the sand.

A shrunken head.

White lightening that crashed and split that tree in two.

That great tree that dropped a limb.

Shattering the windshield of your daughter’s car.

The babysitter.

The night watchman.

The night.

Roads.

Hail Mary full of grace.

The Lord is with thee.

All around the parliament

the men of means shout excrement

I can take it.

But I can’t fake it in my bones.

Free of clouds, the sun shines down.

and shines golden rays on sand beach, hardpacked and brown

It’s later in the day now.

The sun is getting lower in the sky

We, sitting in the sand,

having eaten our dinner and dipped in the water.

And watched Esme run back and forth across the inland lake

That is shallow and warmed by the sun.

The darkening buildings of Edgewater.

The Pink Palace with its flag.

And a storm rolling in.

A young couple just arriving.

Not talking, just moving across the beach.

Mournful dusk boom box tunes.

Children laugh in the waters blue and black.

The moon has all but sailed away

Across the lake that would be sea.

And, yes, I do fear that I will be buried.

That I will be lost.

That I will throw myself in directions that do not matter,

when only the moment matters:

the completed arc, gesture, sweetness savored.

Morning arrives grey and weepy,

With wet continents pooled in alleyways.

And limp flags glum on their poles.

Abraham Lincoln on an old billboard,

Peaks over the garden wall.

And the garden tree, drunk with rainwater,

Is all mother gluttony and delight,

气候浓厚

王后出世

小白公主

睡在朴上

长大要主

谦虚晚安

美丽动人

智慧过人

丰富多彩

狼哭在外

城堡安静

植物再趴

军退落日

城墙长大

Memory, pre-moral. Finding your mind before the thought it formed. I don’t need to be pre-moral, I just need to be more emotionally true. I think I have it in my mind that to be moral is to be emotionally conflicted.

I kind of feel like I am my own worse enemy. I slept well last night and am awaking fresh and focused.

At its best weed is a new fresh lens.

At its worse weed is an individual divider.

I have a lot of things to untangle- no loveloss for my job. My aging body. No vocation. Im exacrtly the kind of person who is really bothered by not having a vocation. Distance from family. Physical. Political. Religious.

Dear Marcus,

**Pressure + resistance = flow**

Yo, bro!

01/30/2020

Dear Marcus,

There is a snow storm outside. A low grade bad mood feud is smouldering between betsy and I. Horns locked in were are trying to decide which one of us is grumpier. We are both super tired. It’s the middle of the winter in this bizarro year of pandemic. It’s been a long haul for the world, no? This thankfully is our nadir. Hopefully, soon I will have an addendum to this epistle confirming that betsy and I have reconciled; we are certainly now on a definite makeup sex level of disjointedness.

My joints continue to align. When you find yourself over 40 someday and become tired of waking up feeling sore and old perhaps you should consider taking up obsessive stretching, It really seems to be filling the bill for me. Moving the needle on helping me settle into my middle-aged form. Tacking back and forth between coding and writing means that the vast majority of my time is being spent in stillness and inactivity. I read recently that office sitting is actually not all that deadly to an individual if they then don’t pile a whole assassins arsenal of leisure sitting on top. That said, I have been trying to limit my leisure sitting. Trying to weave stretching/yoga into the fabric of my day. My mantra has transformed from { run, code, run } to { stretch, code, stretch }. This focusing phrase took on an added laying of significance as my writing practice and my stretching practice intertwined, combining to become the inextricable root system of my fully realized self.

I am excited to move ahead with my App Development abilities. I have felt very bogged down and occasionally overwhelmed, but in those times I have been able to endure and push through the low points, over come the inertia point, roll on past the hinderance, the doubt, the stale felicity.

I did not see this year coming at all, but I am very grateful for it and I am continuing to try and make choices that leverage the opportunities at hand. I will come through the mid-life crisis older, stronger, more tired, more optimistic, poorer, simpler, more complex. All of the things. All of the ways of being. There is nothing in me that will not be touched by this.

We have faced the void. We have faced the plague

This is basically a text. But it’s a rambling text that doesn’t require an immediate response. Therefore, it is an email.

I am eating some steak and potatoes and broccoli. I am drinking a borrowed glass of my roommate’s boxed wine. I am thinking of how Christ must mean something different to me than what he/it means to Ma. And how that’s perfectly fine. I don’t even care. Wow, pretty good. Not completely different.. but pretty different. Pretty, pretty, different. Okay, legitimately, if I had the unction to convert to a religion one day, it would totally be Judaism. I’m not going to, but if I did. I’m a totally closet Jew: “your mythologies are very nice. But they’re complicated. They’re inconsistent. They’re winding. Don’t get me wrong, they’re very beautiful, yes. And three, three is a good number. But you wanna know a better number? One. Why do you have to make things so complicated?”

Oh my food’s getting cold. Would you ever do an internship? Or like, what are you going to do?? I last minute applied for a finance internship at Bissell here in GR. Finance, like helping with their asset mgmt, not buying and trading securities, which doesn’t appeal to me.

I’m like, well, obviously I have to do an internship here at 30 years old. But you can bypass this, right? Are you talkin to folks on LinkedIn?

Okay.. Enough prying. I gotta eat my food and get back to my school bs. O.o

We need a 4th of July reunion this year..... or a Whitmer reunion of some kind, somewhere. Did you go to the Dells?? If not, whyyy?

Okay, enough prying x2.

Much love,

By now I suppose I know what I am sending here. I wonder what the date is. The current day is the last day of April 30, 2021. Word is telling me that this letter is at 13 pages with the current font and margin configuration. I still have no idea when I will send it. Intention continues to be a big them. My current intention is very clear and very simple— find a good flow to work and do the work that I enjoy doing: namely doing language. I feel like I need to put a lot of caviots on that and clarify a lot of things about that and I will. All in good time. There is some road to cover up ahead.

Should I apologize for the length? Please by all means do not feel the need to reciprocate. I am not campaigning to promote some boom in letter writing, I just happen to have found, fortunately!, at least for now, that part of my writing process is keeping a stead stream of letter writing going to friends and family. I have found it to be super comforting. So first of all thank you, for being there. I hope that doesn’t sound facetious, my thanking you for doing something that you did unintentionally. But your being there is this case was just being who you are and acting as a center of gravity, personal gravity (insert PHYSICS metaphor here, psychic gravity to you, pulling out thoughts and references and ideas attached to you or that I would want to share with you.

At some points in this process I have conceived of my letters as anti-tweets. I like the idea in as much as it emphasizes the absolute lack of instantaneousness, broad audience, or brevity that has become the culminating crest of this wobbly, wavey, evolving, unfolding process.

I also kind of like anti-social media, though after some more consideration it feels more like a cheap joke than an expression of what I have been after here, asking for, requesting, seeking and such.

Ballast. This has been a year of intense parenting, partnering, and learning. A good chunk of my wherewithal has been flowing into the deep dark hole of base building tech knowledge. We is a moat of bloated amorphous context that is as tiresome to learn as it is to explain. Without time or really even the possibility of a social life to balance out my intensely solitary tech study I began writing, a lot. One of the streams of writing that has emerged has been personal letters to friends and family. I have always had the desire to write more letters and develop letter writing as a habitual, go-to communication device, but have found the actual execution of letters, the planning (or not planning) the writing, the editing (or not editing), finding stamps, stationary, double checking the address, the postage, having the letter travel around in my pocket for a few weeks before dropping in a blue box on some corner in the city hoping that all my effort was not in vain.

Let’s be honest though, letter writing is not an arduous task. Ideally the form encourages brevity and directness. A form that forgives uneven style or tone if it feels spontaneous, maybe even raw even.

Though based on the Ken Burn’s documentary Hemingway’s letters were far from his best literary efforts.

Confronting this question of intent has been a point of inertia.

Penmenship has been a point of inertia. Now I write things out by hand and then type up what I have written. This usually inspires me to type more. Or if I have an idea or the urge to type directly I obviously have that option as well. The main idea here is that I have a lot of different channels and avenues, but they all lead in the same direction. They all flow through the yellow stream and then ultimately into one of my letters or pieces on the other side. These letters and pieces can then be drafted and I can craft sculptural, collage like impressionistic pieces to reflect the time, my life, my ideas, and my exploration of language and being.

The same question of meaning and intention could be levied at my Chinese study. 为什我花了那么多时间学了这超复杂的语言呢？我疯了吗？好像跟我一辈子都要追求语言的缘分有关系。现在我扩大我的知识基础学习电脑编程。网络发展，APP发展什么的。就像中文一样虽然很复杂还是太有意思，太有趣，太有用。而且跟中文一样改变我生活。

Rollerskates

篮球

文学

中文

手表

电脑

低估

黑石

笑佛

山峰

黄江

大沙

圣诞节

冬天

春天

回家

If your own personal collection of cultural symbols and references and rationales has become so scattered that it is mutually unrecognizable and unfathomable to all possible other participating parties, have you actually then in fact passed over into the realm of the insane? The anti-social? A detriment to society at large and the family in particular and this Family specifically because we are a Republican Catholic Family so suck it. Think of how much worse your life would be if your long suffering mother hadn’t just gone ahead and used her god-given Gloria Steinem and Satan delivered right to abort you when you were a fetus. But no you take that for granted. You take that for granted and you only care about your own children and only because they are just an extension of you and your liberal self-obsessed personality and life. I say these words in love because they are the words of Christ and the words Christ has given me to bear unto you. So please receive them as such. They are offered on the end of my plow shares, all my bastard swords beat down at last. No more teeth to gnash. Everything settled. Nothing more rash. Driving in circles around Sam’s Club’s lot looking for the cheap gas to fill the enormous tank of my 15 passenger van. And you called me in the middle of this. I understand why you seem distracted, but it doesn’t make you fun to talk to. Dad walking out to walk to talk to someone passing by the house while we are on the phone, I am left hanging, awkwardly. It’s a little rude. Maybe would be less rude if he ever called me. Strange though at the least. A little weird. Off-putting. Distancing. Still though, forgivable, especially if it’s a just a moment. A beat in the conversation, a side script, sideline, fodder for more here and now back and forth communication, avoiding the mire and mists of nostalgia, whose lingering flavors are various pending and depending almost entirely on the acquired palate of each particular pursuer, but when it’s a mise-en-scene, a synchronously running wave-length, the quality of the communication sufferings no matter the overwhelming degree of fidelity claimed by the cell signal (including the whiney grumbling of his hungry kids in the background. Again I don’t begrudge them. But Do we need to be chatting now. Just then?).

I don’t believe I have sent this… I may have a little reckoning as I sort out what has been sent and what has not. I may have a,ittle reckoning as I attempt to sort out what has been said and was has not been said.

With regard to process- appreciating time, this is a shift. Its not how fast you can pull things together, its how much time you can give yourself. I think this is where the organization (process parameters come into to play. Fishing for bigger ideas. New phrases. Something that will hold up to a second, third, fourth, reading, with is style and content and shades of meaning.

Just began a book and the author (it’s fiction, so this all may not have even happened) alludes to the fact that the material we have been reading as having been coalescing over the course of two years. I have another book by a celebrated profiler his called *4th draft*. His writing process entails starting out by collecting tons of information, background, sketches, bits for color, quotations, etc etc.

Reading about his process has felt extremely inspiration to me. Obviously, I had been aware of the “research” side of writing, but I feel like in my mind, that part was more about shading in the story. You know you go in with your artistically indispensable instinct and you whip out an essentially finished tale with potential. The essentially finished part of this this definition is the miss though. Its like of Jack Kerouacian Crack-addict fixation that I will be able to whip out a complete book in a single words document if only I can just spend sufficient time typing in the words.

This model is dead. Did it ever exist? I have written somethings like this is the past- letters, essays, notes, and at times a flow of words has bubbled up from somewhere to make that model seem plausible.

I am liberated from this tact now. My most sprawling manuscript is something that I began 12 years ago, reading Stephen King’s “On Writing” as I made my connections on the double decker Chinese buses, yo-yoing back and forth across the Beijing ring roads.

Following King’s style of “archeological” writing, I simply committed to 30 minutes of writing a day and started digging. The process, which ultimately stalled, and I am not even sure why, stands out as one of the most productive single project creative writing experiences of my life. And while it did not ultimately break open into a complete first draft, it has steadily spread its searching tendrils through my soil mind. The story has continued to slowly develop in my mind with shades of scenes I have written returning to me and shades of scenes I would like to write suggesting themselves at odd moments. More than any other project or poem or thought experiment it has returned to me with the most frequency.

With the simple directive of writing 30 minutes a day I was able to get into a Seinfeldian groove or chain. It’s a good approach. Feeling what that felt like to write consistently, I know that that is key. For me it has been about threading that needle between rigid organization offering structure and free flowing idea generation and writerly flushing. In lieu of a tight, productive rhythm I have for years engaged in “prime the pump” exercises of just trying to get words down on a page. Just trying to get a flow of sentences down that I can then come back to and shape into something sharing with someone else. This approach kind of imagines writing as sculpture. First get your material, your granite block, your obsidian stone and then start to peck away at it, hammer it, chisel it, beat it, blast it, blow it all up, what the fuck!?! This as opposed to what, the 3D printing model of writing where you simply just lay down line by line like you were squeezing the content out of some high-tech tube of toothpaste. If only it were so easy. My other writing troupe has been that all writing is merely a penmenship or typing exercise. I say this not cynically at all. I really don’t believe that would be a waste of time. Typing is important and so is good penmenship. In all my years of writing, it is debateable as to whether my writing has improved, but it is objectively truly that my penmenship and my typing have gotten better.

There is a certainly a parallel here with my latest creative journey- probably the most holistically creative experience I have ever head. My process has been affecting how I eat, drink, exercise, engage the world, pray, meditate, think, track time, express… the process has really gotten into me. It no longer feels like some external thing. So sort of program I am on, or some sort of gimmick that I am trying to con myself into. It is feeling, more and more like a way or life. Which I realize now is what I have been looking for all along. I have been looking for a way into my own life, if that makes sense. I have seen it up ahead, I have sensed it, but I have been unable to fully occupy the place I have known to be my own.

Now what has changed?

Be. Learn. Create.

2020年07月22日

Chicago, Ill.

Dear Marcus,

It is the day after betsy’s 40th birthday and I find myself back on a Courier New kick (a phase or period that I have periodically phased in and out of over the years). I must be happy.

And thus, the font flows from my faux typewriter. Actually, just next to me and below on the table there is an honest to Joseph typewriter. It is a beautiful machine. Though very unforgiving.

I write “below me” because I am writing above the typewriter at my standing desk. A workspace cobbled together on the workroom table from drawers we removed to have a dishwasher installed. Do you know about these new-fangled dishwashing machines? They wash the dishes for you? We’re back in the middle-class, baby! We are really liking our dishwasher. And this standing desk has been just the thing to support my hours of study. My back and neck which had been the worst they’d ever been, are much, much improved! Thus, the Courier New.

Just then I look down to my left and Helen is standing there next to me on this rickety old office swivel chair, she is doing her adorable babble-sing-coo, and I scoop her up before she topples down. She is still pajamaed in yellow ducks and is relaxed and happy and energetic as she almost always is in the morning.

Way more than the dishwasher and standing desk, the wellspring of my joy is the suddenly cobbled together time and wherewithal to be home with my girls while at the same time concretely moving ahead towards an honest to Joseph vocation!

There’s a harmony in there somewhere and its humming pretty good.

I’ve started to work on my old dusty “Clockwinders” novel. I still have a good chuck of it that I never even transcribed from my notebook into my laptop. The transcribing has been a nice way to start dipping back into it.

Your new back yard looks fantastic! A yard is something I can now officially never live without. Our sheltering in place has been make so much more doable by the existence of our lovely garden. Esme, especially has benefited from having her very own secret garden to play and plant and shelter in.

July is running on ahead. These last few days feel significant to me. The next week and then through mid-August I will be making my major Javascript push. CSS and HTML have been going really well! A ton more to learn, but I at least feel like I have a good idea of what I’m working with and where to find the answers to the questions that will pop up.

My main programming project has been this evolving locally hosted website linking together all of the learning resources. It has been a pretty perfect way to immediately apply what I have been learning with CSS and HTML. The possibilities really take off once you throw JS into the mix, so I am really excited to level up in that regard. I am also excited/nervous to really dig into a language with my Ruby base under me. I have high expectations that it will be an easier, smoother experience getting deeper into Javascript and a good test of where I am at in my Developer development. The main thing that I have to keep reminding myself and that does in the moment provide a modicum of solace is that I am fully committed to this career trajectory. I am committed to it until I crash and burn. I don’t plan on crashing and burning, but its nice to be playing for some real stakes. I have chosen a career path and now I have to work my ass off to get into it.

The solace here comes from I actually want to get into this industry. Where exactly, I don’t know, but I feel like that is part of the beauty. The stars have aligned. The training is all there for the taking, basically at zero cost. I have had the interest into diving deeper into the subject for some time he rest of this month feels very significant.

Now is it Saturday morning. The weekend.Good morning. Hope your weekend is unfolding well. Weekend?

We’ve just planted a flag in Sunday. Starting last Sunday, Sunday has become outing morning.

Last Sunday found us at LaBagh woods, a forest preserve in the northwest of the city. It’s a lovely swathe of woods

that abuts the mighty flow interstates 90 and 94.

We watched the dear from the lowlight of the forest

There is coffee in my cup and I am at my standing desk near an open window. Chicago, Chicago, always Chicago, great winging archs to China, swinging archs to China and back to Chicago, Chicago, always Chicago. Nelson Algren documentary dreamily watched from my hole deep inside the couch.

HTML, CSS, Ruby, Ruby-on-Rails, RSpec, Rack, Sinatra, Angular, Agile, PHP and Laravel, C#, .Net, C, C++, Python, JavaScript, JQuery, JSON, AJAX, React, Node.js, MEAN, Mongo DB, SQL, MySQL, REST, APIs, deployment, frontend, backend, frameworks, interfaces, WebSocket, Mobile first, etc, etc, etc,… I love it and want to learn it all and will be doing so for next six months at least.

And in the Semantic UI the U and I the Material Design that we have Bootstraped our way into the light of the HTML and CSS arranged screen and the Javascript takes flight, whispering with JQuery in the middle of the night.

Trying and hacking and calling and striving to find the letter in the heap. There always has to be a heap first. Perhaps the heap is just kept inside, but the heap is always there and it shouldn’t be slighted. It shouldn’t be resented or hated and avoided or punished… for the heap is reality. Reality. Blinding, bewildering reality. And here we have the wherewithal to admit that we have been overcome. We have been overrun and overcome and thrown into the river and washed down among the reeds to the accompaniment of pan flutes and drums.

Drilling down, down, down… getting down the correct place. Settling, settling in, the ocean depths. Blue ocean grey ocean, spectrum of blue on the surface of the water and the surface of the sky with night coming on, the firefly swarm of streetlights come out in dusk. Sand on my feet, legs, arms, sand I our living space again, Sand on the landing.

The Process. The yellow notebooks. Interminable. Just like serenity.

The question of agency is an important one. Its convicting. Especially in the realm of the creative. What is creativity? What is the agency there? Act of will! Submission to a process/apprenticeship. Mouthpiece for some hungry ideology that will not be struck dumb. Chasing a market. Let’s not forget Graphomania (aka Scribomania), just straight up compulsive writing. What’s the agency there? Thankfully, this form of mania typically produces writing that is illegible, or obviously manically repetitive and nonsensical. With all the writing I have been doing for decades and the constant loop of questioning why I am doing the writing, I had to go down the Graphomania route, just to see, make sure the pathology wasn’t part of my writing equation.

There are good compulsions and there are bad complulsions. How to decipher? There is a place in the world for everyone? How do you find yours and occupy it without being an asshole.

It makes me want to break down what my own intention is. Life lives on death. Everybody’s got to eat. The snake king is all mouth and belly. The snake king with his belly trailing behind comes out to engage us.

**Sent 11/17/2020**

Dear Marcus,

Test day, no? Hope things are going as good as they can go!

Compiling is the way.  Building. Growing. A sense of order is in order though for sure though.

A flexible order of a sort. One that can organically grow. Something with a

modicum of flow, some get up and go, you know?

My big/subtle/slight/substantial shift has been slimming down and having just ONE notebook for all my notes writing, lists, etc.

And then, and I think this is key, being in a solid rhythm where I am returning to those notes in a timely manner.

And then either bringing the content in the flow forward into a specific project, sending it back around for

another spin on the revolving notebook carousel, or eliminating it all together.

The psychological effect of having a single stream has been really helpful, I think.

Too—  with my notes all going the same place as my writing, the two are melding together quicker.

Sometimes in surprising ways.

The stew seems to be brewing just a tad bit thicker.

At any old rate, please find a few poems below. I’d be happy for your impressions, reactions, etc.

No need to analyze, unless you want, but feelings, gut-reactions good or bad are grand.

My biggest pleasure with these poems has been how they have come together. They all rode the

carousel around and somewhere in the spinning gathered a bit of mass all their own. It’s been a

good process to set up and one that seems likely to keep on rolling!

Love ya, brother,

Aaron

02/08/2021

Still have not sent this letter. It is getting silly. It has been a silly year though. It has been a year of autopilot of certain functions. It has been a year of intense concentration on other fronts. We are figuring it out. We are finding our way forward. Thinking of you a lot during this process. Looking forward to playing music with you and rambling about process and celebrating your achievements and victories and defeats and we are brothers are we not are we not brothers, we are not brothers are we not brothers?

Thank you for the coffee. It is very tasty and tastes good right at this very coldest time of year. This stretch is raw. Negative lows. Subfreezing highs. Our hermit existence keeps us mostly home and cozy. Rob Beranek visited yesterday. We had homemade tortilla soup and sipped whisky and went for a walk in the cold. Damn it was cold. Unfriendly cold. Stiffening cold. Mortal old. Elderly cold. Brittle cold. Ice in dark places.

Writing a great deal. Questioning all of it. But still pushing ahead. Am rounding back on a few projects that first made me feel like I was heading in the write direction. Finding my way into the practice of writing more directly and more indirectly than ever before. Trying and not trying. Effort and non-effort. Effortless, but essential… like breathing.

04/30/2020

I was super fucking wounded and have spent the fall healing.

Learning to be that being beyond attachment,

beyond responsibility, beyond interaction.

You are a being branching infinitely away

A mercury stream forthcoming

Infinite intricately cut channels to fill.

My radio confidently cranks out contradictions,

A.M. or P.M., A.M. or F.M.

That source, to that source where intention and order form.

Philosophy and computer science, simplicity and abstraction, components and definitions, systems and interfaces, symbols, themes, author, innovations.

4/30/2021

Trying to figure out how to build. A body of work and work of my body.

Abstraction can clarify. And it rises out of order, not chaos.

Getting back on track with coding is how I will overcome the Apocolypse. Wait. What? All I have to do to over come the apocalypse is get back to my coding process which is waiting patiently exactly where I left it with my elaborate bookmark slipped just exactly right into the spot where I last left off. And this is the path, the path that I want to take and need to take to prove my mother wrong and silly and prove myself correct and locked in and prove my mother right and successful and prove myself mistaken and free.

It is the discipline, the sustained pursuit, that will unlock the door to our economic and vocational stability. It will be that which gives us the wherewithal to travel and reconnect with friends and family. It will be the intellectual, vocational lynch pin to align and organize my stretched and still developing disparate skill set. It will be an upgraded use of my mind and time and provide me with knowledge and tools to both organize and pursue some of my own personal interests and assist and support friends and family with.

I am excited about it. And all I have to do to do it is to do it. And beyond that, all the dithering and nervous writing that I have been doing has been getting me closer to my tech goal if for no other reason than it is really getting my typing chops up to a very employable level. I am so much closer than a year ago to having the computer chops to get a chop in the tech industry and frankly with a little consolidation and focus I could be ready right now. I am so grateful for this and so excited to keep moving forward with my CRUDy APPS!. I need to work on feeling positive and relieved. I want to keep my eye on the prize but I need to let go of some of this tension, because many of the questions that I have posed have now been answered. I am moving passed many of the dilemmas that have hamstrung me for the last decade or even the last two decades. And I am moving passed them by bravely doing and I will continue to move past them by bravely doing and writing and thinking and recollecting and tracing and editing and calming and centering and coding and stretching and being. Old man Wittman at his eccentric lists again.

That said, it has been a lot, and it has been really hard to know where I am at times and if the work I am doing is the most beneficial or the most efficient and do I really need to review that syntax again!?! Well, yes, I do, I need to review it until it doesn’t catch me up at all. Until it doesn’t look weird of perplexing. So much material, but at some point threaded through with patterns and industry specific logic and considerations. Much like the legal profession prepares people for its trade by teaching them to think in a certain way, expect certain content and order from documents, programs thankfully have much order and system underlying their bewildering synchronous complexity. In fact the reassuring and bewildering fact is that they are all system. And that there are systems underlying the systems and this onion is awfully robust. Thus, strategies are need for what to doing with all those things that you don’t know. Things that you might get caught up by or be expected to know professional at some point, but which ones. Its like that office call from the regional trainer to ask you about the color of the Chronographs Column Wheel. Bonus question: is that Chronograph a Chronometer? And for extra credit does it really fucking matter?

And I sent you that letter about the Union Suit being worn in the day the pajamas. Like a warning, hey you are smoking too much weed, you have to give it a rest, then here I am a 40 smoking more weed than ever. Strung out, writing like a find. Caught in these ever narrower concentric loops. Attempting to find or establish the dense center of my craft. The dense base that I can work from. Get ahead on the assembly line so that I can start to just pump out complete finished pieces and letters. Long form letters and pieces. Built over time. Informing each other. Dragging the best and most relevant parts of one another from one project to another. Trying out material. Recycling lines. Adding quotations. Savoring. Thinking. Encouraging. Connecting. Casting hope ahead and enthusiasm. Celebrating. Stating. Wondering. Sharing my awe and enthusiasm.

But I need to get out of my union suit. It is not good for my relationship with my wife. But I am doing it because it feels good. It makes me feel good and excited and motiveated to writea dn hopeful and positive and optimistic about my coding and it makes my body respond to stretching in an extra open and robust and expanding way. It is gives me a rush of connection snad optimitis intentions that I have spun into thousands of pages of writing and coding notes. This whole process is bonkers, but it is my process and I am learning from it. I am becoming the writer tha I have always wanted to be. I am taking the time. Grabbing it and beating the keys into the pried open time and space. The results have been varied, but that is all right. That is kind of the point. Getting to that point where you write enough to allow yourself to write badly sometimes, because you know that you will be coming back to improve it or edit it. Writing a bad line and not having it sit their accusingly, a dark scar, proof of your paltry talent pool, your dry well ink run, your vapidness, but instead take compassion on it. Is it salvageable? What’s the image? What does it suggest? Is the syntax sagging. What could you add? What could you take away. The inspiration is part of it, but the so is the Rubix cube inspired mud wrestling. And the big change between now and ever before for me is that I have more material to wrangle with than ever before. Or I should actually say that I am more open and focused and wrangling the material.

I am also accepting all the self-settling and style-prunning meta-writing that I seem to be compelled to do as part of my process. I think it is ultimately a relatively health way to focus in my craft, plant a flag in where I am at in my thinking and execution of ideas both practically and ideally, habituating myself to the *too good to accept fact* that writing is both my dream and my vocation. It is what I am decent at and what I chooise to do with my life, both my working life and my free time. My dedication to it will allow me to engage with the discipline and the craft of it without letting it ruin my life (or my wife). Which is just to say, yes, it I invite and expect it to dominate my life, but it does not have to ruin my life and can instead be the mortar that holds the bricks in order. Cementing my sense of self. My loop of self. Being the spinal column of my self-development and maintenance routine. Being a major interface with my wife and daughters. Now my anti-social media outlet and anti-tweet assembly line. My best meaning map making system. Establishing for once and for all a process by which I can hone my life centering reflections into expressive shareable works of art whose import and contain surprise even me. I can be surprised by them because I approach them intuitively and with patience and then I engage with the material in an associative, thematic, collage inspired process which ultimately allows the material make its symbols salient, like a constellation of stars can work together to reference a whole Greek myth cycle.

4/6/2020

Worldwide audiovisual entertainment vs. Cinema

“Cinema was about revelation- aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual revelation. It was about characters- the complexity of people and their contradictory and sometimes paradoxical natures, the way they can hurt one another and love one another and suddenly come face to face with themselves” – Martin Scorcese

Confronting the unexpected…

What are my themes?

Sobriety can be beautiful.

A sort of built in piety,

If you go lightly.

Mature vs. manure decisions

Where does the line in conversation and letter writing and especially in letter writing perhaps because it is both our form at hand and so seemingly more emphatic, statement black and white upon the printed page. It’s a very exposed position to be in. And yet our modern world has embraced the instantaneously publishable word. Making words to some extent worthless. That said, literacy has never been more valuable. Esme’s literacy would have probably taken off right about now anyway, pandemic, or no pandemic, but I have to think that all the extra reading time she got at home with betsy and I and betsy’s mom regularly over facetime and down in the garden with the weather warmed up with our downstairs neighbor Anna. Esme has 5 fairy lit mothers: Jinn- an artist who has relocated to Berlin but keeps in touch via letters and occasional facetime. Her last letter to Esme included some flash cards of some particularly delightful words. Esme of course has a sense of the procociousness of it all, but its just a game so she’s game to see a new word and roll it around on her tongue and add it to her word list on the fridge and make up elaborate rambling stories linking together this sometimes macabre collection of words: typical, optimist, pessimist, versatile, nonchalant, neglect, humiliate, offend, subtle, mammoth, essential, zealous, contemplate, minute, enforce, epilogye, cloying, frigid, foliage, fragrant, evidence, miniscule, discreet, taunt, consistent, unanimous, morose, bizarre, glum, persuade, orbit, monotonous, partially, foul, despise, loathe, meticulous, irrelevant, precise, unique, livid, remote, postpone, delirious, temporary, spontaneous, vapid, solitary, vigorous, drab, artificial, prolific, smitten, oblivious, quarantine, empathy, chaos, melancholy, aggressive, simultaneous, exaggerate, specific, massive, agile, incredulous, vacant, ominous, taper, rhetorical question, numeral, noble, inevitable, fraud, swindle, reluctant, onerous, ceaseless, dismal, euphoric, dissolve, disintegrate, predict.

The idea of doing a song swap with you popped into my head at some stray point over COIVD. I have a lot of these stray thoughts about people I should connect with. References that bring back memories or make connections. Something that feels weighted right, directed by some sort of mind-emotion sub-logic drawn out in my communication specifically with you. I am really interested in this. Because my voice, my tone, my techniques, my approaches, my tires, my judgements, my shares will be totally different if I am writing you than say if I am writing my mother, or even betsy— for whom I assume I could conjour up a pretty affect neutral voice to communicate things to. So yes, part of this letting writing process is utterly selfish, but only selfish in as much as it is like asking some body to meet up for a drink or a round of golf or a bowling match. Its not like you are demanding a ton of someone’s time. It is actually quite a value rioch lending of your time. I am esstentially trying to create a virtual model of you that will add in the genaration of messages and their contexts. My ease and comfort of communication is for better or worse incredibly affected by other people’s reactions and perceived reactions to me. I often find communicating with other people incredibly tiring. I don’t feel like other people get me at all and that if I tried to contextualize half the stuff I am about or how I spent my time I would come off a pretentious and pedantic and self-obsessed, and while all of these things carry shades of truth, there is a larger truth that these stress rigidities are byproducts of an overall extremely successful persome and professional if not transformation then certainly maturation. On so many levels, this year of crisis has returned me to shore in such better shape than when I was swept out to sea. We have had to be a bit like water. When I have felt the need to paddle, I have paddled like hell, and when we have run into squalls and setbacks and fatigue and burnout and distractions, we have experiment with new and improved maneuvers around.

11/01/2020

You could encapsulate this last month as my super-hero origin story. Some good montage material in there: piles of crumpled yellow legal pad paper, furtive pot fueled writing sessions while the girls are at the park, returning to find my showered and toothbrushed and visined, hacking at my Taiwanese laptop, furtive scribbling on the aforementioned yellow legal pads, coding, note taking about code, pushups until my pecks complained, running until my Achilles heal gave out, drinking beer after 5 with betsy, sneaking beers after runs, while washing the dishes, here and there, breathing— weed and writing led me to Hatha yoga.

07/15/2021

I really don’t get why we are not closer. I really don’t u9nderstand why we can’t get more of a regular telephone thing going on. I am sorry to put this extra pressure on you, but I think I need you. I need you creatively and I think you need me. I need to know we are cool and are getting each other. I want to get you and I want to really non-judgementally be a cheerleader and a appreciator of your life. You are an inspiring figure to me. You talent, your capacity to create. You enthusiasms. You deep thinking on things. You humility. You churning ambition and insecurity that I too have felt enliven and poison the hidden arteries of my superhighway heart systems.

How do you get control of your own head-space without having to push people so far back.

I have to let my hypothetical fears go. I have to let go of my fears or other people’s fears which is often some sort of excess politeness at best, or at worst a socially accepted form of cowardice. Now mind you I don’t think anya of my content is particularly offense, I just feel the need to apologize for sort of opening and maintaining a new interface. I mean, who really needs another interface these days?

Suddenly my letter work and my writing work is squarely working to confront or at the very least chronicale something aboutn our times—the way we communicate. The way we get each other or do not. The way we connect and make relationships and cultivate these relationships. Tending to our memories (an orderly compost heap?), harvesting the day, dreaming and preparing for the seasons yet to come.)

I must admit that a lot of this writing blitz has been caffeine and THC fueled. This has put me in my own little world a lot of the time which has been necessary for me to jump over the fence and get into the new territory and the new working head space that I sensed I needed to be in to pull together all of these disparate thoughts. I take that back, it is not like I intentionally have pursue marijuana as a key to unlock my creative impulses… or maybe I have.

Today is the IDES of July. I am planning on smoking a joint. Getting quite high. Doing more writing and planning and pulling together and then taking the rest of the month off from smoking. Having a good sober month. Simple and prouctive. I am going to take note of my weight today and my goals for the month—get through the rails book. Get something up on Git hub. Get something hosted by Heroku. Learn Heroku!! Learn Git Learn Git hub! Learn Rails!

Continue to knock out Yellow river note books making the trip to Gladstone feeling calm and confident and deeply engaged in my vocations while at the same time achieving a new plateau of enhanced wherewithal for transitioning back and forth between my professional, creative, constructive sphere and my family sphere were I have possess the knack for approaching family interactions with forethought(pull things together over time, trouble shoot), focus (be present), fun (play! play!play!).

08/23/2021

Circle of Violence Gruff Rhys

Cycle of Violence,  
Spinning patterns across the sky,  
Start the ball rolling;  
For consequences unforeseen by 'man.  
A forgone conclusion,  
Wrapped up in a silver shell,  
Set it in motion;  
Watch it spinning  
Stop your grinning,  
Say goodbye to everything you knew.

Cycle of Violence,  
Cosmic encounters,  
Power stations and aeroplanes,  
Start a commotion,  
Expect a sudden answer by return  
Aspects of terror,  
Should be kept between you and I;  
You're one in a zillion:  
Dirty bombs and clean ones,  
Look the same if you look closely,  
Cycle of Violence  
  
Piece together one another.  
  
Cycle of Violence

08/27/2021

I’ve decided that organization is the best sort of intelligence and the only sort that we can hope to manage consistently.

9/4/2021

In some really concrete ways I have completely fallen apart this year. I have completely lost my mind and gone to pieces. And now I am attempting to collelct the pieces and move on to the next stage of my life. The next chapter. I know what neees to be done and now I am doing it. Rebooting my career with a tech focus. Learning the tech chops to write my vocational ticket and ground my 21st century skill set. The process has been a bit mad. Lots of notes, review, idea lobbing, revision, relaxing, stressing, bumbling. Feeling inspired. Feeling completely down in the much and spent and tread on and naïve and a sucker. A genius. An independent. An artist. A seeker. A doer. Seeking and doing!!

Other people’s shit can’t get me off track. Other people’s shit can’t push me off the road.

10/28/2021

Dear Marcus, as I address this to you, I have the realization that I currently am not in possession of your home mailing address. You've moved since last I mailed you. Thankfully, I have around 1,000,000 ways of extracting that information from the infosphere-- We’ll worry about that later, shall we?

How are you? Thank you for your gameness in absorbing my random expressive outlets and experimental interfaces. This-- my latest stab at filling out a form, is simply a single page letter written with immediacy, with a sense that the communique will be perfectly complete by the end of our limited yellow include line real estate we have here.

I think it also might fall under the. Penmanship writing style I sometimes indulge in. With an interest in fluency in speed and a flowing. Can stuttering pen. Attempting to fill the page front and back, this quick is reasonably incoherently possible. The key I am intuiting here may be finding a certain rhythm and then just rambling into it. Meaning into the necessary continuation of the thought, or simply an agile or disastrous or whatever transition to something new. But all long, being something about penmanship and rhythm and immediacy and legibility. I'm hoping that in the future iterations of this form I can free myself up to engage with it. Slightly less meta. I always seem to find myself writing about writing, or perhaps just. Using writing about writing as a kind of prime for the pump. At any rate dash. I hope you and Kenny are well, We remain in our tech in toddler tunnel but I am thinking of stepping out for a film soon so she'll look forward to the immediate. Social look forward to the impending change of scenery. Have been. Looking at algorithms a bit more and realizing that I am rather fond of data structures. You keep stewing your business juices and I'll make sure whatever you cook up gets a handsome website and a snazzy app. It's all about the curtains, baby.

Much love,

Aaron.

Dear Marcus,

How are you? Tonight's a rainy cold one in Chicago. Harbinger of cold fall, brittle fall waking up to frost fall and so on. Esme turn 7 yesterday. She had such a lovely birthday. I feel like betsy really excels at birthdays and really holidays and festivities in general. Really, she threw Esme great party on the theme of her choice-- “Animal predators.” Prey and predator game for spayed, woodland. Creature masks were worn, owl pellets were dissected (real ones full of tuffs of matted animal fur and crumbing roden bones. One enormous lovingly layered together by betsy out of papier mache and stuffed full of faux fur and some deconstructed decorative skeleton bones and a bit of candy was bashed with a sturdy yardstick and then later as a party favor the kids all took home an owl pellet cake pop and a genuine coyote teeth tooth on a string. All in all, a good time was had by all.

Break grinding at the intersection out the window across the alley and the bank parking lot. The six points where Irving and Damen in Lincoln making asterix-shaped-nexus a surround of a couple banks and cell phone stores. The traffic sounds are a relaxing hush. The girls are nearly down. Helena fell asleep on the porch. I had wrapped her in a blanket and cozied her up in the Papasa an returned chair swing so we could be cozy on our porch while it rained outside and we were dry on the porch. Helena was quiet and then asleep. Then I stretched using the railing and I closed my eyes and try to listen to the night without hearing anything in particular. Try to hear the night without hearing. Anything in particular? Allowing it all to blur together into a textured layered. Collection of rhythms and sound oxygen flow. Of my inhaled air. Clear deep with the health strain of my stretch. I sucked into the strain and the humidity of the cool evening and the soothing kasha. The passing traffic across the the lot.

11/14/2021

Dear Marcus,

Second very grey day in a row. A SUNday ironically. Esme is off at a classmate’s and the apartment is calm and quiet and thus I am writing on this calm afternoon.

Here’s hoping your end of the semester kick sprint is feeling sustainable, timely. Things falling into place. I keep pushing towards my inchoate Christmas deadline of just being generically better and more settled and polished as a programmer. Still feel a long ways off from where I’d like to be, but I am feeling increasingly comfortable with the tools that I have spent time with, as well as learning new tools that I come across. I’d probably be well-served in the short-term to narrow my focus a bit, but my broadly creeping survey seems to be building some sort of foundational skill set, so at least until Christmas, I am planning on continuing to hammer along with my process-- my tutorials and notes, my reviews and returns, my wandering on intuitively or on the informed suggestion of a friend into the new.

Here’s hoping one of these live long days we will be able to catch some more time when neither of us are being drawn and quartered bby the here and the now. It would be good to play music and do some slow cokking and wine quaffing together. Enjoyed a very easy drinking Portuguese table red the other day. I think my palatte has finally amphibian style dragged itself out of the sea and onto the shore for good taste, leaving my affinity for cheap box wine back where I lost my enthusiasm for that which cloys. Though I am a sucker for quantity and value, I suppose I have evolved to a slightly more enlighted bud collection where my bitters are now more often than not beating out my sweets for culiany attention. My scalded rubber tonue has matured into its current funk savoring middle-age.

Best, best brother, to you and Kinny too. Keep thinking about that pre-Christmas trip. Could be a good time to swing through.

03/27/2022

Discipline circumscribes talent.

The word -- a life’s work, every life’s work.

Seeking to untangle the past. Declutter it. Decouple from it.

He had to become part of the context.

How do you become part of the context?

Current

08/01/2022

Dunning Krueger Effect

Peak of stupidity

Valley of Despair

Slope of Enlightenment

Plateau of sustainability

Nominate you as my witness. This chronicle will come to you

Whether I make it across the time span or not.

The Ish of August

Spiritually, materially important

A practice of limiting

And keeping close to mind

The Ides of August

A celebration

A decision

A reward

A revealing (“The gifts of the Ides”)

07/15/2022

Its raining. Pretty hard. And very grey outside. Hushing car sounds. Breeze in through the window. Bandied around by the ceiling fan above. Cuisinart is percolating.Huavanapata Peru, La Palmera Colombia. Guatemala Antingua. Starbucks. The hanging gardens of the three story back porch of the 6 flat across the alley. Anchored by the exploding pink and peachy Whatever flowers, thirsty ferns splayed to catch the rain in full. It’s a good coffee drinking and thinking kind of day. I mix swet and condensed milk in with my ANtinuq blend. It tastes pretty, pretty good. The hydraulic sighs of the bus breaks send my mind to Bus de[pots in China and I almost feel like I am traveling with the wind blowing through the window and the fan humming above me and the traffic conversing at stree t level and the hiss of the machines and the horns announcing or protesting or carousing, I take out my tarot deck and deal three cards. The Chariot inverted, the Ace of Wands inverted and the Queen of swrods. There is an upside down spinning top on the Chariot and I can’t help but think about *Inception*  and the layers of dreams and realities, contingencies, lives layered on top of lives, things feel in the balance, I feel strained in dispute, conflicted. Then the Ace of Wands conjours up the image of clouded joy, perdition. The Rain gives me this locked in feeling all of a sudden. Besty has the car. It would be a journey to head out anywhere. I am sheltering in place. But how to resolve this entangled state… female sadness and embarrassment, privation, sterility. I have to conform to the system and conform to norms, which is pretty easy, I just have to smoke less pot and stop writing so much nonsense.

King of Staten Island. Judd Apatow. Sick in the head. Sam Ramis. Ground Hog Day Bill Murray, Zen Buddhism. Stretching. Rooting. Sam Ramis a big proponent of sobriety. Replacing marijuana with meditation. Be. Here. Now. Zero sum. Nothing. Reduce. Root. Connect. Extend. Release. Breath.

05/12/2022

You are angry.

Your car is a mess.

Hand in your homework

Comb your hair

Get dressed.

Just like Uncle Jesse

You feel complelled to confess.

Call home to, Mommy

She will make your redress.

04/01/2022

Dear Marcus,

I had meant to bring the flavor of evanescent raspberries

Brenda Nutkins.. the Nutkins on Leap Year day, I’d come from the big sale, running up and down the stairs, showing watches, seeling diamond studs. Up and down the stwaris to steam them and box them up and ring them up and watch the door and be ready for the clients and be excited about another day to sell, sell, sell. Brenda’s birthday, youth leaders, rock and roll is from the devil, tried to buy a lambi, stopped at two places no one had it.

A few days later attend a concert in Pilsen. Thalia Hall emptying out into the sulphor street light on 18th, the tour van parked out front, people spilling on to the corner to linger, to spread out, to call Ubers, say good-bye, make next plans, smoke a cigarette, take a picture, feel the mildness of the early March evening the Crimson tide rising from just off stage where we’d seen Eleanor Friedburger do her best Mick Jagger sing and strut, jazzing up some of Destroyers more sanquine numbers, you know the ones that sounds like they should be sung by an aging diva in a ballroom somewhere high up with city lights a glow below. Some sort of sentimental jazzy stab at journalism. A wide eyed assessment of my own blindness.

And the I had a returning client. One of the Chicago Bears. He called me on the phone and got a quote on a couple of watches. I emailed him the invoce. He showed up a couple of hours later with a cashiers check. That evening I attended his shopping event at the Hugo Boss flag ship store and spent way too much on a sport coat, but justified it because I was using house money-- including a two hundred dollar Cartier gift card that I have gotten for selling my lovely South Dakota couple a pair of Cartier watches out of the Oak Street boutique which was totally not cool by brand standards because our door was not technically an official Cartier point of sale and for good reason since there were two Cartier points of sale including the Chicago flagship store just around the corner, and then all of the commission cash I would get from the two watches I had just delivered to the Chicago Bear.

We met for dinner a Cooper’s Hawk, little did we know this was the end of an era. We drank wine and talked books and writing and had drink’s at the Sparrow (the one that’s decked out like a Havana Hotel lobby in the 1950s). Then a train ride and another couple at the Victor Bar. Lagers and salty skins on chips. Then up to my porch for a Heinekein 0.0. I’d been trying to drink less, but looking back wasn’t drinking so much less. Though a 0.0 nightcap is probably never a bad idea.

I walked away from Hugo Boss that night into a misting rain and shitty cellphone reception. Decided to trudge up Michigan Avenue, which looking back seems significant since that routine trudge was over two years ago now and I haven’t been in the habit of being back that way yet. Walking past Burberry and Cartier and Rolex and Crate and Barrel and The Disney Store and Tiffany’s, Water Tower, Omega, the 900 North building, Oak Street, Graff, Razny’s, Harry Winston, Gucci, Christian Luboton, Hermes. Snatch and grabs at Burberry, a belt slipped away just behind me, attempted watch flip, credit card fraud, fake checks, phony stories, fishy wive, fake ids, duffle bags full of cash, smashed glass cabinets, smashed glass doors, a u-haul truck smashing straight through the fucking façade, working trying to, studying up on diamonds because I was being paid to, had to complete this online training course, wrote out notes, typed up notes, review the notes ahead of the test, this all took some time, but they were all billable hours and I sprinkled in some tarot card / attribute- archetype Mandarin-English work-- doing “Readings” using the draw cards to intuitively suggest poets and specific poems from skimmed indexes; 3 cards; 3 poems-- feel out overlapping or complimentary imagery, language. We are pattern creators and dissonance appreciators of contrasts if something is thrown in severe enough relief.

Notebooks, infinity notebook, the yellow river, hq-- modular writing. Building up to something, but have felt unstable along the way. Unclear on what the last hundred yards look like.

What was that French writer you were telling about when we dined on wine and pork medallions just as the pandemic was on the cusp of blowing up the world.

3/11/2022

Vloggers thoughts on modular content creation and exploration really resonate with me.

I suppose I have been trying to find something to supplant my notebooks. Grease the process of taking something from an inchoate dashed of fragment -- a part -- and having a repositiory where whti material can just hang out and be ready to be useful at a later date.

Any information can be abstracted just by adding it to the network.

The art of procrastination. Leveraging not doing other things into getting other things done. Hopefully you are neglecting the correct parties.

Letter

03/06/2022

Made we laugh with his reference to listening to a 45 mm presentation on a fake can drive.

Traverse City is known for its whites.

The Camille Bordeaux Blend -- $16 a glass. Fancy pants wine for a mid-size city wine room.

Who was that French author you were into when the pandemic first kicked off.

Will you really move to Downer’s Grove someday?

04/06/2022