[**current**](#current)

**This… that… the 10,000 things…Been meaning to write… used to look to Hemingway… and then I try to set up and write…then the Helena bit.. writing for home… tracing the logos for that good place of home. Mushroom trip… Ruby.. my tech home… the 10,000 homes…**

And this is the right silence—buried and unburied by the process. Faith helps me keep pace. Faith sets my pace. Listen to the river. Listen to the river. All the many messages. The lone message. Many and one. One and many. All of the thisness flowing through. Sometimes right through, directly, sometimes lingering, remaining, leaving something behind. An impression. A flavor. A sense. We are tainted, changed, altered. Without necessarily our full consent awareness, reflection, consciousness of what we are echoing back, reflecting, all our unconscious conclusions, our lived in architecture. THIS lashed to THAT, THAT lashed to THIS. Our stories. Our myths.

Reclaiming place of belonging—which is everywhere—deeper understanding and conviction of economic skills, realignment and calibration of economic skills, wherewithal, temperament, self-actualizing through tech and my acceptance of my writing and music and physical wellness as being integral components / practices that I must be commit to incrementally cultivate over time. Taking this, my small plot, and making a life out of it. Making a life out of this small, simple plot.

Order, focus, retrieval, articulation, judgement, consideration, a place to foster one’s values, and lick one’s wounds, stock up projects, make a mockery of art, writing, linguistics, programming, songwriting, thought collaging, personal letter writing, essays, discussions, efforts external to return to the mortal sphere, driving the heat and coal of inchoate thoughts and emotions can improve one’s gatekeeping and butlering and hosting all in turn. Our way of being is far from earthy—technological, theorehtical, relational, skills based, talent, concentration, focus, creativity, dedication, devotion.

Craft—understanding CRAFT

Stop working so hard to write correctly—just write in the right silence.

The right silence—that isle out in the water where the pressure and the power and the path all align in just the right flow, the correct escapement, its amplitude humming true, stable, sustainable, accurate.

I feel like I am stuck in a repeating loop. I keep coming back to the same themes and sentiments. But the question remains… am I circling and circling deepening the process, understanding the process more and more, or an I simply trapped in an ever bifurcating path, leading absolutely nowhere… this despairing though is resolutely untrue and the posting of this letter is proof of its falsity. For we have moved—point A is well behind us and here were are at point B. B used to be 那, now it has become 这 and a new 那 has appeared on the horizon.

The backdrop of this emotional, intellectual and physical unfolding, accelerating, accumulating, experiment has been the radioactive morass of our late stage 2020 presidential campaign cycle.

In October writing shifed again. My accruing body work become inexplicably, inextricably linked to bodywork. The content of both the stretching and the writing began to matter less and less as compared to the practice. The practice was the thing, not the product. The training and sustaining, not the performance and production. We seek inspiration in training and sustaining, not performance and production. Performance and production take care of themselves if your training and sustain practices are sufficiently nourished (inspired). Earth- grounded physically and mentally (perspective); Water- hydration, flexibility; Wind- breathing, flowing; Fire: active, engaged, seeking proximity to heat.

I am not didactically seeking to explain the world to anybody, but I am attempting to engage with it. Engage the world in a friendly, twinkling eyed chat, opening up to it, relaxing, not seeking to transcend it, but to transcend the multiplicity in me which disconnects me form the essential integrity and simplicity of this existence—my elaborate literary and technological and linguistic luxury sales apparatuses have all apparently been in pursuit of this simplicity, carving out time and space to practice it.

Cast a cold eye on life, on death

Horseman pass by.

Seeking to overcome, at last, my didactic foundmentalist, white nationalist upbringing.

History has a way of rising up working these things out for us. Leaving us powerless to either avoid or ignore the resulting chasms left by the resulting fault lines. The chasm will never fully resolve, we shall spend our lives crossing them or gazing longingly across at the ones we have loved and perhaps still love, which is why we gaze, which is why we cross. The wound cannot be fully healed. The Titanic cannot be raised from the Atlantic. The Grand Canyon cannot be filled.

What is my fucking problem that I can’t get over my horro and disgust and disappointment and disillusionment and disapproaval and embarrassment and lack of energy and discipline and joy and emotional reserve and resentment and bristling judgement and prickling sensitivity and soft bellied disappearance – you really expressed that better than I could have expressed that myself—I want then to be self-satisfied and happy and virtuous and at peace with other people’s spiritual and political convictions… and yet but still is the confederate flag really not a racist symbol? Why did you just say that there were a lot of good things about the south. Why did you just replace out actual shared last name with the word *NAZI* when discussing the Governor of Michigan who shares our shared last name. Was it really the windmills that cause all the issues during the Texas ice storms? Are *they* that are so concerned with public health and COVID-19 pandemic the same as the *they* that are so focused on expanding on-line gambling and extending bar hours? Are *they* the black boys that you saw in Escanaba who thought were probably selling drugs or doing drugs. You saw black boys in your very small white town and you thought drugs and large Cadillacs and pimps and fags and pedophiles and leftists who are also pedophiles and we all know pedophiles are the worst and it is not a battle against flesh and blood, but of spirit. Spiritual Warfare—fighting for soul (not the vote, but the very soul) of every last citizen of this great country, this civilization, fighting for out very collective soul that can either embrace the light and the truth and goodness and radiate out that light and warmth to the whole world—or turn ack on our hneels and descend once more into the darkness—the selfish, the indulgent and undisciplined, the hateful and freedom-murdering. We stand together at a crossrads—we approach from the heavy mists along the North Superior shore—Viking Berserkers foaming in our whale-beds, hungry for the immediacy of death delaing and death dancing—sickness and infirmity- slow roaming assassins of a vengeful God. Before our coiled forms, our taut rams gut, rent form the sinew, beat your stone bones to announce your stalwartness, echo the legendary savagery of our fathers, their hoary beards that once were mottled in the stains of our enemies squirting heart-spasms, the savage reverberations of age upon age of training, our strength shall outlive your strength, our conviction shall choke your conviction to the floor, the humming, dulling, dragging, the pumping of bloodpipes, animal hearts in paroxysms, hungery for good, glad tidings, tell us what we long to here. Goosey, goosey gander, wither shall I wander, upstairs and downstairs and in my lady’s chamber. There I met an old man who wouldn’t say his prayers, so I took him by his left leg and three him down the stairs. Yes, yes, the soul affirming propaganda. We will make this country great again. It shall be great again. Just like the propaganda advertised, it’s a helluva time to be alive, it’s a helluva time to be alive.

My writing made possible by neglecting my daughter, having her watch TV shows about the great outdoors instead of actually taking her out of doors. My writing sapping my wherewithal to simply be present and available for my wife, because I am so behind and so buried and have some made faith intuition that the only way to get a grip back on my wherewithal is to get through all of this material, spinning the hay into gold, spinning my life-sapping anxiety and alienating fragmentation and disorder into life-affirming inspiration and settling form and fixture.

My writing made possible by making the made Chicken Run at ruin by neglecting my coding—my clear cut path to work-life balance and sustainable, economically sound professional development, the hedge and sensible plan I have been selling to anyone who cares to inquire about the gambit I’m riding on.

Everything has felt ver compressed of late. Urgent. Necessary. Immediate.

**3/26/2021**

“A true vocation calls us out beyond ourselves, breaks our hearts in the process and then humbles, simplifies and enlightens us about the hidden core nature of the work that enticed us in the 1st place (Whyte 9).”

“We found that, all along, we had what we needed from the beginning and that in the end we have returned to its essence, an essence we could not have understood until we had experienced the actual heartbreak of the journey (Whyte 9).”

“But a calling is a conversation between our physical bodies, our work, our intellects and imaginations, and a new world that is itself the territory that we seek (Whyte 10).”

“A vocation always includes the specific heartrending way we will fail at our attempt to live fully. A true vocation always metamorphoses ambition and failure into compassion and understanding (Whyte 10).”

Vocation—gravitational field around us; breathing from atmosphere of possibility itself.

No path—an ocean crossing; only a heading, a direction, in conversation with the elements.

Arrival at generosity => delight in the hopes of the young; core activity => giving it away.

Sheer privilege:

* Having found a road
* A way to follow
* Allowed to walk
* Often with others
* Witness to and full participant in the conversation

Giving self to the process—believing the intimations; being silent— listening.

Our hearts ripped out because our gardens aren’t adjacent.

Looked to Hemingway superficially – how to become a writer. Had some questions in this regard to pose to Bob Dylan and then later T.S. Eliot. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jack Kerouac, Thomas Pynchon, Raymond Carver and Don Delillo, David Foster Wallace, Tim O’Brien, Cormac McCarthy, Thom Yorke… very white and male, no?

Hemingway goes into a Parisian café. Drinks coffee. Eats oysters. Has a carafe of white wine, Checks out a cute girl. At some point loses himself in the revelry fo writing—he’s in Michigan, he is forming great sentences, he is transported the fuck out of he. And then he’s back. The cute girl is gone . He orders a carafe and white whine and some oysters and begins planning his next trip to the mountains. The fucking lovely order and aesthetic balance and procedure to all of this are incredible.

Unfortunately for me my process has been a little different.

Getting set up to write….

Inspired by the promise of salvation… redemption.. celebration.. praise… so many of these archetypes from Tarot… so many of my archetypes tied up in the church… something I have left behind me but that follows me and forces me to engage with it directly from time to time in the culture of my now very large and extremely Catholic and politically conservative family. Oh, I live in America… How do you convince someone that you are not hostile to their religion if they define hostility as anything less than enthusiastically joining their religion. Also, how do you not become slightly hostile towards a religion or at least the way it has consistently approached you over the last two decades since you have been out of it…what do you do with that knowledge and those ideas from the time when you practiced the religion? How do you feel about them. How do you talk about them, apply them to your life?

The subtle and then growing horror of the looping message. The inescapeable scenario. The personalized message, so heartfelt, that feels alienating, almost disorienting because we have had this same interaction many, many times before.

The obliviousness of the evangelizer to the looping nature of the interaction. Their most real messages come across as completely canned, life-denying and relationship defining. This is going to be a Christian relationship. All relationships have some sort of a power struggle, interest struggle. Differences in opinions, preferences and political beliefs exacerbate the fault lines in the situation, opening the relationship dynamic to be affected by the conflating of large, national, community issues with a more personal flavor. Allowing the environment to fully breach and penetrate your previously cloistered and protected shared world, or overlapping world. Years of being apart, differences in experience and education and religious beliefs and practices have eroded our relationship to the point that the possibility of growth and forward development currently feels distant, remote, despairingly not even worth the effort…

I appreciate things that are clear and well-reasoned, optimistic and kind.

Nick Cave…

I am water,.

Pentecost

Chinese.

Language.

Language is broken.

Relationship irreparable.

Can I just send you one thing… she still thinking about the Pentecost and sends me something in Catholicese about the Trinity. This just after the declaration that language is broken and insufficient without an inquiry spirit.

Shattered, but if I can frame it just right maybe I can piece it together.

“Dad, let me down. Let me down, dad, let me down…”

She wants to go downstairs. She is waiting for me to collect my thoughts.

“Let me down, dad.”

I will mutter. I probably will.

… how did my family become a microcosm of America? How did I become an exile in my own country? Was I really from here… not Illinois… not the city… ill equipped value wise to deal with the economic reality of my life choices.

**Been Called (Worse)**

I’ve been called, I’ve been called

Herald of the coming Lord

I’ve been called to return with him to glory

I have wandered, I have played,

I have whiled away my days,

But by the blood of Christ I ride on glory bound.

**Hell**

Having listened to your twice-told tales,

Hear tell three times of mine.

Let’s anoint ourselves in rhyme,

Flesh away our mortal days.

Seek the company of sorcerers and whores.

Besmirch the name of Christ to all who’ll hear.

Defile the cross, wear women’s lingerie.

Fornicate with strangers

And masturbate out in the hay.

Consume a sea of drugs,

And slash a score of throats,

Then raise a stout-walled castle,

Run round by a blood-filled moat.

But fear not, we’ll stay in touch,

Keep watch for stiff dispatches from my solitary cell,

As I while away eternity in my beloved hell.

Dear Erik,

Oh the unset narrative, the undecided direction, the constellation of disparate symbols without sympathetic eyes to pull them all together.

How do you write and show things and share things without being coercive? I suppose sometimes readers appreciate having their hands held, but no one wants you to force their gaze on the dark crystal.

I remain in the dark. Unblinded by the light. My unmitigated senses tentatively canvas this room for truth.

Writing is but a quality of light—dim and dull or bright and sharpened, slashing through the shadow malaise of this high noon existence.

**weiji/Exile**

Mt. Pleasant. Married housing on the campus with my brother and my undergraduate parents. Okemos, Station, East Lansing, government assisted townhouses with an upstairs and downstairs, Kindergarten in Mount Clemens, near Detroit, where were these mounts? Where were these stones? Hans whacking that little girl across the skull with all his strength, but the pitcher should have never pitched it. She had walked up behind him. Maybe shouldn’t have been swinging a wooden bat anywhere near where little kids were running around. He face turned green. The hospital was right there. Immediately there. She had brain swelling. She was somehow fine.

Later Hans would slide into second in our yard and take a buried pipe property marker across his knew, wrenching the skin raggedly sideslashed revealing muscle and bone beanth. That jhad been one of the more gruesome injuries I have seen to this dauy.

By then in Gladstone. After Marquette and the 1st and 2nd grade birthday parties at roller rinks, skating to Debbie Gibson and Sheena Easton and Huey Lewis and the News, *Duran Duran*, the Pet Shop Boys shooting the duck and skating slow and controlled with the birthday girl in one hand and my current crush in the other. How was I so confident and connected then. I was in boy scouts. I had a good friend that was a towny. And another that was a doctor’s son and another that was a dentist’s son and my mother was going to be a doctor and my dad was one of the most athletic guys in an athletic town. And yet they decided to move to Gladstone. That will always baffle me. My life would be much different if they had stayed in Marquette wouldn’t it have been.

*Winter Dreams, Brewer’s Book of Phrase and Fable*, English Literature, Philosophy, Reading, teaching, writing, poetry, Language, travel, food, drink, sales, hustle, coding, information technologies, half-marathon on a whim, knee injury, out-of-commission, recovery, stretching, diligently, consistently, running less, drinking too much..

All of these disparate symbols coming out in chunks and associations. Coming out in rambling. Accumulating together in letters and poems. In stories proposed or postponed. Pushed aside by my mountain of code. My unwieldy stacks of characters. My manic hustling soul. The morning now my miracle insulating the stillness of my process, steadying against the static of the day.

My parents are the sort of conservatives that won’t even concede that Rush Limbaugh is controversial. The don’t believe that he is and can’t really see why anybody who was worth their respect would see otherwise. He’s super smart and well-informed and well spoken and he has so many listeners and you know what he loves America and he is doing the good work of keeping commies and liberals morons from running this country straight into the ever-loving ground.

**Heart held, standing.**

**Not quite fully formed**

**Mostly honest, no longer compelled to perform.**

**Two and two at last together**

**each generation leads the last**

**in the end by the hand**

**releasing them to death.**

You once expressed a sort of admiration for Emily’s knowledge of what its like to have lost a parent. You creepily sang to Tom Waits, indirectly in a department store, near a sweater display. I remember calling you from a department store as I quaffed champagne and wandered around the accessories floor in Barney’s that was such an institution until it was not and disappeared over night and the whole five story superstore of fashion and good taste was just an empty sell. All of the clothes had been sold on consignment so they went back to the manufactures or where ever no need for a big blowout sail at all. Later that evening I dropped by a Ralph Lauren event in the Mansion like Ralph Lauren flagship on Michigan avenue where I was given a key to a glass case that contained a handbag in it. Whoever had the magic key would get the hand bag. I had wanted to at least give mine a try, but a very eager woman who seemed like she had something to do with the charity wing of the purchasing even was increasingly aggressively trying keys from a pile of identical small brass keys, making an increasingly large pile of tried keys to here right as they proved themselves to be the wrong keys. And I waited in line, patiently at first, feeling kind of amused at this woman’s antics, they feeling increasingly annoyed that she was oblivious that other people might want to have a turn. She had all the keys and none of the social awareness of share them or give anyone else a crack at the lock. I slipped my key on to my keychain with my house keys and my library pass and left the event and went home kind of hoping that my key was the right key and that by leaving I had ensured that no one would go home with the handbag. My sour grapes were pointless, but I did like my key and I felt like its symbolic value was definitely enhanced by the ambiguity of its abilities. Was it a lock breaker? Maybe? Possibly? I guess we’ll never know though.

Centers of the world—Paris, Calcutta, Moscow, Tokyo, Mexico City, Rio di Janero, all these great collections of souls, these great urban temples, collective offerings to the development of man. Created all, but our collective unknowing. The saintliness of our rituals and habits. Endowing *The New Hope Revival Tabernacle* and *Joe’s Deli Quik Stop*.

Collecting and rolling all our garbage down to the Mississippi where our refuse meets your refuse. And I dwell on rivers, these powerful connectors—the great seeping creep, the unceasing suck of low sea-leve thirst.

Laughing with our beards wet from mead draughts. We sing among the bear chested men. Brothers to huddle with in cold when we soon lie together beneath the earth. We’ve plowed the field soft for our graves. Removed the stone obstacles, to help us find our goodly depth.

Have spent the year cramming to make sure that Web Development was an obtainable, desirable skill set, and then falling back into the bliss and somewhat tormenting ambiguity of my unhinged and only marginally controlled writing process. The honest to god fear and trepidation that has accompanied this whole process, in retrospect, has been pretty grounding. It has stated the stakes, if not, at times irrationally inflating them, but it has forced me to acknowledge that this is my life, this is the only chance I have to “come into my own”, pursue my dreams or my desired or imagined way of working.

I wanted a settled mind. I wanted some settled thoughts. Some long thoughts. Some long habits. Some slow habits. A settled, consolidated response to being middle-aged and as yet still vocationally unestablished. If I could just keep fighting I could get their with coding, I could get their with writing. Failure was really not an option. I now knew what I wanted and my motivations for wanting these things were clear and struck me as solid and healthy and life affirming. My methods seemed savvy and realistic and pragmatically were leveraging salient resources and opportunities. Low hanging fruit that when combined with my good faith study effort would land my on a new shore of skill and employability.

My relationship to my computer is much different. My typing is at an all time high for speed and comfort. My writing process has begun to bear fruit in a way that I could not have expected. Somewhat unsciously suggesting new pieces and new topics to begin hacking away on. The breadth of my writing keeps surprising me. It also scares the shit out of me in as much as it represents a huge block of time that I could have been doing something in the tech category to get myself into a salaried job ASAP, but that said, the writing has been my ballast, my social outlet, my teacher and assistant and organizer, the system that has given some form to my promiscuous cypher play and exploration—it has been the net to catch my thoughts. The internet meets in inner net.

**Process – Unreal Estate (article on the Special Career)**

* Boym (Brodsky, Benjamin)
* Benjamin (Maps—symbols, Nazi Suicide, a certain phlegmatic European intellectual)
* Brodsky (Referred to in Boym extensitvely)
* W.G. Sebald （blurb from Susan Sontag）
* Fermor (Alan Watts reference)
* Alan Watts

Erik Anderson, Sky Anderson, Ander’s son Bjorn, Wes Anderson, P.T. Anderson, Anderson Cooper, Cooper’s Hawk, Hawkeye, Eyeglass, Glass pipe

Alone, astride Highway 41,

ahead into the haze.

Oh, my mercury mind

Oh, my mercury maze.

A steaming stream forthcoming—

Intricately pathed ways.

Oh, my mercury mind

Oh, my mercury maze.

Pariah does not bother me all that much at all. It is actually quite freeing. Considering the current climate it is absolution from a great deal of chaos that I finally realize at this point I have studiously sought to avoid. So yes, I accept your offering of pariah status, but now how do we work out a new interface to maintain it, make the new arrangement stick and so forth. I am honestly though. If I am not hurting anyone. I really don’t mind being a pariah at all. It is like Joseph Brodsky with his shake to himself and his typewriter. Thanks to our good friends who far excel us at earning and saving money we have a very affordable third floor rental with glorious light and a fenced in garden below where the girls can run around and we can hang out in the shade and where we’ve planted a little plot of Chard and hot peppers and will soon put the cucumbers in. Esme has a cracking pickle recipe and all last summer served us up garden to table quick pickles thanks to her sturdy legs that didn’t mind the three flights down and three flights up to the garden and the searching, searching, where’s a good one, I thought maybe, oh, my, up there, that one’s huge! Stretch—reach—twist—pull—lean—snap. And then two more smaller ones and pick a couple peppers for the parents and then up, up, up, back up the stairs to wash and chop the cucumbers and toss them in salt and rice vinegar from China to serve as a side that we think goes with pretty much anything, especially in the summer and especially when beer is involved.

The reconciliation of mind to the conditions of life is fundamental to all creation stories… and all acts of creation.

Words don’t have to mean anything, but they can mean everything.

The illusion of continuity. Stitched together and edited and reflected upon and bounced off the wall of you, or at least what I think, intuit, anticipate will make sense to you, be impactful, not annoying, maybe even enjoyable, catalyze thought, inspire and encourage, offer up something of the nourishment that I have received over the process of composing.

This ultimately is pretty key here. Finding a way back to writing that felt nourishing and not corrosive, which is tricky because if you are writing well and writing honestly you are going to be able to access your full palate of goodness and nastiness, your certainty and your doubt. Entering into a truly protean state is not easy. Returning from the protean state and getting good at transitioning back and forth ain’t easy either…

Here are somethings that I have tired or thought about trying to ease the transition in and out of the Protean state.

* Discipline
* Organization
* Stretching
* Meditating
* Calisthenics
* Weed
* Alcohol
* Walking
* Drinking water
* Breathing
* Reading to my daughters
* Reading an article aloud to my wife
* Playing guitar
* Singing
* Drawing
* Housework
* Simple Organizational projects (“deep pickup”)

Tarot, injuries, coding, mental breakdown?, Mistakes, Chicago, exhile…émigré… exit from a culture. How to get out? Leaving a cult?

Vidar Mo, Preparation to write, Obsidian stone, Chicago, Making own mistakes, I peed in my pants and I’m proud of it. The material is the heap, amalgamated, nearly incomprehensible. It’s the weave that makes it work. It’s the approach. The cultural approach—openness, perspicuity, ready, who are you going to interact with.

Time spent coding will almost certainly improve the financial security and flexibility of my family.

Time spent writing poetry… more settled father, smarted father, emotionally more stable, more articulate father, more accepting, more creative, warmer, more connected, less conflected, jollier, more honest, less repressed… funnier… tougher… more focused… This wrestling with reason… this wrestling with reason. I am deeply into this. I am producing tons of words and phrases and sentences. I am zooming and weaving back and forth between 30 some pieces (and growing) and 30 some letters (and growing), finally embracing my fragmentation, by putting a hopper unter it to start collecting the fragments and ideas and sketches and direct them into their discrete holding pen, storage locker, petri dish.

Zing my grey matter keen.

Keen my grey matter zingier.

Restorative Nostalgia, reflective nostalgia…

And now totally unmoored, I stay afloat by flooring it forward.

Expressing goodwill is in essence a creative act. It is a beatific abstraction conjured up by our humanity out of the complexities of our personal suffering and good fortunes. Good will offered up, one soul to another, somehow finding some sense ofd harmony in a shared humanity, a humanity grounded in language and shared experienceof and through that shared language. The tendrils of language enmeshing culture creates the web that attracts and supports the mass.

Nostalgia:

*No trembling harp, no turned timber, no tumbling hawk swerving through the hall, no swift horse pawing the courtyard stones. Pillage and slaughter has seemingly emptied the earth of entire populations.*

Trying to get over the hill.

40

/ \

/ \

/ \

**Birth (0)**  / \ **Death (78.54 US, Canada 81.95, UK 81.26) basically 80**

Life focused, affirming, positive, becoming, striving, learning, idealizing, hoping, improving, and then you hit that halfway point and it is all down hill from here. A phrase which I have often thought could be manipulated completely in either direction. It either means everything is going to be easy from her on out or that everything will continue to get progressively worse from here on out. Death would seem to indicate the type of downhill we are headed towards. That said, I would argue that in this descent though there is a lot of variety, both in perspective and experience. First of all, historically a lot of people did not even reach this age. Would it be cruel of me to bring up to my mother that until relatively recently most people had only a 50-50 chance of getting out of childhood. Despite our insistence on legalized murder the particulars of our society have made incredibly huge gains in increasing one’s chances of making it out of childhood. Now that number globally is 4.6%

**Historically? 500/1000**

**1970s US 23.2/1000**

**Now US 6.98/ 1000**

What has cause this to change? Has god become more just? Have people become more pleasing to God? Did God have some change of heart on the average age of the souls he preferred to harvest? I don’t ask these questions vindictively, but open heartedly. Because they have occurred to me. And questions are how I wrestle with life. Wrestle with death. I am not afraid to wrestle. I do not have to be right. I do not have to go to heaven. I do not have to go to hell. I do not have to be wise. I do not have to be kind. I do not have to be loving. I do not have to be calm.

Let’s keep things from getting too deep yet,

Like a Golden Girl’s *Chia Pet*.

Pursuing language, a mythical beast, a moveable feast, the nearest, dearest element on this earth. A precious creation of man— humankind— a human gift— a gift of the Gods, but also so human; so Godlike in its abundance and resilience, every being whole and complete, ever evolving, expanding, inspiring each generation, changing with each generation. Collectively edited by the minds of all humanity. Conjuring up what could be. What is.

And what about Nostalgia. The homeland.

Get back, Get back, Get back to where you once belonged.

This text is just another element packed into the collage of your Obsidian stone. Like one of those images— a face for an example that is composed of pixalations representing every aspect and element of ones life— memories, sensations, impressions. Smudges on the mirror, uneven spots that magnify or obscure. Some of the pixels can be approach, expanded, entered into, other’s remain blur, astigmatism.

And this letter too, a text reflected in the mirror. A text built up over time like wreckage fire-wrecker collected, dumped into the bay to reclaim some parkland. My text eventually solid. Built up by layers. Landscaped, fused over before others are invited in. And then they arrive waking backwards with their mirror before me, guiding their way ahead into my garden. All the light from all the texts, black and compacted in the mirror. Reading shadows. Meditating on suggestions.

I have found writing to be a rewarding vocation with an absolutely soul destroying commute.

There have been points throughout this year where I have had to take some serious stoke as to whether I have either lost my mind at last, or finally found it.

But if the mind that

*His folk were known for hewers of wood and drawers of water, but in truth his father had been a school master. He lies in drink, quotes from poets whose names are now lost. The boy crouches by the fire and watches him… He watches pale and unwashed. He can neither read nor write and in him broods already a taste for mindless violence. All history present in that visage, the child the father of the man.*

That early scene of the Judge bringing down the tent revival of Rev. Green by claiming that he raped an 11-year-old and had congress with a goat.

St. Louis to New Orleans on a barge. Hungry. Dirty. Harried. Bloodied. Fear. Power. Murder. Survival. Predator. Herd. Tierra del Fuego. Black paint on bodies and white lines. Head pieces. Spirit bodies. Revalationo. Seeing beyond the veil. Imagining beyond the veil.

The violence of education. The consumer of time. The consumer of mind. We choose. We submit. We sign up. We get with the program. Efficiency and effectiveness without killing your spirit and becoming robotic and loosing your lust for life, your zest for life. Is this a religious thing? A political thing? A vocational thing? A family thing? An aging thing? A health thing?

I sent a motorcycle, a boat and a helicopter, what more did you want?

You need to make a big move

I sent a plague and a U-Haul truck.

*World be meek, world be mild,*

*World ain’t nothing, but a lonely child.  
World be cruel, world be wild.*

*World ain’t nothing but a lonely child*

Caught between the thrill of getting pulled deeper into a productive, thrilling , self-organizing creative process, but then faced with the uncertainly of its prudence, effectiveness, morality, rightsness, trueness, every penstroke is a test of faith, rpgrssiveness as the destroyer of old. Are we destroying or are we adding , what do the ruins of Rome tell us about what is possible with Culture. How do we progress forward without being totally overhwlemed by the past.

Kind German youth’s maturely drinking coffee and expressing the impossibility of being proud of being German. Different perspectives. A need to be right or at least as accurate as possible given the available information. Our truths are always clear.

And what if was completely out of control. Maybe she was completely lost. She felt like she had to be lost to be found. She felt like she had to be overcome to become. She left like she had to be run out of her head to gleam some sense of clarity, some straight line, some settled obsession. These were the good veins. These were the opportunies. The flow channels. The place where life seemed most real, closest. Most intesnse, most real, most intimate, most articulate,most honest, most literate, most collected, most calm and most seething. Why did this have to threaten her health? Why did this have to threaten her sanity? Why did this have to threaten the balance of her being? Why was everything an existential crisis now? When did the balance of being become so precarious. When Did the natural suddenly become the most complicated act of synthesis ever achieved by a human being. Or just synthesis. Thesis- Anti-thesis- Synthesis. This is a powerful dynamic in our lives and history and culture. It is perhaps not the reductionist pathology tracing scalpel we wish it were, but it is an extremely helpful model for considering the perennial seething of each new generation, raised to consume and overcome and outlive the former though not the following. Was she afraid of death. She was not. Was she afraid of disorganization and nervousness and disorder and an inability to dig her way back out of the well. Where was she. How had she fallen so deeply behind the story process. She wanted to be a simple writer. Romance. Travel. History. Just enough detail and depth to make the experience seem substantial. Long wide frame shots or landscape. Movement observed and anticipated, waiting for and lingered on. Not the hyper helicopter and crank cuts of Tony Scott ‘s Spy Games and such. Robert Redford and Brad Pitt on a roof in Lebanon and techno music and about 10 cuts per second to ratchet up the nuance and intensity and rolling inevitability of the scenes conclusion. The student is breaking with the master. Going Ronin. Heading into the wilderness for love and honor. They are both right. They are both good men. They are on different sides of this thing.

Jake would get pissed off mid-chess game as the tide began to learn in my direction. he took issue with how un-warlike chess was and how the actual strategies of war were totally different making equating chess talent and war-applicable strategic thinking was stupid. He made a couple of observations about how the pieces were arrayed on the board describing how he would actually command his troops if the chess pieces were soldiers and artillery instead of wooden abstractions of fixed movement capacities.

Implying what? That the only reason why I was beating him was not him losing within the context of this game but that the game itself was flawed, rigged, inadequate model of how we want to be tested or to test reality or to pit ourselves against one another to establish our intellectual or social compatibility and enjoyment .

The kismet of meeting people you enjoy spending time with. The fraught, fragmented nature of adulthood. The need to retreat into community and stay local and grow local and let settle.

Betsy’s mental health has been poor. Her back has her feeling like she is elderly before her time and looking at a quick decline in the coming decades. It is a real drag as I try to buck up and focus on simultaneously burrowing away and trying to get ahead on my writing for the first time in my life, surfing along on the ridiculous sweel of output and perpetually branching project tree that the latest evolution of my Process has spawned. A process that I would connect back to all my disparate notebooks and then my “infinity” notebook which was a strategy to get more second drafting into my process and then “The River” which has become the engine of my 3rd and 4th draft efforts. A process that has launched 30 plus pieces of fiction/non-fiction as well as 30 plus postcards and letters.

This is a process that encourages stewing, rewards it. Once I have gotten ahead enough on my notebooks… in the the new year? I really need to take the next step with some of these pieces and apply my idea about highlighting parts in YELLOW that I am transferring into a 3rd draft which will naturally begin to take shape as the themes and content begin to suggest a form. I can also begin to experiment with hook ideas and framing. The hook ideas and framing are what will take the pieces from being psychobabble vomit pools to crafted personal and general statements and reflections on life and work, language and being.

They’re reflooring the Colesium. Have you ever stood in the Parthenon? I think that is on my bucket list now.

Coding and chess notation. Chinese characters and chess notation. Openings. Just get a couple openings and a couple of closings and a couple things to think about during the mid-game. Reference points. He liked to bootstrap. Get an idea. Run with something. Having some idea, some target or list of parameters to consider or even just explore always accelerated the process. There was always much to learn. How could you stay in that perpetual learning mindset while at the same time feeling sustainably confident and settled in your acquired skills and competently able to apply them and use them as tools in which to engage with and study and play with the world.

But then was saying anything and hanging it out there like it was everything even honest. How are you— “Good…” I guess. “Covid good”. The necessity to live ina sort of bumbling bubble of personal earthworks, constructed internally and externally over time to hold the international, national, regional, local, and personal conflicts and stressors at bay. How are you? Is I have no idea a nihilistic response. A capitulation of duty. A puerile bluster act to avoid fully squaring with reality.

You cannot protect you children from the extremes. The extremes exist. Politics. Weather. Opinions. We are creations of balance. The framer whose fields are forever too wet or too dry, too sun exposed, or starving for light. Forever trying to thread the needle on the conditions. End up with a surplus. Anticipate challenges. Store up supplies for winter. Learn the seasons. Find the rhythms. Celebrate the milestones. Learn to learn from the land.

Baader Menihof Phenomenon

* Frequency illuisons
* Meaningful coincidences
* Synchronicity: Burkina Faso: article, radio, shower curtain. Erik from Burkia Faso, had last felt that way when I learned in my late 30s that the capital of Australia is not Melbourne or Sydney or Brisbane or Perth or Darwin, but Canberra… which when it finally decided to penetrate my skull, because I can’t imagine that I had never encountered this place name before in three decades in the English speaking world and even as a younger child having a Crocodile Dundee inspired obsession with the marsupial lousy continentally proportioned country. That sinking feeling of unknow and confusion and disorientation, how in the hell did I never notice that or hear that or think of thank. Our incredible minds that can take in so much and can process so much, but then still miss so much, create unhelpful maps and network graphs of our existence.
* 333 aid and encouragement
* 444: a sign that someone is trying to communicate with you.
* 1515
* 1001
* 1111
* 0101
* 555
* 556

If you are not happy with your work or the place where you live, it could be a sign from the universe that it is time to make a change.

My truths are all foreknown.

I’m naked to the bone.

Disarmed for my protection.

A shield of naked flesh.

A lot of questions, not many answers.

Setting up a confrontation.

Looking for a fight.

Stating something to prove his rightness.

How smart he is.

How indignant the other side makes him.

The rage of history rattling the clapboard shutters on their hinges.

A provocateur.

This is a style.

An entertainer.

A coiner of phrases.

An exaggerator.

But what is his intention?

What is his heart?

What is his milleu? Purpose? Intention? Role?

Is this the best source? Why do you listen to him?

Oh, mother matriacrch,

Archangel Gabriel— his terrible hair before us

And they demanded a King.

The spirt of the Lord came upon him and he burned with anger.

He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces and sent the pieces by messenger throughout Isreal. This is what will be done to the Oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.

The freshest eggs and steak available in the country, shipped directly from farms in refrigerated train cars. Pan-size wheat cakes staked six high, quarter wedges of hot apple pie, and cup after cup of the best damn coffee these cowboys had ever tasted in their lives.

Experinecing the world with our children, for our children, because of our children:

Going to see the cotton balls under the tracks in the alley by the Begyle Building. The cotton balls magically hovered over the asphalt in the golden hour rolling in miniature stampedes riding on unseen currents of air. After seeing them two days in a row, we came back yesterday (Saturday May 23, 2020) and the heavy rain had pulled the carefree balls into white clumps like soggy snow drifts.

To say anything one way seems desperate. To say anything one way seems like sloganeering, marketing, messaging.

This opportunity to live and then live again and then live again. Reinventino. Findnig reasons. Purpose. Bullet proof proofs of concept. Resonance. Concept that resonate.

*I Do Not Speak*- Stevie Smith

I do not ask for mercy for

understanding for peace

And I these heavy days I do not

ask for release

I do not ask that suffering

shall cease

I do not pray to God to let me

die

To give an ear attentive to my

cry

To pause in his marching and not

hurry by

I do not ask for anything I do

not speak

I do not question and I do not

seek

I used to in the day when I was

weak

Now I am strong and lapped in

sorrow

As in a coat of magic mail and

borrow

For Time today and care not for

tomorrow

Intricate unwinding and revealing of metaphors and rationalizations or some sort of grand suicidal filabusted designed to sabotage any shot at peace in this mortal red dust existence.

Bao yu.

The tears.

Sandra Bullocks 3 D ear at the imax on Navy Pier weh we could all still gather in large groups. And eat unselfconsciously in public.

Finally, fully heading done the rabbit. Hole. Remember leaving some corny letter to your grad school friend whose name I forget just like I forgot about boating at that park with the caslt.e After you mentioned it to me it came back at little especially after I Googled it and di some thinking about my time there.

You generosity to letting me hang. Running on the Stand. The heights where the caravans were. Riding the bus and some racist townie asshole really pissing you off. Cooking potatoes and Chicken and getting beer from the grog shop. Finding Pointe Beer from Stepehen’s Pointe, WI and having to get it even though I knew it wasn’t great, but having it be fine and having to get it because one of my big sturdy cardboard beer boxes that opened from the top with heavy, durable flaps that I kept my G.I. Joe figures and vehicles in was a Pointe Beer box and I have I aways been kind of fond of the beer. Even though my former Cousin in law who my dad says is a narcissist says that its not good beer and that it will make you sick. This said after he buys me a six back of it. After I told him I would drink whatever. And then suggested Pointe because it was the local beer. My courisn was obsessed with her jean collection. Her and her boys loved shark week. Jordan became patient zero for my mother’s why people are gay rationalization and made it very clear that Jordan and his partner would not be welcome at my brother’s wedding. We don’t want to distract from the sanctity for the day. And Nina almost killed in that 4th of July motorcycle accident when her boyfriend failed to follow the curve of the road and blowed straight into a utility pole instead. He was killed instantly and she was thrown form the bike into some pine trees and had a shatter pelvis and a compound fracture in her arm. She employed her incredibly loud whistle that she could do by putting her index finger and thumb in the corners of her mouth and blowing. She was able to alert the people in the house and they came out and called the ambulance.

We were close by in Curtis at the cabin and had been at the cabin earlier in the day when a tornado warning had come through and we had hid in the middle hallway of the cabin away for the windows when the sky had gone all gray and then sort of greenish and it had been very still and then the winds had picked up and we stayed in the hallway surrounded by wood paneling until the winds died down and then we went back outside and play Prince and Princess and swam and waded in the water chasing crawfish and minnows with little nets and heavy ruby diving gloves and snorkels and masks or we played on the big mowed lawn with a whiffle bat or croquet set. Later we would walk into two as teenagers and check out the turtle races and the parade. And then one year there was a misunderstanding and I had walked into town with my cousins and had left my mom waiting for me to drive back to Gladstone. I was a teen with my cousins resenting the timeline and kind of confused and oblivious on how it all was to work. I was relaxed and feeling fun and confident around my cousins and on this holiday weekend. My mother went straight into argument mode attacking me for walking into town and not twlling her and not being ready to drive back to Gladstone when she was ready. I came back with what I thought was a playful face saving calling for a “timeout” Zack Morris style, she responded by hauling up and slapping me harder than she had ever slapped me before or after. The swell of anger that welled up in me at that moment was inconceivable, shattering, murderous, humbling, disorienting, distancing, christening, cauterizing, traumatizing, something to be returned to.. I stormed out of the cabin without responding, running out to the pines behind the cabin back towards the next cabin’s property. Did this set up our pattern of confrontation and retreat that would repeat itself in cycles over the years t come, This was all later though. That day was before. Before Jane became a dentist and Patricia became Princess Zelda. We were just kids who had played all day and were tired now but excited by the crackling of the fire and the smores we were to make. The mournful cry of the ambulance echoing ove big Manistique lake was hardly noticed as we ran spead out to play Ghosts in the Grave Yard. Ollie Ollie oxen free. Kick the can. Hide and seek. Flashlights bouncing through the ferns and tall grasses at the edge of the mowed open field.

**“To him, mythology was “the song of the universe, the music of the spheres””**

* **Bill Moyers on Joseph Campbell**

Soundtrack

Ennio Morricone (spaghetti western sound tracks)- jaunty whistle, building up, chorus calls, get along little doggies.

Clint Mansel (*Requiem for a Dream*)

Ahem

Hedgehog

Carsick Cars

Nick Cave

Panda Bear

Destroyer

Gruff Rhys

Super Furry Animals

Clinic

Radiohead

Bill Calahan

Bob Dylan

Debussey

Chopin

Fela Kuti

Solfeggio Frequencies

Nature sounds

Dungen

Russian Circles

Hypocrisy

Sweet Cobra

Red Vinegar

Annette Summersett

Summersett

Bossa IV

Indie music ala Jonathon Franzen’s novel with the bird on the cover— *Freedom*? And is the point to have read, to have connected a dot. To have let the coding of something culturally important to you.

How do you pack in Mad Men and 贾樟柯 and seeing Taxi Driver for the first time and going to see *Once a Time in Hollywood* at the Music Box and having it be the first movie you’ve seen in a theater in 5 years and being there with Dave Clauson and your buddy Dan. And having some nice beers and catching a meal at a diner afterwards that only has a long straight counter and no tables and the guy who takes your order is the same guy who cooks your food and makes your shake and everything and all sorts of people are coming through on dates or out of the bars or off their shift of whatever. It’s a place near the intersection where Popeye’s and Starbucks and Lakeview Highschool circa 1874 and Jannel Martinez died on the night when Grand Theft auto drove out of my television and up Irving Park to Ashland where death was delivered on impact and Jannel never made it home to her kids. And where is that kid now? And what are the rules on police pursuit anyways?

Sobriety can be beautiful.

A sort of built in piety,

If you go lightly.

Mature vs. manure decisions

Saying anything to avoid having to deconstruct my mother’s obsessive desire to see the kingdom returned unto the earth, most expediently through a Republican helm Thallasocracy. And they are always in opposition. They always have been. Liberals are the enemies. Progress and change. Unnaturally rapid change is the unwholesome confuser of states, wolf amongst the sheep amongst us. And we need both don’t we. We need it all. We need early bed times and all nighters. We need coffee pots in sun reached kitchens and long walks with nothing but water and wind to wet our teeth with.

Family feed. Ofeedneing Franchisaka. Violinist. Teacher. Head administrator of prestigious boys school, former British special forces, involved in the invasion of the Falkland islands, came into some money from his mother who ran a string of pubs in Wales that played up the regions UFO legends and an old friend who had gotten ridiculously wealth from some tech company. Retired and decided to become a Catholic Priest which he could do despite being married because he was ordained as an Anglican priest. Meanwhile, his wife who had retired from violin performance because of aging hands and shoulders was just finishing up her training in psychology and she was launching into a big rehab job of their incredibly cool property in the Cotswolds, the very town we all visited for an overnight when we were at Oxford, they had purchased the olde Draper and were doing the whole entire up tres chic in a minimalist, very white and clear, and drab continental vibe. Kind of eccentric, but it seems like the Brits excel at marshaling together eccentric decorative schemes. Its delightful!

And then the George Floyd, Let’s just hold off judgement until we have all the details. The guy was probably on drugs. Black Lives Matters is a slush fund for liberal special interests run by Marxists that want to destroy the White Christian American Family. The status quo supremacy of it, yes. And that was what I was ultimately up against with my parents wasn’t it? Running into that dynamic of their having perfected the keeping of traditions in both religion and politics (and lifestyle?) and that they would out of hand be hostile to progressive positions just based on disposition, education basckground, peer group, lived experience, and they would politic in a specific way with a specific tone and take no prisoners, self-righteous compote which they were entitled to because we were talking about babies. Real human babies. A holocaust of babies. Many of them black and brown. And while this imagery was disturbing I was not willing to make the jump with her that a strong anti-abortion mentality justified all the other upper-crusty callousness of a lot of the rights policies. She did not perceive how deeply the tone of conservatism had changed under Trump it felt so much more off putting than under Bush, but I’m not sure that Bush was actually a much more powerful President than the Donald. He did get reelected. He has been coming out and speaking out against “Nativist” tendencies in the Republican party which was nice to hear. My parents won’t hear any of it. They like the change of tone. It echoes the hollowed bellowed of Rush Limbaugh. When my mother called for prayers for Rush Limbaugh who was in a losing battle with advanced lung cancer at the time and then referred to Kamala Harris’s Diabolical Agenda being the darkest sort of evil I felt like I had to throw a towel in in an effort to keep the feed politics free as had been agreed upon and whose policy wisdom had been extolled repeatedly before and after Franciosed BLM exit. So when I wrote something polite, trying to be polite about keeping the feed a politics free zone, and I was quickly admonished, on the feed by my elder brother to “bite my tongue” and “Suck it up” and that “I had no idea how much my mother loved me and had sacrificed for me and that I should have more respect for her.” My response on the feed was something like: “Biting tongue. Proceeding to suck. Officially retiring from politics. Love to all the chaps! And then I left the feed. I was out! Which honestly I had wanted to be out for a while. I mean it was my sister’s in-laws more or less and then my Annette who was a warm person, but honestly not someone I really wanted to be close to. When I was in college she tried to give me a bunch of denim shirts with Disney characters embroidered on the breast pockets. And inside I was like “what the fuck”, but I felt compelled to take them from her and the remained in a drawer in my paretns house until my mom would show up wearing one . Its kind of faded and stretched out and thre’s a goofy on the breast pocket. She wears it when she is gardening and likes it very much.

**CURRENT**

**01April2020**

Morning. Reading Coleridge. Reading/Sing Nick Cave. Reading the Gospel of John. Reading Tarot.

*“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” H.D.T*

*When we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy.*

* Herman Hesse

*“Let him step to the music he hears however measured or far away.” H.D.T*

*“And the children in the apple tree / not known because not looked for.” T.S. Eliot*

I’d like my daily bread however  
you arrange it, and I’d also like  
to be bread, or sustenance for  
some others even after I’ve left.  
A song they can walk a trail with.

* Diane di Prima

**Structure:**

* The rural dweller to Cifitifed dynamic. Not seeking that out, but finding it and understanding something about Trumps America myself. It was plausible. I believed it. I lived it.
  + Small family.
  + Not home owner, not much space to accommodate my 2 parents, 5 siblings, their 5 spouses, and then our collective 19 children. Summing our total to 33 people. What exacerbates this is my families inability to do much intricate or even prudent coordinating planning. And no one outside of my mother, whose instinct is just to do it herself as is my fathers sometimes telling other people that they did it, sometimes not, so yea, we can’t plan stuff together, so we pride ourselves as a clan on flexibility and spontaneity, which I have found increasingly difficult to hang with over the years as the I have had limited vacation time, few free weekends where I am not working, including what is for most people a long holiday weekend, and then the logistics of just how massive and how inclusive our family gatherings want to be in theory. This whole house of cards came crashing down with the addition of politics. When we arrived at Thanksgiving 2016 and their were Maga hats strew about the house like it was some sort of Michigan militia safe house I decided the absolute best thing to do would be to just start drinking craft beer with abandon. Might raise the ceilings and push out the walls of my brother’s weird cave like tri-level. I ate everything in front of my and drank like an asshole and since then my enthusiasm for family gatherings has only declined. I think it best fot my own damn health that I get some distance from this shit, or at least figure out a more productive way to dealk with the alienation and heartbreaking distance and familial lonlieness that it stirs up in me. I need to look that down in the face. I need to face that and bravely saw I accept it and own it and know that it is a part of me, but not all of me. It is a texture within my being within reality but it is not all. I do not have to let specific textures dominate my way of seeing, my way of being, my perspective, I can see as I shall see, settled though bedlam. Swiss alp mountain scene. Snow capped and serene. Breathing in the cold air and exhaling. The jazz drumming from my headphones whispoers of currents in the murk. Write on muttering scribe. It can’t hurt.
  + Not married to a healthcare worker and supporting them from home.
    - Emily, Hans, Beth (Caleb just married, still getting settled, Marcus is a dissolute rebel just like me, we are the “artists”, the beatniks, the explorers, though he is confirmed in the Catholic church and I believe attends church regularly.
  + Not Catholic
* Rural vs City- not necessarily material, attitudinal, political, lifestyle, rhythm, diet (your diet and the diet of the people around you), available grocery stores, restaurants, sirens, traffic, transportation options, transportation habits, reading habits, churching going habits, church going habits of the people around you,
* [The river](file:///C:\Users\aaron\Creating\Writing\Pieces\The%20River.docx) flowing out, appearing, existing everywhere at once. At the mouth, against each inch of bank. In the mountain. On the plain. Cascading. Lugubrious. Ever mutable. Ever becoming. River quotes from *Blood Meridian*, *A Time of Gifts*, *Siddhartha*, *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, *Journey to the East*, *Journey to the West*.
* A song … the Passion of Gold?
* A film… watching something projected…
* Finding the right metaphors (right silence, cypher, calm before the mirror, the void, overcoming despair and dislocation and fragmentation).
* Forged on an anvil (improved), between the shit out of destroyed.
* Inadequacy of language, the sacred trust of engaging with the language, testing it, stretching it, miniscule contribution.
* Coming into one’s own, overcome by life
* Ego sublimation, ego actualization
* Stretching vs. running.
* God is in all things… Pantheistic God.
* The Mawkishness of naming everything and theologizing everything. Our differences are important to me. Words are more important than feelings.
* No longer beholden to my parent’s salvation narrative, my parent’s Good Life narrative. How to express anything without intellectualizing it and splicing it up into intolerably abstract fragments.
* WATTAGE + WEIGHT = SPEED ?
* WATTAGE / WEIGHT = Power to weight 3.5 whatever/kg
* CURRENT = VOLTAGE / RESISTANCE
* VOLTAGE = CURRENT \* RESISTANCE
* RESISTANCE = CURRENT/VOLTAGE
* A condition of complete simplicity, consisting of not less than everything.
* I have been really into physics as a metaphor. I’m very forgiving of myself for not knowing something. The Rhetoric of the outgoing president and even Emeron’s wild know-it-all prose always feels like a revelation even the line of thought entails a few felicitous leaps. Wasn’t it Colin Powell who said “optimism” is a force multiplier”. The good will of Ralph Waldo is evident. You leap with him or you’d like to if you knew what the hell he was talking about cause he’s so excited about it. You are sold. You want your ticket.
* Harnessing the power of a WAVE. The LOGOs… this doing thing, this being thing, this WORD, this breath of life, this physical manifestation of soul that can enter in through our ears, through our skin (sound waves, vibrate our blood in their blood pipes running through our body. 血管，龙头，电话，电影，危机，东西，自然，大自然，自己，外国人，
* Arranging objects and interaces. Objects are collections of data and behavior. They express this behavoir and data through the messages that they send, the ones that they are programmed to send or the ones that they simply let pass through them, jot their messages, but they were programmed to relay the message and so they do, or they do not send the message because they are not programmed to nor are they programmed to let the message simple pass through. And then the messages that they can receive are circumscribed as well. They have behavior and data certainly, but only certain messages, sent allow specified interfaces have any chance of reaching them and the desired information. It is all quite complicated and convoluted no? Not to mention all the loaded baggage with terms like object and subject. Matin Burber would take some umbrage with my nomenclature I think. I am not saying its perfect, I just think its illustrative. But how do you alk your metaphor ot and undress it in the moonlight without losing your sense of its actual proportions. How do you avoid the 110% conundrum of inspiration. Or can you learn to leap up toward it, record it and save it to savor or just cut right up when you have a cooler more considered head to contemplate it. Looking for ways to integrate it with all those other things that you have said and collected or heard and collected in the same place and which become the same things when they sit together. This mind collages that you have been endeavoring to collect and create and craft. Getting ahead of yourself so as to trick yourself into doing. Doing without knowing exactly what you are doing, discovering, keeping it interesting. It can be messy, but knowing how to deal with your mess. Finding your studio. Getting fitted with a well drapping smoke. Putting the throw cloth down practically and metaphysically. Finding a clean room to get dirty it. Dumping out your entire fucking useful box and finding an artful way to deal with its inspiring, but sometimes ultimately chaotic and overwheleming content. And not like it is some super special treasure trove that you alone possess, but know that everyone has it in them, and if you get out your golden cro-bar to have a looksie, you will have to deal with the firewalk that awaits you. We can make a career out of firewalking or we can make a career out of not firewalking. I am covering my bases here. Covering my ass for posterity. Trying to get to a place where someone will read this and think, huh, this is interesting, this guy knew something, or was at the very least trying to know something. He was knowing. A knowing look. Imparting some kind of understanding, but not an exact understanding. Calling our bullshit, but not specifically, just sort of Duck Typing our response to leave the received to sort out the inherent or implied or interpreted error message.
* I’d rather be a text than a testimony.
* I’d rather write a text than a testimony.
* Sabotage by the Beastie Boys on a Tuesday afternoon… Your Crystal Ball ain’t so crystal clear…

Direction:

* Luce County, Clockwinder, Mother, Amerikana, Full Retail, Tech, Travel… having relinguished control I have gained control. Having let go and made the project about tuning in, thinking, waiting, collecting, reflecting, refactoring, writing without judgement or intent, not attempting to craft with my will, but willing to allow the story to take shape from shadows and impressions, rather than so upfront, straight-forward, false to life delineation. That shapes appeared and the absences suggested. The stew has had time to comingle its flavors. A quote begets a quote. An image suggests an image. Unafraid to get out of the way. To yield to the river. To yield right of way. To follow the river. To return to the river.

Proud male robins conspiring together on the easy slope of the bay window’s tarpaper roof.

And this is an antedote, this reading, this blind falling into books, words, impressions, allowing the author’s to comingle in my imperfect understanding. To linger awhile in the new left. Spiritual seeker, still holding his bible, a long way from a pew, but without spite, without malice, but rejection is malice, opting out is attack. Disengagement is betrayal. Conservativeness approaches sneakily and I am left to answer for the fallen world.

Are we in the realm of the political? Are we in the realm of the real? Are we in the realm of the cultural? The realm of the spiritual. She drags the spiritual into the world. As much as she wants her spirituality to be set apart, as something that the world cannot touch, the world cannot defile, she drags it into the political sphere and tears it and wrenches it and her roiling insecurity and ill-will make for a turmultous river to navigate.

It has taken me some time for me to get to this point where I can freely write and express myself and my path on this road continues to unfold. I am seeking silence and I am seeking perfect ways to work in this imperfect world.

The deep belief in the process (in life) is what sustains me. The conviction that yes, this is it, this is all there is on this side of the mortal veil, we accept this and attempt to surf the silver linings. I like this sentiment, surfing the silver linings. More movement metaphors.

I am writing something larger, more expansive than I have ever written and honestly I don’t know if it will every coalesce or if it will simple flitter out of me leaf by leaf until the tree is bare and stripped and perhaps that is the work, the naked tree withered grey in time.

An instinct of intense consolidation overcame me. I turned within. 8 years of faking extraversion, whiplashed back and was amplified by my survival instincts, to get inside, get going, mobbing in a new direction. You have no idea how much time you have to do this thing, but take all of it. Take it all. You have no idea what is happening in the world. All of this is beyond our controla. What we can control is what kind of shape we are in when the dust settles as a family, creatively, and vocationally, as a I smoked weed and meditated and stretched and created quasi-shamanistic rituals to purge and settle and center. I have sought to flip my ego inside out. I have fled from pain, I have run headlong into pain. I have been drunk in the afternoon I have been stoned in the morning I have stayed up all night stretching and meditating. I have written songs and shouted them to my empty apartment and then forgotten them the next moment. Oh, my fog, oh, my amphetamines, oh, my pearls.

The past comes back to me with packets of pain, packets of joy. Nothing is clean. If you remember it being clean you must be misremembering or you simply narrowed the issue down to a clean framework. Something that worked for you to get clean. Get free. Some new way to rationalize your way out of the muck. Some new way for you to rationalize your way through to the other side of the field. Where the grass has always appeared so green and just might be.

I should read something about creating structures… finding synergies. Finding profoundity in simplicity.

Stretching = sport.

Music = salvation. (music more than politics can bind together. Music is language.)

Time spent = success

Everything is interface

New metaphors: achievement is application, stretching is sport, obsidian stone (aid not block), Maintain (achieved) silence.

In some ways, sometimes, I feel like I am caught in a loop, and I think, to some extent, I am, but thankfully the loop is expanding and stretching and beginning to build speed as my arc cycles out and out.

**CURRENT**

**09/11/2021**

Her mother was dead -- I almost envied her for knowing what that felt like.

**06/07/2021**

Some maps get you places, so maps help you make sense of where you’ve been.

**04/01/2021**

Susana Clarke book “Piranesi” -- read this and write something to Erik? This could be a good frame

**03/24/2022**

Hans, you are extremely attached to narrow narratives-- this simplifies things for you, clarifies things. We all do this of course, but our ignorance -- that which we ignore create blind spots. You need to stop with the altar/alter calls. You don’t think God has a direct line to me? You think you are called by God to be his messenger to me? That’s fine if that is the narrative you are choosing. My response to that, is no-- I don’t want a relationship with that as its main foundation / assumption / goal / only successful outcome. You don’t thing that I live off the abundance of Creation, that every single breath I take is not infused with the essence of this existence.

You seem to tried to make a God out of these words. My God is the word. You seem to have mistaken the Word for words. It wasn’t in the beginning were the words. It was Word. A mystery. A spirit. An intangible. A relationship. A state. An understanding. An acceptance and awareness. If I were a religious man I might call it blasphemy to say something like that! But please stop. We need a new interface. Your playing the Cardinal Ratzinger to our shared Imam is not going to work going forward. You nee to figure out how to respect my non-Christian status full stop. I am not a practicing Christian. I have not been a practicing Christian for literally decades and having you still hung up on that and being caught in this unending loop of argument and altar call is unacceptable to me. I am done with it. If this somehow feels like too much of a burden to you or too constricting to you to forgo your evangelical compulsions when you interact with me then maybe we just shouldn’t interact. Because I am completely over it. I have no desire to campaign against the particulars of your life, so please just, you know. back the fuck up.

Your being hung up on this in combination with your corruptively nostalgic and defensive no-nothing political and social attitudes, combined with your uninspiring screen dominated consumer focused family culture honesty make spending time with you unappealing. Just being honest.

Your politics is frankly mean spirited, especially the rhetoric you respond to and deploy. If you really looked critically at the way you act, the things you say, you might begin to be able to start to piece together why you are such a deeply unpleasant person to be around. You have to forgive me for not being a Christian. You have to forgive me for walking a different path than you. This life is not a zero sum game. If your faith is so strong then why can’t you let this go? It is finished. Forgive me. Let God work. You work. You practice. I will work. I will practice. You talk too much. Religion is not about words. They are fallible. It is about the Word. A spirit. A practice. Something lived. Something that only sparkles in action, otherwise in its word form is lifeless or worse unintelligible because the words are spoken from a mind that is been washed over by the carefully crafted and insolar cult speak that you have become fluent in.

Sometimes I feel like the I have spent a good bit of time over the last decade learning Mandarin and Ruby and Javascript etc and all you have acquired are a levels deep Catholic lexicon. Something that can be breathed and exhaled, but never fully inhabited enough to take possession of. We are possessed. We do not possess. Thus the words pass through our cypher skulls and our best chance at grounding truth in life is action, relationship, give and take, exploration. Drive by religious sloganeering and texted altar calls are a lazy, passive-aggressive, ineffectual, relationship alienating way of applying the logos. You have the breath of the universe within you. The truth of the ages. Is that really the best you’ve got?

Your repeated altar calls make you sound so insecure

**03/21/2022**

**I lost the script… I lost myself on the page. I have tried to flip the script.**

**A script are just a list of commands stored in a file.**

**A process is an instance of a program (the application of those commands)**

**Escaping mean striping something of special meaning.**

**03/11/2022**

**Names:**

**P.T. Anderson, Wes Anderson, Sky Anderson, Sherwood, Andersonville**

**Banana video, old plywood sign propped outside the doorway to the stairs up to the video store.**

**Plant names.**

**Lake names**

**Band names**

**Song names**

**John Fahey has the best names**

**Kidri and Riles The Emmlers also made up. They live in Andersonville. We had been planning on going over there, but they had a cold so we canceled. Helena peed in her diaper, so she lost her chance of a noontime episode of Mr. Rodgers. With these messages all coming at her Helena, wails and whines as she shuffles off to her potty-- “Ahhhh, now I not going to Mr. Rodger’s house…” But its all rooted in play. It has gotten harder and harder to play, but I am trying. I am taking stabs at it. I am marrying some dioysian and appolian practices and living the results. It has been a strange journey. Today is a good day. Momentarily I will throw my sandals on and go job a few miles in the 50 degree weather. The birds of reeling and chirping, the smooth sound of traffic steadily advancing through the morning air with a stiff southern wind bringng a balmy tone to the day. Tone. Tis all tone isn’t it. Guitar tone. Tone of voice. But what informs that tone?**

**Rivers & Religion**

**Does Robert Bly write about the river?**

**Faery Tales -- entering faery -- the land of make believe. Fred Rogers went their daily and he looked like some kind of a secular saint on TV. I walk into the room when my daughter is watching and**

**Weed strain names:**

**01/23/2022**

**January cold does not disappoint. And now, over night, snow. Our kitchen skylight covered, the whole neighborhood lumped in fluff.**

**In the evening I slip my sandals on and layer up in my Uniqlo “heat tech get-up and I do my west loop down Irving and up the west side of Horner Park at California and then back along Montrose and Welles Park and various snakey patterns paraklleling diagnolling snaking Lincoln Avenue.**

**I get hom and show and then pop back out in the car over to Lincoln Square to pick up Jummiy’s Piza from Lincoln and Foster. The old cozy corner location. Thwety odd years on and I am still trekking to this place for vitals. Jimmy’s has now moved even closer. Just west of Welles park on Montrose. It is the absolute best NYC style chewy crusted pizza.**

**I have been “barefoot” funning in my Xero branded minimal footwear sandals sinze August. I’ve generally been running shorter distances and at more relaxed paces, with an emphasis on how my body is feeling and running in this really light-footed and core-forward sort of way. Despite my lower milesage and less stress effort I feel better, my running is more enjoyable, I am les prone to injury and the the whole practice has melded really well with my increased interest in and practice of stretching-- I essentially practice some sort of lazy amalgamation of Yoga, general fitness stretching, tai qi, qi gong, pilates… I’ve tried to abstract the process my distilling the who effort down to a couple of principles or goals or tenants-- root and extend.**

**I pushed a fair amount of paper and burned a lot of words and leaned into a lot of tight ligaments to boil a bunch of things down to those two words. And they are what I am left with. And so I practice. Root. Extend.**

**I’ve heard through the grapevine that your empoyers have finally showed you sme just deserves and that you ow have an assisten and a driver and a whole kennel of assassins at your beckon call. This all seems like a whole lot of responsibility, but if you’re up for it just be sure to keep the assassins well fed. Hungry assassins just aren’t good for anybody.**

**0/12/2022**

**Seeking some sort of bulwark against the unanswerable in others.**

**n =~ /..\\*/ || n =~ /[A-Za-z]/ ? false : true**

**01/03/2022**

**And we wake up to burn. Early up. Resetting the kitchen in the half-light of the day. Green tea dispensed into a sieve to steep in water surreptitiously boiled in the electric kettle. Clean the room out where I worked to my wife’s ire, her tiredness. It’s Sunday she says, but I want to work and I know tomorrow will be disruptive-- appointments, child juggling. And so I work in the room that has vomited craft supplies and Christmas wrapping supplies and fragments and papers, child drawings. And just when I move to settle in, Esme wakes and settles cozily into my lap and tells me about her dreams and Harry Potter and Dolphin and on and on and betsy will be up soon and she has an eye appointment and I will be on point with the kids. Get them breakfast, get them dressed and I have not looked at a single line of code, despite my early morning rise. I am despairing. I am chasing the Li now over Kan. I knew I should be pursuing Li, but I did not know ho for a long time. June 2020 my body was tense and injury prone. My circulation was off. Bloody, pus weeping sores on my legs. Over caffeinated. Doing pushups. Marking them down, trying to track my was to a more solid self.**

**Trying to heat myself up to a boiling point, push through my limitations. Learn a new skill set, mind-set, set of habits. Having no idea what I am doing. Blundering. Attempting to raise children. Stay available for my wife. Heating up and then cooling off with Alcohol.**

**And now here.. somewhere new. Moving past my THC and caffeine and alcohol dependency. Movingpast my need to get real hot. Learning to learn. Learning to abstract. Learning to be unapolgetically iterative. Rounding a new corner. The corner I had sought to round, but did not know how to get there. Having gotten there, -- after breakdowns-- body, mind, habits, relationships, career, financial, familial, political-- want distance from it all, want the golden light to surround. Truly broken now? Can we go lower. I remember the spring when I started looking at RSpec. Less than a year ago. Coming back to Rails full force, in a different space than a year ago. Still on course to pull this career transition off debt free. I am water. “What about water, Aaron? What about water? *I am water.***

**This thought, this articulated. This not understood. This not practically understood. Pain a teacher. Time a teacher. Broke in the sense of a horse-- conforming to its trade. Learning to pull. Broke-- not fixed; Broke-- no money; Broke-- a will reshaped to a new skill set and tasks. Chinese is a practice. Qigong is a practice. Programming is a practice. My family is a practice.**

**01/02/2022**

How much Foxnews do you check out?

Billboard-- T-Mobile billboard atop an At&t store, Smash fruit selzer (sunglasses reflecting an underwater shark that is also wearing sunglass), sustainable farming with a sort of “duh” tag line telling corporations to get involved in sustainable farming, Peroni holiday sign, a giant red billboard featuring an enormous heart graphic formed from pills advertising an on-line pharmacy where you can shop for your pills more conveniently and for a better price.

12/08/2021

Shared language as atomic unit of cultural bond.

After many years of seemingly being unable to write and remember my own songs-- caught in this perpetual go-nowhere spontaneous song composition process, one which was personal, but cloistered and one that didn’t really advance my musical abilities very much at all. I have been blocked. I have connected this back to my contentious relationship with music and my mother-- all those fights over practicing the piano and my parents spastic way of trying to cultivate my musical education. The whole process felt really fraught and seemed to always just grind on my insecurities and lack of self-confidence. Then when folk music and rock started to pull me into the idea of making music, my mother violently and emotionally attacked me and accused me of bringing in some sort of negative and demonic force into her life. She saw me going the route of Doug and then just reacted with anger and frustration and condemnation. He attack touching some child-senstive adspect of my psyche that I cannot deny exists. Then I also had the thought that I may have been sexually molested as a young child while my brother was at his Suzuki lessons. And how that fact came up was that My parents had seen an old playmate of mine EWTN performing a folky guitar and vocal number and my parents were reminded that Dougs father had gone to jail for molesting children and how they didn’t know if he touched me, but my mom had obviously considered the possibility and she wells up with tears and gets that same guilty tone in her voice like when she says she should have loved me more when she was in medical school and she felt like she had to neglect me and how maybe that neglect and this child molestation thing kind of explains why I am on the outside of the church and I have chosen a broken path rather than following along on her remarkable swing to the right politically and religiously to become a Rush Limbaugh loving Santorum Catholic that has no compunction of referring to the Governor of Michigan (who just happens to share our last name) as Governor Nazi for her efforts to mitigate the affects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**10/28/2021**

Interfaces, busyness, friendship, thought, intoxication, defeat, arrogance, inferiority complex,

The mother who is constantly ragging on herself (“self-deprecation”)-- Why can’t we just be proud of what we are engaged in without feeling guilty of conflicted or just totally scattered to the wind.

I had set up a tricky equation for success. Burnt the ships. Off in a new direction.

And then you have this 98 page letter that I have been adding to gradually over the last year and a half.

**10/14/2021**

**Abstractions-- common stable quantities**

**9/29/2021**

“There are no limits. There are plateaus, and you must not stay there; you must go beyond them. If it kills you, it kills you.”  Bruce Lee

**9/27/2021**

**We have to make our own mistakes. We have to play our own wrong notes. You can’t teach someone a song by just sharing it with them, but that doesn’t mean its not worth sharing. We have to follow our values and what we feel is important and ground our sense of beauty and goodness and peace in that.**

**I have felt completely iroded. Distant from family and friends and even my own wife. I have journeyed into a psychological desert with all my good ships burning on the craggy shore.**

**What to tell a middle-aged man in the middle of his mid-life crisis. There is not much to be down. There, as always, is just a low row to hoe. My extra challenge has been the ‘long walk’ to the field, which while physical involves stepping through a door from our kitchen into our 8 x 9 x 10 foot ‘workroom’. I think about that short story *How much land does a man need*?**

**Trying to learn computer programing while attempting to find my voice as a writer while trying to maintain my Chinese and raise a 5 and one year old and mitigating the needs and challenges of my wife who has been much put upon by the girls, my fragmented mind, the general toxic swirl of the past few years, not to mention chronic back issues which damage her mood, her mind, and generally dampens her enthusiasm and optimism.**

**There is a big fucking wall of inertia in front of me-- what the fuck am I going to do. I have tried to work intuitively. I have tried to keep my head down. I have burnt out and manically written thousands of pages of letters and story fragments and notes for a novel.**

**So yes, in the year when I lost my job because of a pandemic and a race riot, I slipped into a chrysalis and have been attempting to complete reboot myself and launch my career as a writer and digital creator.**

**I am so tired of unwarranted certainty. I am so tired of unwarranted uncertainty. I am certain I am tried of both certainty and uncertainty.**

**If there is an arrogance to writing then there is also an arrogance to existing. Do you deserve the breathe you breathe? Do you deserve the space where you stand?**

**Yes, yes, how can we manage?**

**Stay optimistic. Stay focused. Follow you values.**

**I really want to get over myself and focus on my family and friends and supporting and encouraging them from a settled position of consolidated strength and mitigated weakness. I am trapped within this process of becoming. I am 42 years old and I am still trapped in this process of becoming. What the fuck? Seriously What the fuck?**

**The leather has been cut. The fairy children came in the night and laid out the leather for new shoes.**

**Be wary of endeavors that involve buying new clothes.**

**After a scant decade of wearing a carosoul of begrudging purchased suits-- conservative blue and black and dark gray, this advice strikes me as pure fucking gold.**

09/21/2021

Sweet child of mine over the roof tops of the northside. The sane brick alcoves. The old brick warehouse buildings up and down Ravenswood. The spot light of gold coming from the low sun shinning between the liver of space between the stolid buildings.

Baby in my arms. *Read me Daddy, read me.*  Vomiting from the loft at 4 a.m. The animal confusion of a vomiting child. The stench of sick, urine, my own unwashed smell. My tight back and disordered mind.

Our abortions. Our lost of mind.

09/04/2021

Writing beyond the ideas and into the words themselves. Beyond the idea is the tone. Beyond the words are the tone they impart. The atmosphere. Could you change a room with thouhse words. Exploring mode and mood.

* A run
* A stretch
* A smoke
* Changing of a mode
* Not prescriptive, but descriptive. Attempting to capture something about it physically, mentally, spiritually. The tricky pan-intellectual realm of music. Immediate, direct. Running over each other. Losing one another in the night. In this concept I am strong enough. IN this concept I have to be strong enough and I am .
* Il want to have the wherewithal for other people’s art. I want to have the wherewithal for other people’s beauty.

Northern Lite.

04/01/2021

Can I take this letter to the next level? What is the next step with this? 3

06/08/2021

He reads her the snotgreen passage in Ulysses, or he asks her if he can read it. He wants to read it aloud. And now he is not alone in the room. She has come to sit in the room. Haunting the couch across from him where we sits after having gotten up, gotten his daughter going for the day and begun to work on his writing in the frayed and checked backset white chair. The sides of which were shredded by the cat who developed the habit after his companion Hugo died. That was a whole other thing— finally back in China, in career limbo with less and less wherewithal to shift.

You are sitting and not really looking at me, but you are facing me and I am conscious of you. I got up earlier with the girl and have had coffee and a 5mg THC capsule. The morning is warm close and humid in that fresh June way when the heat takes its time rousing in the morning. Unlike perhaps an August heat that stays up all night and greatest you in the morning feverously, delirious and drained at the break of day, the dog days, these are still the bird and grass days, the get the garden in days.

I offer to read her something and she looks kind of stunned. She speaks slower in the morning and quieter, like she is speaking from a far away place, I’m trying to engage her, this has been going on for over a month, I am desperate, I don’t know what to do, but what happens when that desperation has bubbled up and boiled over and then cools upon you just like your limits on your happiness you find limits to your grief, stop gabs, stiff upper lip, a little high, a little low—how do we keep functioning, how can we live in these contradictions, how the fuck does it makes sense any of it when we start breaking it all done and we start to line up our messages and behaviors and try to untangle and maintain our relationships in a landscape that is ever expanding geographically and digitally as our resources dwindle or we contort ourselves into strange positions mental and physical to make our personal political-economy cohesive, sustainable. It will kill us whatever it is, but we can mitigate pain, we can try and mitigate suffering… though should we… don’t we want our JEWELS to SHINE for all eternity. My jewel was forged with dragon glass and it is darkness itself, consuming all light that draws near, necessary disappearing into the depths and folds and facets because where else do we exist—what is the baseline to be? What is the basis for your next mood? What do you do with broken relationships, fragmented ones, political umbrage, religious intolerance, racism, addiction (to drugs and alcohol sure, but all the million other HABITS with their varying degrees of salubriousness and salacity. Deadening habits of consumption hang our unhealthy minds on our dry bones for all the world to behold our cravenness. Deadening habits. Streamlining for efficiency. Coffee up. Alcohol down. Up the stairs and down. Go, go, go…

So many stairs—3 story businesses, third story apartments- up to the “el” platfom, down

06/06/2021

One upon a time the goose drank wine

And the monkey chewed tobacco on the street car line

The street car broke and the monkey choked

And they all went to heaven on a billy goat.

06/03/2021

But what if the whole thing is just about accepting that I have this compulsion to write really mediocre poetry and to journal and do writerly things even though there is no guarantee that it will be a financially rewarding pursuit. A big part of this process has been getting the perspective that writing is ultimately extremely important to be and nourishing and finding ways in which I can engage with it and leverage it to help me to engage with the world. Full birding the gap between my social self and my private self. Writing has been about cultivating this private life, this private persona that has not always felt up for interfaceing oni the fly with the outside world. The literary act has been about COLLECTING my thoughts. ORDERING language. ORDERING ideas. Playing around with chronology. Trying to find some kind of universal truth in it or encouragement. Doing language to the point that the language itself begins to yield fruit and new connection and approach.

**09April2021**

**Am I not free to opt out of your apocalyptic politics? Your aggressive politicking? Your offensive use of language and ad hominum attact and strawman argument. Pointing out people’s logical fallacies is a good way to become popular. I have learned than if they don’t want to burn heretics kept around for blood reasons should probably learn to keep their mouths shut. Sure, yes, there were many GREAT things about the antebellum south. And yes, of course it is preferrable for US to resolve our differences and not the government. Like when Dr. Carson moved into that white neighorhood and his neighbor flew up the Confederate flag to welcome him. And then all the other neighbors put up American flags and then Dr. Carson and the racist neighbor became great friends. And that’s how we overcame racism in America.**

**Or like when your dad had COVID and he had to keep telling himself that it was possibly a cold, possibly, likely even maybe, and he had to keep telling himself this so he could keep going into the school district to coach track and to substitute teach. And then when he beat it and test negative, he proved himself right.**

**“Sort of warped reality to his convenience.”\**

**“Right exactly!”**

**It is always easier to ask for forgiveness than it is to ask for permission. Why should we pay taxes on that?**

4/29/2021

The Obsidian stone had blocked stopped me up, or let me flow clean with nothing meaningful to glean, at least not right then, diarrhea of the pen; now that that was all opened up and I had made an ally of my block, a far seeing funhouse mirror of appearances of my obstacle I had unleased more material to collage with that I could actually handle. And here I write 1200 pages behind on the assembly line and my letter to you is at 53 pages and almost 27,000 words. This is an absurd situation, but one that I have intentional sought to create. I have launched out int this freeing rambling lurching, searching, cascading exploration of voice. Seeking in the shared culture of our decades old conversation, buoyed by my perception of its tone and our shared interests. This anti-tweet of stacked up ramblings. Feeling my way through the material. Running it back again. Adding it to the heap. Heaping it on. Then thinning it out. Discovering what its all about. What is there. What is the collective affect. Should it begin with an apology a note of explanation. Is it a series of letters? Is it something that could be chunked off into several different projects. It is certainly something that has grown and will continue to grow, especially given the fact that I have 1,200 pages of material to pass through the cypher before I am even caught up to today.

I would really like to come back to earth to pull some things together to share with betsy. Share with Dan. Share with Susan and Micah and start reaching out to some people with letters and such. I dod not have to worry about the end intention. The end intention is love and attention and consideration and good will and survival and community and hand prints on the walls in caves in southern Argentina and buffalo artfully painted nearby. And communications of old. Shared remembrances. Sketches. Colorings. Well wishes from another ear. Another location in space and time. A surprise. A slow approach. A collected message. A message pulled together with the intention of wishing well. A message pulled together from material accrued over time. Material entered int from many different angles. As manner different angles as possible. Enter into with a multitude of intents. And a singular one. The one and many. The specific and the general. The actual and the imagine. The postulated and the possible.

Something blew up in me and sent me aloft and I have been way up high collecting samples and impressions and recording them just as fast as I possibly can and finding in this frenetic pounding pace the discipline I need to take my writing the next step up the trail. I am finding rhythms, unconscious rhythms that allow me to pop in and out of different sources and different focuses. Honing this ability and honing my ability to drive into the connections that present themselves or that I intuit will be what makes me as a writer and a reader and a human being. I love that freedom. That wild ability to jump from one thing to another, that abrupt change in consciousness without giving off the impression that you are being random or associative or falsely creative or whatever our “performance” might engender. You are merely being. Thinking. Communicating with a text. And excitedly attempting to act as a conduit through which texts can connect and interact and communicate. Attempting some sort of literary alchemy of elevating lower substance to higher substance— the low substance of my scattered, fragmented literary gatherings into some greater composite whole, more formed matter. A matter that I could not have conjured directly under any conditions. A creative act of discovery. A mining of association and connection and shared experience and reference. The buoying power of culture. The buoying power of projected culture, or perceived culture. Culture bought into. Culture rejected. Culture contained behind party lines. Connection or perceived connection. Not to belabor a point. Lifting up. Why do people write letters? The Apostle Paul? Encourage, exhort, instruct, etc. Rilke- generous, helpful, empathetic, interfacing on this shared love, obsession, life ordering focus, fate maker or breaker, speaking to that which hangs one in the balance, and other letters, I have that book in English and Mandarin, something about the world’s greatest letters. They had a lot of these kind of mawkish mass market books at Chinese bookstores. I loved them and scoped up several bilingual editions in one of my sweeps through collecting western literature translated into Chinese on the cheap, I think my thinking was that I would be able to understand it easier because the language might be slightly easier (based on the readability of the credits to a landmark television show in my language development which I would watch from 10 until 11 in Xi’an which was a Mexican Telenovela set on a mesquite farm dubbed into Mandarin and subtitled in Chinese characters. The language was so simple and direct that it made me feel like I was halfway fluent when I wasn’t really, but supported by the obvious story and roles of the different characters and emotion, over acting I could totally follow what was going on and making some valuable connections for the use and emotion import of many commonly used phrases. It was fantastic. I wanted to repeat the estactic linguistic experience but with like *A Moveable Feast* and *Hard-boiled wonderland and the end of the world.*

This is all just to say, I need to read. Reading feeds my desire to write. Writing feeds my desire to read. I long for a day when I have fully buried my need to write on the subject of writing with such dedicated frequency, but that too will be an important milestone. And hopefully, someday, using my consistent “heap” and filter strategy I will be able to pull together a comprehensive collection of my best writing on writing. If it was cohesive enough and if there was enough material I could totally run it as a series of blog posts or even just have it to share my thoughts on writing with betsy or Erik or whoever. The girls. Which reminds me. Bringing the girls into my writing process and my stretching process is really important. I think curbing my weed smoking will facilitate this and make my writing a bit less of a solitary act. I have such great momentum going that I can with confidence ween off the weed and expect that my daily and weekly output will not be affected. In fact, I am certain that I would have a better chance at stripping away a good chunk of that 1,200 page back up if I involved the girls more and tapered off my somewhat overeager weed for art’s sake. Thankfully most of the writing I have done while high of late has been cohesive and clear. Perhaps the logic has gotten fuzz in place, but this is why the sober eye of an editor is such a boon. I have really relished having a more cavalier creative approach these days with writing. It has certainly created a lot of waste, but in some ways this waste and the inefficiencies and self-inflicted wounds or self-imposed limitations I have placed upon myself have led to reckonings that have acerated my artistic development. Which I can’t cringe at when I write. Maybe it will not be as cringe worthy when I return to it at a late time, but what I am trying to say is that even though my freedom has led me into making more mistakes I am at least in a virtuous cycle of identifying the mistakes and cutting them off and allowing myself the latitude to continue to write and ramble without focus or full end goal, with the realization that much of what I type will never see the light of day. Is this a mania? Why is all of this inefficiency an acceptable part of the process. If I am so dedicated to the craft and balance and everything why can’t I just peck out what I want to say and be done with it. Why all of this filibustering and literary babbling and blustering? I suppose its because when I start to write, when I set my pen to paper or my fingers to the keys I honestly do not know what I am trying to say. I honestly do not know what I want to say or what I need to say, nor what is right for me to say or what would be popular for me to say. I simply begin to write. Talk. Create. Ramble. See. Think. Follow.

This reminds me of the watch market and pawn shops and the U.S. Marshal auctions and the robbery and the Hinsdale shop. And the guy with the check for $120,000 and an I.D. from the Common Wealth of North America. My colleague running the sale up, obviously holding the watches, but sending the check up the line to accounting with a copy of the guy’s id in which he looks like an obvious lunatic and the check with a kind of like “I don’t know” “we’ll see’ “I did my part” and Rebecca who is our manager but who we also compete with for sales and who can butt into our sales with cavalier (and sometimes hilariously precedent setting) impunity and she was also kind of like “I don’t know”, I’m going to have to read up on this Commonwealth of North America. And I feel like I am being gaslit in to believe that something that is obviously ridiculous is not ridiculous.

Really don’t know where I am but the inspiration to proceed has never been stronger. The compulsion to write, the compulsion to tune out the world and work is very strong and I am shaping my whole life around it at this point. I am losing control of not doing it and I think that is fine once you have figured out how to carve out the blocks of time that you need. The blocks of tiem that I am carving are basically stealing time from my coding ventures, which ends up being a bit self-defeating seince the coding ventures are what we are hedging our bets on for at least our next decade of employment. I would love for writing to play the bills, but I still do not know how to do commercial writing yet. Even in this process, while it has spurned a lot of production, none of it has achieved a marketable level. This letter project which has ballooned out of proportion in a wonderful and overwhelming way has never been about trying to writing a book. I am ultimately seeking to dwell in the place where writing exists and writing is possible. And time can be manipulated in strange and wonderful wauys and there is a fluency of language and speech and recall and allusion and contextualization that often eludes the spontanteous conjuring. And then there is the conjuring The feeling your way into a description. The weighting of sentences. The bubbling up of the perfect word. And reading. Other people’s worlds. The intimacy of that. The irony of finding your thoughts at the end of msomeone else’s pen. The closeness of that. The binding aspect of that. Book bindings. Bookman’s Alley. All jumping out of Peter Carlson’s car to feed the meter and leaving the car locked and running and being locked out and having to call a locksmith and paying cash that nobody had on any day of the week and all we wanted to do was go book shopping.

In the spirit of fluency I have broken up time and collapsed it. Snipped out certain phrases, sentences, paragraphs, copied quotations included clippings, references, allusions, illusions, confusions, conundrums, conflicts, riddles, reflections, whims, memories, imaginations, phantasms, chicanery, problems, processes, solutions, the dissection of habits and appetites…

I went to bed early again. Passed out with Helena beside me in our bed. I remember her squirmed and kicking me in the side a few times, then I wake up and its almost midnight and betsy is coming to bed. I pick Helena up and slide her into her low crib that is now more like a bed with the 4th wall removed.

Esme jumping through the 4th wall in the character of LeBron James. It’s LeBron James and he will now jump out of the Television. And how LeBron James became Mudgie over time—

A TV character on an imaginary show in which I the curious viewer tune in and then am sucked into the show when I press the IN button on my remote control.

Then I join in as Mudgie, joining Wudige and Pudgie, in battling our arch nemesis Mr. White. We are acrobats in a gypsy circus that Mr. White had wanted to take an ownership stake in. We refused to allow him into the business because he seemed untrustworthy. He proved to be untrustworthy and he tries to burn our circus down.

The circus is actually our cover because we are three extraterrestrial creatures who are in exile on this planet. Mr. White is also an extraterrestrial, a serial criminal who has arrived at this far-flung corner of the galaxy to live comfortably and exploit and control and neutralize the people around him.

He is actually a rat, but can make himself appear as a plump little business man in the habit of dressing in white suits, as well as a giant. I had one vision of a scene where Wudgie and Mr. White have a battle of the minds with water rushing down upon them and Mr. White getting swept away in the rush and roar of the water, but that does not necessarily have to be the end of Mr. White. It could also have something to do with another character or even be back story.

Something that was really traumatic for Wudgie. But he saved the day and he survived, even though he realized he had gotten very close to not coming out on top.

This image of Mr. White operating a hand cart and cruising through the Sceney stretch towards Sault Ste. Marie and the Locks and trying to get his boat through the locks and on our along the St. Lawrence Seaway. He needs lots of money because he has a lot of people on pay roll. Whole towns depend on his largesse. The shipbuilders. The miners. He takes control of the mine.

His luxury ship, something inspired by the Day After tomorrow. Mr. White is kind of an Ass, but he has really nice things and is much more connected to the people and the community than the three adventures. He wants to control it though. He wants to be the boss of it. His generosity is on his terms and he is very generous. His birthday is the biggest even in the town. He gives generously to the church and the mayor (or he is the mayor), and the sheriff and the newspaper. He uses the law and public opinion to get back at the Siblings. Older, middle, youngest. Genderless. Compassionate. Daring. Longing for return. Not nostalgically, but preparing, anticipating when it will be their time.

The old ways— they sing a beautiful three part harmony.

They practice a stretching and tumbling martial artistry: Tai qi, yoga, aikido, karate, acrobatics, dancing, they tell stories with their dancing and their tumbling, and they can actually kind of fly, but they obfuscate this a bit with their act.

Staying near the Roma protects them from being sensed on this planet. They are in hiding from their evil Uncle who attempted to grasp control when their grandfather had attempted to hand the power over to the people. Their father had died in the struggle with their Uncle, who vowed that the traditions of the family were more important than the fate and well -being of the country. The three siblings then had to go into hiding. The rebels know where they are and will come for them when the time is right to launch the revolution against their corrupt and greedy uncle.

Slowly, slowly building up some stories- about the U.P. Children’s stories that Esme and I have thought up together over time. Personal narratives with reflections on art, writing, travel, vocation, family, parenting, politics, selfness, religion, health, focus, discipline, addiction, dedication, illusion, delusion, language, risk, value, motivation, intention, action, order, chaos, dislocation, alienation, poetry, food, alcohol, exercise, film, music, photography, digital dislocation, process, sleep, intoxication, sobriety, inspiration, perspective, awe, nature, the sun, the seasons, travel, the future, the past, the present, reading, Chinese, China, English, America, Coding, Ruby, technology, sales, CRM, modes of being, active, passive, kinetic, static, rigid, flexible, progressive, conservative, progress, preservation, the word, the wyrd, Beowolf, old Testement, New Testement, vogue, message, earthly consolation, cancel culture, Trumpism, Nativism, Insecruity, Manicheanism, Not against flesh and blood, transubstantiation, the accidents of substance, classes, instances, messages, interfaces, flow, seven-habits of highly effective people: Be proactive, Begin with the end in mind, first things first, seek first to understand, then to be understood, seek synergies, Sharpening the saw- the upward spiral and continual renewal through education to propel one along the path of personal freedom, security, wisdom, and power.

Walker Percy- “The last Self-Help Book” Christian Literature. The one class that it still kind of burns me that I didn’t do in college, that and I probably should have done FAL as well, cause why not? Just ordered Walker Percy’s book because I have an intuition that it might possess a piece that I need for my piece. This disparate collecting of writers and phrases from the accumulating phases of my life is not to prove my ultimate realness, if anything it is a weakness, a need to work at maintaining my grasp on the immediacy of life and its manifold intricacies and interwoven connections. A rhapsody is a stitching together reality, reflecting on it, celebrating it, cursing it, shitting on it, badgering it, corralling it, running it down, adorning it, displaying it, hanging it on our way, putting it under a bell jar, blowing it up on a jumbotron casting it out from my minds and our souls in bas relief in some sort of deeply naïve and pure act of pagan gestalt belief. Language this fabric of reality. Doing the fabric of reality. Running it through your hands, golden sun on grain, sand on Montrose Beach in the sun, Tony Jops there talking future’s options with his fanny pack full of sunshine and the children growing up right before our eyes. And it is always the 1970s and Bob Newharts Chicago on the high rise northside. I go to look up the Bob Newhart show and mine it for anything interesting about its connection to Chicago and mine but find that I am not connected to the internet on my computer and my cellphone has just run out of power.

Dylan comes on singing that “you will start our standing proud to steal her anything she needs…”

Its nearly noon on Thursday and I am sorry thoroughly lost in this process. “Peaking through a keyhole” down on my knees.

There is something about America in here. And something about my family in here. And something about my understanding of it. Or at least my accepting it, which is much the same though acceptance and tolerance and accepting and compromise are having a touch season. What are we talking about? Our democracy? Our personal finances and ambitions and self-respect (“Never Settle”, “Impossible is Nothing”). The mythic sphere of politics and advertising and any kind of myth making, story spinning, branding exercise, the creation of collective culture. The collective process of cultural creation. Test marketing ideas, celebrities, stories, controversies, fueling the 24/7 news cycle, a coal fire boiler room of information and ideas and books and films and tv shows and references and Wikipedia articles, DVDs, CDs, MP3s, sound recordings, camera snapshots, film camera, digital camera, editing photos and videos, 4-track recordings, recorded memories recorded for posterity lost in the cold, alienating abyss of digital dislocation note books, journals, DevCurriculum, HTML, CSS, Emmet, JQuery, Ruby, Rails, React, Git, GitHub, Commandline, Commad prompt, Linux Shell, Libraries, gems, package managers, SQL databases, NoSQL databases, servers, HTTP protocols, Restful Web services, pipelines, frontend frameworks, backend frameworks, Domain Specific Languages. *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *Siddhartha*, *Journey to the East*, *Journey to the West*, *A Time of Gifts*, *The Gifts of the Ides*, Tarot and Chinese, Tarot and Poetry (*Readings*), Diamonds, Sales trainings (Always be closing), *The Gift of Fear*, *Under the Sign of Saturn*, *The Rings of Saturn*, *The Three Body Problem*, *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Fela Kuti, Radiohead, dancing moving body, rhythm, John Fahey- in bad health in motels selling guitars to stay afloat, Alan Watts living in Druid Heights, drinking a fair amount, Peter O. Whitmer, Frances Fitzgerald,

Accepting that VOICE can be so much more than just a talking voice, a self-explaining collection of metaphors and symbols.

I am gambling with my children’s future. I could be making this transition to tech in a much more staid, focused, undynamic path. Dynamic seems to have a value judgement, like it would be some kind of capitulation to just through out my writing impulse, my creative reading imputlse, my collaging impulse, my recording impulse. These impulses that did not just spring up impulsively, but that have been being honed over the years by your lifestyle. As you commit to this and have that striped away, allow this to flourish and that to be neglected.

The banality of evil… meaning…that which allows ordinary people to do extraordinary things, could also be switched around to talk about he balanity of good, the balanity of extraordinary, each life a collection of habits and projects that unfold in time and space. This brings me back to that vision. That necessary vision. That vision that is somehow beyond the good or the cool or economically prudent or even ambition in as much as ambition is attached self-promotion and advancement, I am talking about being, I am talking about tapping into some basic need and desire and personality of the individual, realizing one’s personal aesthetic, not as a pretentious act of self-expression, but as a quiet act of self settling and acceptance and consolidation, strength sensing and weakness confronting. Committing to a process that does not end. Conscious acceptance. Unconscious acceptance. Gratitude for the easy and abundant and convenient and close, acceptance of the hard and scarce and contingent and far. Not letting your mother’s anxiety freak you out and make you feel so uncomfortable, there is nothing you can do for her really. Her health is good, can’t improve her health. She is financially stable, she has 12 children and children in law now and 19 grandchildren, she is not hurting for outlets for her mothering and advice and judgement dispensing talents.

My openness to tech was in essence just that. A changing of attitude and engagement with computers and software and web technologies. Once I had made this switch in my mind I sought out conversations on the topic. I ordered a text book. Signed up for a $9.99 MOOC which I then spent the next two years working through in my free time which I worked my active and demanding retail sales job and juggled becoming a new minted father of two, turning 40, managing a job transition (hurt coding momentum, but accepted that and committed to it, built rebuilt system), then a pandemic and a layoff, and a midlife crisis where I was compelled to add to my coding challenges by feling compeeled to pursue my writing practice with an engagement and intensity I had heretofore never been able to muster.

Despite not giving them much time my Chinese and guitar playing have been feeling really good and intuitive as well. Something again about accepting my limitations, feeling grateful for my abilities. Exploring those abilities iteratively and creatively and with some relaxed sense of discipline. The sort of discipline that awe just do and internalize like achieving proper articulation of words (in our native language or others) instead of lazily mumbling unintelligible renditions. Somethings we learn to do properly and then we just do them properly and unconsciously and that is a beautiful ting. Like typing. At some point with typing you really do stop thinking about it and your fingers just know what letters they should engage.

Despite the fact that I am gambling here… cause I feel like I have a pretty clear path to employment if I can just stay focused enough to keep my coding coming along on a solid timeline. There really is not a contradiction of goals here. In the future that is. In the future writing and coding are completely harmonious. The rub is the present. Right now. What should I be doing right now. If I am coding I am not writing. If I am writing I am not coding. But to reach my harmonious future I need to be writing and coding at another level. At a level where I just write and code and I am not conflicted about it and I am not worried about whether I am doing it correctly or following the correct process or wasting too much time or reaching my limits on ability to process new information. And I am able to cultivate these long skills— these skills that take a long, long time to really develop. Finding a peace with the slow development, something I have experienced with Chinese and writing, but experienced in such a way as to not quite be able to say that I have done it correctly because I still do not have an established career and I am broken away or been pushed away from the structures of my family with having found or founded solid structures of my own despite the solidity of my family and my friend network. Much of this writing process is acknowledging that fact and making intentions about how to proceed. Finding that right silence in which my next action is able to bubble up from necessity and order. An unconscious birthing from my values and well grasped responsibilities, liabilities, and consequential contingencies.

So yes, I am gambling, I am getting off track, eroding my singular focus on tech to take time out to write and writing what? What? Well nothing specific exactly. Just rambling. But rambling consistently, sometimes topically, sometimes personally. And there is a system to it and I am tracking it of sorts and putting it on an assembly line of sorts, with the end being crafted some finished stories, memoirs, family histories, letters- relationship building, savoring, acknowledging, encouraging, fun. But I feel like to fully realize how I can work and how I have to work, I have to work in this strange flowing expanding and contracting way. Finding my confidence in the long game dedication of it and the long game dedication that I have already shown in my marriage and my sales career and my Chinese study and my writing, despite my undeveloped process. I now have a more developed process that should do noting but increase my confidence, level of engagement as well as the audaciousness of my goals.

Ultimately, this is also a huge fucking hedge. When I am able to make my full transition to a tech industry job whether that’s in some kind of a support, sales , or actually development capacity I will do so in very solid physical, mental, and emotional shape because my process for making this transition has meticulously, obsessively, continually circled and cycled around to keep this end as the ultimate goal of this process, a goal nested and essential to my larger goal of achieving familial security and relatively settled or at least vastly improved work/life balance, harmony, synergy, the sustainability of which will provide the mast upon which we fly our family sails. My well-being and happiness and engagement and self-worth and self-fulfillment and ability to have long thoughts and personal explorations and cultivations is also part of that big tent equation, that pie chart presentation that freeze frames ones life as full and fulfilled or empty and pointless. Maybe before here you describe a pie chart that graphs each family members sense of happiness and fulfillment and engagement and development by some of GNI index number of how good their life is divided by how much they like it.

4/28/2021

Memory, dust

Mint green leisure suit ensemble

Same-same

Wiskers on her chin like mine

We take a picture together and eat cookies

At my graduation party

Dolores had a deep writing impulse. She would scrool notes on floral cards, incomprehensibly scralling out looping calligraphic lines hellbent on the mutual destruction of the line above and the lie below. The angy scribbles of a Graphomania. And what is the difference between graphomania and literary genius or literary accomplishment. Does the world need another essay? Does the world need another “Tweet” or even “Anti-tweet”. I am sorry to return to this theme again and again, but I believe this fundamental question, this WHY, this existential WHY, this spark of motivation, this snatching of the spark of inspiration out of the air and slamming it into the dock, why? What? What are you up to? Is this a mission of nostalgia? Is this business? Is this burnishing some sense of yourself as being a certain way, communicating a certain way— with your cellphone, your walkie-talkie, your two way wall of larger than life friends, your VR headset and reality augmenting lens, your book club, your subscription services… and here I am lost in my lists again…

4/26/2021

Mother always seemed a little overwhelmed with her multiplying mind. I feel like I have something of the same with my rambling amtitions of language— Chinese, Spanish… and what am I doing??? I am DOING language. This was a helpful, flexible insight I overheard recently. Writers DO language. And if you are really DOING the language you may not always be able to justify what you are doing. Do I have to justify my time whacking buckets of ball into the well-lit and net enscribed green dream kingdom of the suburban driving range I frequent.

In some ways I have always expected that thought, good thought, true, well-thought thought had to come out preformed. Sure spontaneous too, in conversation, building on other people’s ideas. Parroting. Shifting. Comparing terms. And so force. But what about all the chafe. The bad ideas. The half thoughts. The 10% taken as 100% which affects all of our thinking to some extent. Vision is a kind of blindness, no? You have such a clear path in mind that all the other avenuse fall away. Your desire to take those other paths disappears. A death of an infinite number of worlds. All those other lives and deaths you will never know, because you made this decision and not that one. You moved here instead of there. Missed that flight. Caught that train. Wrote a letter. Stayed home.

And most of these pathways will never be missed or even noticed, acknowledged, thought upon or even imagined. We block them out by accepting the inevitable now, the inevitable realness of this life as it were, the steadiness of this existence, which is but a collection of disparate and separable parts. We do our very best to stich them together. We build sweeping rhapsodies of narrative and rationalization, we seek a sense of place, family, firmness, purchase, purpose, history, tradition, we forge or have forged for us a complex scheme of relationships and values and customs and commerce and responsibilities, geographical connections and separations, urban and rural divides, time differences, ideological blinders, political baggage, emotional balance or imbalance, health concerns, sleep deprivation, doom scrolling anxiety, overeating, drinking, inactivity, overactivity, distractedness, indecision, exhaustion, hunger, thirst, boredom

All of the projects: writing and coding and video and film and watching films and reading books and traveling and stretching and exercising and meditating and getting enough sleep and drilling down on my diet and overcoming my digital dislocation trhoughb some elaborate retroactive digitizing of my unwieldy paper life,l including the transcripting of 20 years of writing in scattered notebooks, a project that seems to demand some investment of time to both justify the effort that I have already expended (have swum halfway across the ocean, it seems silly to swim back at this pint, but again, where the fuck are we? What are we doing? And even though this is an honest and open expression of how I am feeling it is not mature or responsible or even the whole picture. The general picture is that I have a block of months to focus on trying to And yet that curiosity is made from a quiet, humble, broken, human place. A man’s place before the world. Before his family. This place of pride in the family become a place of shame. But I do not apologize. This is my devil’s bargain. All prophecies shall be self-fulfilling beasts. And I write on to be surprised. I code on to be surprised. I read on to be surprised and remain curious and attempt, perhaps, somehow, someday to find the cresting wave of the word ride the cresting lift of quick existence. A quickening of mind and body and soul. A longing. A reaching. A balancing. A summoning of natural force and order, a harnessing of natural force and order and physics. Anticipating the force, danger, possibility. Surfing the silver linings. As it were.

And so you PRO and CON and weight and argue over and consider and calculate and rationalize and rationalize and rationalize until you are in a tangled mess off responsibilities and habits and commitments and short and long term crisis that you have a diminishing wherewithal to deal with. Fuck.

Dreaming of reading Wendell Berry and living in the city and working in web and app development. Continuing on with my Chinese study, but not with the sweaty unsettled feeling that my vocational best bet had run its course and was up for reassessment, it was time to cut our losses or collect our gains, or whatever necessary sequence of moves needed to be made to get clear, get free, get on and into the next thing, immediately.

4/23/2021

Spent the year kind of dreading the social inquisition of “How are things going?” My canned response of “I have absolutely no fucking idea.” Strikes me as kind of melodramatic and immature and sort of unloading on the unwitting confessor.

Comparing year on year things become a bit clearer. Things are improving. Making me realize that a year ago I was in kind of rough shape. Again, kind of melodramatic. But true. Not stated for sympathy of self-aggrandizing, but stated simply as face. I was confused and concerned and the future seemed very unclear and ever so far away. And how the hell would we get there?

4/9/2021

What happens when you are so buried it starts making more sense to just keeping digging down that to try and dig back out again.

What happens when you realize you really are a lost cause. Or you are not but it doesn’t matter either way because you can’t even take the first step towards recovery. Repeated lying to yourself to try and sell a new feeling. A sober grasp on life. All stocked up and dug in. Kingdom coming, kingdom might be coming, calm in the face of crisis coming. The path to jeresuleum is strewn with rock. Mud Slides and Indian Jones Driven buses. Forever Over the Mountains and Back again. She’ll be coming and so forth and the pertaining references and so froth. All splayed out on the table lugubriously. Fragments of a mind nearly gone straight.

And I was having a hard time talking to people cause every honest answer was actually just another blackhole of unsettled structures and estrangement. Was this growth or collapse? A time of reorientation or just a nosedive into panic and chaos? Aren’t grand generalizations fun. I have expressed an intense emotions and grandiloquent stakes, but honestly, what the fuck was I talking about? Where was I? What was I doing? These were questions that I just kept asking myself. Rephrasing my answers in more specific or general ways depending on the day. Depending on the rhythm of my nebulous curriculum. And this. This nebulous journey? Was this a great success or a sort of unraveling? Had I really changed, matured, found a path to a sustainable future for my family or was I simply running down my next half delusional fantasy to inevitably flee from with the deed but half done.

But what happens when you are just so far behind? Do you give up? Do you just stop and stay exactly where you are? Why go on. Life has move on. Life is elsewhere. Gone. Lost. Forever away.

3/27/2021

On my 42 birthday I cast my deck of years up in the air and let them erupt around the room in a exhilarating mess and scatter or time and memories and impressions and disappointments and unreal seeming distant experiences .

We shall not cease this exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time. Through the unknown, remembered gate, when the last of the earth left to discover is that which was the beginning at the source of the longest river. The voice of the hidden waterfall and children in the apple tree not know because not looked for.

Caught 9:11 yesterday in the a.m. and the p.m. and checking the time right now it is: 13:10.

White stones laid down on your way on deeper into the thickening forest.

It has been a year since I began this letter. It currently stands a formless first draft of 30 single spaced pages and approximately 16,000 words at the time of this typing.

This letter to you underscores the ridiculousness of this last year’s writing effort and the earnestness of it. The sea-girls have been singing and I have followed them in my waking stoper. The quantity has been there, there effot; despite writing necessarily playing third or fourth fiddle to my coding, family responsibility, and attempting to work through what I wil Ml frame as my Mid-life Crisis 中年危机. Hoping upon hope that that what it, that was that, rear-view-mirror, *Hey, Hey, I’m a believer*, guess hindsight is 2020, Merry Crisis and Happy New fear! Amidst much change and fragmentation, I have set out with a clear intent to do and to be and have sought intuitive paths upon which to answer those mermaid calls and put them into action. The results are the process itself which continues to ripen and evolve, but slowly, surely bear fruit, extend types of literacy, perhaps something new has opened in me, or I have found a new openeness, and am processing data differently, still hung up and working through and all that jazz, but less so to some extent, and feeling quietly confident that there is a road before me to further mitigating and general well being, and it all comes down to a slight shift in seeing, or believing, of forgiving and growing your heart right around old wounds to help them heal. Not in denial of those wounds, but in affirmation of woundedness deep desire and need for love to heal and how self-love, self-compassion is a necessary part of the process to heal that woundedness. This has all been about healing and now that I was healed, or healing, on another plain from where I was. In a new wilderness, with a new way of being, I was going to be able to realize all of my dreams, and enter into a more mature working skill set and wherewithal for achieving all of my life goals in a more wholistic and balanced way. I had been imbalanced and was perhaps still imbalanced to some extent, but I truly believed that if I could stay on this path for long enough, which I planned on doing so with bulldog like tenacity… or you, know like whatever the most ferocious and tenacious dog in your imagination, but in a lowkey way that wouldn’t alarm the people around me or make me look or sound like some quixotic manic, a feeling that I had grown quite accustom to during my last 15 years of learning Chinese to mixed results— a quasi-literacy that still felt academic and much of my Chinese speaking and listening skills going dormant, though there, and solid, but still obvious not native, not like the 1.5 billion native speakers, leaving my Chinese to be a good chaperon, to accompany another skillset, but not necessarily going to be the lead skill to walk me through the ballroom door with all me having to think about being what color dress do I want to order from *Rent-the-runway*. So tech looms large in the same way and then 3 years ago after a recent trip to China in which betsy and I confirm that we no longer have plans to live there long term and instead would like to focus on honkering down in the U.S. and are more open to where that would be , but I need to upskill someway to broaden our options. And we are traveling in China with Micah and he is tech savvy and bouces around to these great jobs seem flexible and leaves him time to pursue a million projects and hobbies with great benefits and unlimited PTO etc. Every part of that underscoring why I needed to be getting the hell out of retail. But was assaulting the tech citdal at 40 really the best path to a better work life balance and longterm job security that would ease up the financial uncertainty and allow me free space and time to think about writing and Chinese and Spanish and French and German and Film and Philosophy and history and whatever random topic presented itself- lately it has been this wonderful strain of new left writing that has bounced back and forth between fiction and essay and memoir and back again. Reading has been opening itself up to me again. Or perhaps more correctly syntaxed: I to it. And I am so grateful. So relieved. My books were really looking ugly to me. Unnecessary weights. I think I weight through this really deep life evaluation as I plunged deeper into the digital arts and really started weighing all my years of reading and writing and so forth— like some sort of weekend golf warrior, out there working on his swing, endlessly, for years, decades, just swinging, spending time in the clubhouse, the pro-shop, watches the videos, sees the films, 9 holes anyday, occasionally 18. Occasionally. Much less since the girls. He feels proud of that. Its good. He has sacrificed. He has endured. Pent up. Gone without. Not said anything. Not reflect. Just done. Dishes washed. Trash out. Apartment cleaned. Clothes up and down the stairs. Washed and folded. Put away. Worn. Repeat. For the girls. And the apartment not even that clean. All of these processes. Trying to balance them out. But when stopped. When not moving. When sitting. Not climbing stairs from apartments. Up and down the train. Platform climb. Tunnel descent. In the store of glass, three stories in sun, three stories of concrete and painted steel finishes, inerrads like the bowls of a freighter. Custom’s lu on two. Employees on three only. Grace comes on Thursdays. Once a week to clean the multi-floor story. I bet Grace has some stories. But when not moving. When at stillness. When with pen, with paper. With book. Coffee. Water. Sunshine. Light of some kind. The happy light snapped on with XXXwatts of blinding Vitamin D UV delivery… is there vitamin D in there? Nature sounds of rivers and oceans and fire crackling and then soleggio frequencies droning and intoning white noise waves of comfort and world distancing, concentration increasing buffer, you, your mind all alive with white caps, and the the wild illusion of movement that is but wave undulation squeezed through your 110% prism. Pale but illuminating. When pen on paper or fingertip in my hopeful stabbing keyboard clip, feel this need and find this flow. Harmony has always delivered. When in the right silence having paced through the eye. The door creaking closed just behind. And the Obsidian mirror proceeds me— I stride through my tomb far off, awaiting.

I truly do not know what I am doing, nor do I know how this will end. The punchline will be a surprise. The fat guy at the crystal desk floating out over the snowfield alps smiles down upon the mountain marmot, the mountain goats, the eagle waiting for the avalanche dust to settle down again, before he collects his supper from the over eager ravens, nipping at the first flesh snatches to be stolen from the skull crushed and organ splattered carrion. Mountain travelers rewarded from above. The surfer in his wave, the snowboarder on her wall of frozen hydrogen, frozen oxygen, the entrepreneur surfing the momentum and attention of his historically bad bets. The novelist lost in the world of his story, the process of seeing it to end. Getting lost, really getting lost, lost to your career, lost to your process, your obsession, your religion, your desire, the habit, your addiction, the thin strains of melody or rhythm that bubble up through the gossomar mosquito netting that has grown up like seasons of collected cobwebs between you and the sensual world. Keep the stimuli at bay, the buzzing insect just before I die the good death of sleep, the death of need, need for death and unknowing, consciousness turned over to the insatiable soul. For she feeds in the dark upon the thoughts dark and light that have flickered though your conscious mind, run roughshod through the cache of your organized pantomime of knowing and activation. Thoughts. Ideas. Ideas welcomed. Ideas shut down. Contexts controlled. Suggested. Cultures stabbed at, hypothesized, draw out analytically from the first to the last, from the prognostication from the horse’s mouth to the humble recitation from the mouse’s quivering lip. A puppet with a clinical, yet twitchy hand up my arse. Company line, company line, brand line, personal anecdote, personalization. Product demonstration. Denial. Misdirection. Insertion of humor. Veiled reference disparaging all other brands and competition. The incredible complexity of the simple and the mundane. Is this what the *Pale King* is all about. I haven’t read it, but I totally understand why I haven’t read it and I have compassion for myself for not having read it. I have a desire to read it and I do feel convicted that I will read it some day and I don’t feel bad about that. I don’t feel bad that there is a wonderful book about Allen Ginsberg that you have published- multiple volumes, but I do not have the wherewithal to read it or even engage with what must have been an incredibly involved process to bring it to press. This lack of wherewithal for all of these interesting and engaging things is a strange kind of torture and identity grinding neurosis. Why should the existence of the wonderful and interesting destroy you and your belief that you get into interesting and worthwhile things. You are either embarrassed to share because you are mid-process and can’t contextualize anything in a meaningful way. You feel like the nuance that you would like to give to your expressions will sap them off any visceral impact. The visceral impact of your writing is not the visceral impact that you desire to produce. You have one target, but achieve something else. Your successful completion reveals itself as a failure. But I am here to say that there cannot be failure where there has been honest, direct engagement with the process that takes into account life and vocation and family. I have committed to not failing any of these things. I have committed to staying engaged and hopeful and hungry on all fronts. And the way through this wood is a veil of tears and terrors and depravation and sufficiency that pulls you off your path. The more you are taken care of the less you achieve. This year of uncertainty has produced the most writing and coding that I have ever been able to achieve. This is a wonderful success and something that will look logical and *a priori* if in another 6 months my writing continues to develop (letters completed and sent off, pieces molded into coherent artifacts of my past times and my past work and my past efforts, judgement settling and morphing over time) and my ability to work in the digital sphere continues to expand and develop. I need to rejoice because I have traveled far on this road. I have traveled long on this road. I am 20 years down this road and the some total of what I have lived and learned is perfectly delineated by the point at which I am.

I have my nature sounds. I have my sunlamp.

That was pure wild animal craziness. You are an animal.

Something to be done, perhaps discussed, but no, never crowed about, never gone on about, my huge tracks of land, my seed and fertilizing implementation, routines honed over decades, magazine quotations mumbled like mantras from the cab of the big tractor on the back acres early in the day to get the far work done before we make our way back. Move on the roads with the big rig before most people are up, in the dark or half-light of the early day. We do our far work early, so that we will be closer to home where the girls wake up, just in case they need me, I do the far work first and try to get back soon.

But the everlasting question remaining… was I in fact achieving these things (in a timely manner) or was I simply spreading out the impossibly broad apprentice period, a craft I have proven apt at as per my writing. Having achieve perhaps my own sort of journeyman status with writing, slyly, dumbly, while strumming in my living room. Hyponotizing myself on the warmth of our home fires. Resolute in my desire to transcend the vengeful and that which would breath chill and undue separation from this health warmed hearth. My child walking over me from a crawl. Transitioning to full personhood with me in the morning and me in the night. Just the gift of that should press the shirts of my pencil pushing sweat-throughs. My doom-drilled worm-holes, black sheet with a single star pocked through to. The more you know, the less you knew and on and on ad aspira. The moment of truth. The wild loosening. The ferret. The mongoose. The leavening. The leaving unleavened. Cakes in the morning and more cakes morning cooked and provisioned, foiled up in aluminum in the cooler with the perch we’d caught. Skipped lunch beyond constant snacking, then fired up the perch and warmed the cakes in the caste iron and spinkled on some cabbage shavings and carrot and tomato and salt and halepano salt to complete our Northwoods taco. Best consumed out of doors. Way far out of doors. Back in the woods. Listening to the wind. Munching away at your nourishing handful of the earth’s bounty. Feeling small, but connected, small but dwelling within, not small and alone, or large and alone, not large or small and living apart, but simply living, breathing, being, filling as much space as you do and no more, and feeling content with that and being aware of that contentment. Thrilling at that. The beautiful simplicity of that. The symmetry. The balance. Awareness of that balance. Gratitude. Oneness with the many. Multitudinous with the one. Answering the call, attempting to understand what it means to answer, where to go, how to proceed, of course, of course, stay the course, as we’ve discussed, but, how long, I mean, if this is something we can answer, how long? This course seems fine and we are dedicated to the effort, we truly are, but we must know at some point, I mean, you know, so we can notify family and friends, landlords, girlfriends, fiance’s, in-laws, exes, kids, grandkids, etc, of our availability in the coming days, weeks and months. I mean we are not trying to be all needy, McGreedy here. We are not trying to be whimps or weirdoes, or cry babies, etcetera. We just like to have a sense of the trajectory of things, the arch of the journey, so to speak…I mean, you know, you know? No, okay, just keep going, go it. Keep rowing. Okay. Ok. Fine. Keeping rowing guys. Just keep it up. You are doing exactly what you should be doing and just killing it. Keep it at it, boys!

**03/24/2021**

Reading list:

*Surely you can’t Joking, Mr. Fynman.”* Richard Feynman

*三体* 刘慈欣

Joseph Brodsky’s Collected Poems

Patrick Leigh Fermor’s *A Time of Gifts*

Douglas Adams *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*

*Selected Poems* William Butler Yeats

*The Future of Nostalgia* Svetlana Boym

*Under the Sign of Saturn*, Susan Sontag

*The Rings of Saturn*, W.G. Sebald

Alan Watts

*Journey to the West*

*Journey to the East* Hermann Hesse

*Siddhartha ,* Hermann Hesse

*The Power of Myth* Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers

*Blood Meridian ,*  Cormac McCarthy

*The Old Testement*

*Beowolf*

*Shakespeare*

*This is Your life and other stories Ted Tsiang*

*A year off* The Browns

*Lost in the Cosmos* Walker Percy

3/22/2021

Accepting. This foolish accepting. This mistake making that is indistinguishable from freedom. Actions and consequences falling on your head. Eroding your soul. Corrupting your already corrupted sate. Your sins that shall be passed on to your children. Your imperfect nature that breaks your mother’s heart, looks steely eyed on the longing of her burning heart, coldly looking away, moving away, proceeding in the natural expansion of your trajectory. Committed to the trajectory. No longer resisting. No longer attempting to shape. Grounding yourself in the physics of the situation. Driving hard towards the thinning atmosphere of the vocational sphere you have accustomed your CV to these last 8 years. Keeping your nose up and sky driving. Every commitment is a fool’s errand. Our vows made in earnest, our faltering confidence in our previous convictions. The horror of mutability and change. The life-sustaining hope of mutability and change.

I have accepted that I cannot control this thing. I can attempt to tap into it. And direct the flow a bit. I can attempt to be judicious and make choices about what comes out or if not what, where. I can choose the place and time to write. I can choose the place and manner of the storage of ideas. In this organization were find abstraction. In this abstraction we find clarity. Given space to shade with light and light with shade. Highlight with shade, obscure, luminescent.

Do not be afraid. Proceed with joy or not at all. Proceed with an open heart and an open head and a willingness to bet it all on that which you feel convicted of. You have found a way to live. You have found a way of life. A path unfolding. A challenge to undertake. An agile project of self-creation and self-actualization and self-discipline and self-retreat. An embracing of your most important roles. Confidence that you are correct or at least completely entitled to make your own mistakes and mistaken reads. You are permitted to read and think and wait and bellyache and criticize and self-criticize and be mean and angry and be calm and kind. You are truly free to do whatever the fuck you want.

3/19/2021

Locked into something as deeply as a sex addict has disappeared into his appetite. As deeply as a drug addict in the night of his desire. Lost in the process. Seemingly in control, but now lost from control. Now having given over to something other than self. Given over to life and the force of life that possesses and does not return. The burning of the bridges. The distancing from shores. The true faith act. The madness of misplaced faith. The conviction forgedby impressions or restlessness. Restiveness. Forces from above.

3/16/2021

Reading intuitive, randmonly, lazily, without discipline, dipping, abstracting, following clues.

Used to see 9:11 on the clock all the time. Now I see three/four numbers in a row. 11:11, 3:33, 4:44, 5:55, we are here, blanced. Aware of time.

Astray investigates those seekers who pay the ultimate price for their spiritual quest. It is a spiritual question. It is not a spiritual question. A garden is the most spiritual thing you can cultivate, unless you are aware that it is a spiritual act. If you are aware that it is a spiritual act then it becomes just mundane grunt work. But if yu are unaware than it is just mundane grunt work then it becomes spiritual, unless you releaize that it is spiritual. Insight is loss. Loss is insight.

Humming to Tom Waits in the department store. Expressing a weird sort of envy of Emily having lost her mother. Your old girlfriends presaged more recent relationships, presaged your wife. You wrote a novel about a travel arriving in a town where all the people he meets in the town are just different incarnations of himself. It is strange, dreamlike, unquestioned, accepted. The contradictory becomes permissible. Contradictory, but not unkind. Violence to express peace. Peace to express violence. All out war. All out peace.

3/14/2021

Happy PI day. My computer charger has been on the fritz. This has been a minor crisis. My fundamental vocational anchor, the paddling I do to move us closer to the sure shore of our newly aligned life all runs through this Acer Laptop. 3 years ago when I consciously decided to try to become a computer programmer, or at least become “open” to tech, I went the “good value” route, both out of monetary concerns, and a desire to get more exposure to a Windows machine (we also have an aging, slowing Mac desktop that serves as the family media center, betsy has an iphone, I have an Android Huawei… who the fuck cares?) My metaphor though is this— the inability to recharge, or at least recharge without it being a fraught experience of jiggling cords and holding my breath until I hear the charge engaging beep and then holding my breath again as I remove my hands from the cord, waiting to see if it beeps again, indicating that it is no longer charging, has felt like this soul sucking ritual. This digital stalwart, the value solution to the realization of our American Dream suddenly seems so fragile, elderly, unwieldy, far from robust enough to build our futures on. And what of my body? How good is my body at recharging these days— body, that other technology that consciousness rides and flogs towards our dreams, or settles in and wallows where we are, or one day, at peace, residing, moving, no longer flogging or wallowing, being.

3/04/2021

维达默 wéidámò Maintain the achieved silence

Right silence… pass through bedlam…

Forgive your asinine brother even

Get over myself, my limitations, my dumb mouth.

2/27/2021

Flow.

Waves can travel thousands of miles on the open sea. Yes, I know what a wave is. I’ve got it. I can move on. The sea is a danger. The sea is a mystery. Kept clear behind the sea wall it is very comfortable.

But the water has been rising. The prickly ash boor ate the big trees as the big winds delimbined them season by season. Scraggly high growing scrum pines, stripped of their lower coverings by the might of the bay we pretend to be oblivious of trained so well to hide away when she comes out to feed. Drag the boats in, secure the lawn furniture, the big sun umbrella driven straight through the bay window, the prickly ash sickened white oak dropped on the decked, bash the jacuzzi into a splinted cracked shell, dumpyard stuff, or forest floors where old cars and pull top Coors cans embedded themselves in the soft settling and shifting cedar swamp. High water, low water, year after year the crops too wet, the crops too dry, a farmer’s earthy real, laconic like someone whose made work their life and life their work.

Work is something to be done, perhaps discussed, but never crowed about.

This settling, this accepting, this surrender, this capitulation. Not the young man’s celebration of his work and the flash of gold he subliminally perceived in the muck and mire of engagement, the sustaining engagement in the muck and mire. Making what one may with the limits of strength, the limits of weakness, perception- strong and weak in turn. Truths clasp and held and cultures perpetuated or walked away from. These enduring promises bewilderingly intertwined with impossible to balance intentions. The mess is necessary. The mess sufficient. We all have the same clay. We celebrate the inspired ceramicist and mock the shit out of the dilletante. But what is the in sandbags, talent deceives, talent. Talents speaks convincingly about insubstantial things, talent burrows, talent sends a sea of arrows at a target and finds affirmation in the stray direct hit and instruction in the millions of errors.

What is a wave?

Current… flow…. Scientifically

CURRENT = VOLTAGE / RESISTANCE (high voltage, lower resistance = best current/best flow!)

VOLTAGE = RESISTANCE \* CURRENT (VOLTAGE here meaning intensity … this is resistance running into my flow… watch out now, don’t short circuit.

RESISTANCE = VOLTAGE(keep voltage low to lower resistance) / CURRENT(keep flow high to lower resistance)

From this, we conclude that; **Current** equals **Voltage** divided by **Resistance** (I=V/R), **Resistance** equals **Voltage** divided by **Current** (R=V/I), and **Voltage** equals **Current** times **Resistance** (V=IR). The important factor here is the temperature.

Another theory is WATTAGE + WEIGHT = SPEED

Rabbit hole of computer programming, literature, politics, mythology, family dynamics, ethics, drugs, meditation, yoga, Osteopathy, linguistics…

2/25/2021

I am a writer because I can spend hours trying to unpack my thoughts and listening to Solfeggio frequencies and can so happily fall down Wiki-holes, suddenly finding myself on the pristine shores of the Sylvania Wildlife Area in the eastern UP, taking absolute delight in the fact that these lakes, despite being inland, are so clear, and are fed by springs and very few intermediate streams, something to do with being close to the Big Lake and very far from the Mississippi. I am delighting in this ABSTRACTION of the plain upon which we live where we can write away all the cities and towns and infrastructure built up all over the Midwest and consider for a moment that it is just a big hole full of water and then a plain that slopes down to an enormous drainage ditch that sends all our collective runoff all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. This simplified vision of our continent, stripped of politics and strip malls and all the intermediate needs that can be met all up and down our epically grand highway system, appeals to me. Gives me some sort of succor. There is a timelessness to this vision and something exhilarating about it. I want to visit those lakes and see the clear waters made possible by their “apex’ position and their ecological “fragility” (something about low flush rates and low nutrient load), I lose myself for a while in the names of this chain of lakes: Glimmerglass Lake, Big Bateau, Snap Jack Lake, even the more pedestrian West Bear Lake, or Loon Lake, or even Long Lake strike me as worth a vista.

Maybe I am just incredibly bored or wanderlust withdrawing. Though honestly I feel no urgency to visit those places. I would like to one day, but the stress of giving a timeline and all of the things that need to fall into place to open up the possibility of a visit, while certainly not impossible, are at the very least a bit far off, there are more pressing concerns— the pandemic abating, switching careers, having the wherewithal to take vacation, take time off, time away. When I do make it to Glimmerglass lake my life will truly have reached another state.

These states are so mysterious. Gliding across the boundary waters with you and Noah and Peter and Nathan and Tony all those years ago. Broken up with betsy? Feeling existentially unraveling. Having just finished a summer at camp. Putting to rest in some ways that narrative, that path forward. I would not marry there. I would not work there anymore. I would probably not send my children there. And then in quick succession my very covenant world— North Park, home church, older brother in Seminary, suddenly shifted. I was graduated. Out of the church more or less. And then my brother had his roiling time in Chicago before retreating home to lick his ego and renounce his theology, finding succor in a 12 DVD presentation of Pope John Paul II’s thoughts on sex.

And the church, the community, the identifying civic-religio base of our family shifted to Catholicism. Initially, before TRUMP came along and so artfully dredged up and gave voice to their entitled angst (upset about not being able to go to England, restaurants being closed, having to wear a mask, not being able to talk to them about it because I am put in the position of joining their grouchy kvetch fest or feel put in a the position to “defend” or at least review the logic of the governmental directive. They are of the mindset that just because it is of the government it is at least partially shitty and has at least a tinge of the ANTI-CHRIST’s acrid earthy flavor to it. They have always loved conspiracy theories and *This Present Darkness* loomed large over my childhood, we read the entire novel cozied up in mom’s waterbed. Which, honestly, what the fuck!?! This books correlates meditation and any eastern New Age practice with Satanism, which given that the author is a long standing resident of Northern Idaho where the Confederate flag has become something of a regional banner, but the obvious anti-immigration stance of equating all non-western European religious traditions as being of the devil plays rather nicely into the Donald’s worldview. This idea of Good vs Evil. Power struggles that we cannot see. Media moguls who are hellbent on promoting the return of Satan. I had a Ying-yang as a kid. A key chain. My mother threw it out. Occasionally she would go on these wild purges, throwing out my brother’s Anne Rice novels, precariously scooping up our hulking, heavy television set and weightlifter shuffling it to closet if there happened to be something on that she didn’t approve of or if we were watching TV and had not finished our homework or practiced our instruments. And you know what, we probably shouldn’t have been watching TV, but why all the rage. Why the flying off the handle. This uncontrolled rage coming at the end of a long day of intense patient engagement. What a good, hardworking mother we had. Supported all 6 of us and Dad, with Dad doing the house-husband thing and killing it along the way deputizing himself as a mechanic, hunter, plumber, carpenter, roofer, gardener, snowblower, shoveler, racker, cleaner, cook, baker, Wednesday night Song leader, track and cross country coach, race organizer, visitor of the elderly, companion, collector. My parents are amazing, good loving people who have supported me and loved me as best they can. But it wasn’t enough. It was not all encompassing. It can’t be. How could it be enough. How could it be everything.

Your offer to send me the two volume collection of Allen Ginsberg’s journals kind of made my stomach turn a little bit. Which is a truly absurd , but it speaks directly to something in my psyche at that moment. This feeling of just feeling completely overwhelmed. I have been trying to fill my head with as much coding and computer stuff as possible, and then in my spare time reviewing Chinese, mostly reading articles, I love it, don’t have enough time to give it, and then with my new writing process, my writing has really broken open and I have been able to maintain a physical and mental balance by equating writing with stretching which has given me a new vision of exercise and health where through diet and stretching and lowing my overall anxiety level by cutting out caffeine and alcohol and THC and limiting carbohydrate intact I have lowered my daily caloric requirements while improving my health and lowering my weight and increasing my concentration and ability to sit for long periods of time without feeling like I am killing myself.

My stretching has been a sort of “Parqore” stretch anywhere mentality and has been about just following the tightness and the weakness in my body. Really trying to open those areas up by long slow engagement. Finding stretches that engage multiple points/joints/muscles (multi-point stretches), trying to follow the mantra flexibility is strength, have often over the years tried to get on the cathletici workout routine rhythm and at different times have, but ultimately have felt like the reps and the counting and the cycle of soreness wasn’t super enjoyable. At this point in my life flexibility seems more important than strength.

02/23/2021

Erik and I finding a boat near a park that was a small amusement park with a castle wall and then talking about it in the late cold spring, me as depressed and uncertain as I have ever been, not existentially at risk of anything, but uneasy with so much unknowing all around, unmoored from where I was before, unsure about exactly where I was going, in a boat, in a loch, or better still, pushing off the strand, away, away from the estuary, the flat bunkered greens and tall grasses of the main, out towards the isle and ever onward grizzled beard of father silent at first sleet, breathing the wind like wine, seeing with clouded eyes, overcome by the cataract of time, decades superimposed all one over the other, voices in unison, choruses of truth, songs in high rafted windowed barns, shelter from the sudden summer gale, thrashing rain and icy hale. Firm belly of song, young and pulsating with bad decision s yet to make, a bursting seeded grape, pimply wonder, thirsting for the ends of the earth without a clue of what comes first.

Running on the strand. Cookie potatoes and chiecken. Writing my cycle of love poems five times just to get the thoughts out.

02/19/2021

The incredible stretching of time. Weed smoking helps this. Solfeggio rhythms helps this. I have been listening to a lot of music while I write or code, but more recently just to kind of reset my ear I have been listening to a lot of Youtube Solfeggio rhythms. I have found it find of a bone to find something that doesn’t add to my linguistic frequencies, but seems to scope under all my thought trails and just sort of offer its backdrop services like an old humming drinks cooer might. I like it. Its strangely refreshing and I have been able to get a fair about done, especially with regard to compiling and extending notes. Not judging anything I put it unless it is really dumb or silly or obscene of something. Its funny, but I think the simple breakthrough here if I really, really distill it down is to not put so much pressure on the first draft. In the past I have had this feeling that if the first draft of something, anything, even an email was too fragmented or too uninspired or something that there was just nothing there. When the absolute opposite could actually be true— that a super fragmented, unstructured first intention, or list of intents (things that you might want to touch on) could be the fuel from something really solid. And is the fuel for something really solid if the writer actually commits to drafting through the process. I would say that in my process, this is the second draft. The first draft being the writing out on paper of the content and/or sketching out a structure or list of intents. The third draft will be pulling all of these disparate entries into a more cohesive form and rewriting much of the content. The third draft likely has many different iterations just like the first draft and the second draft (which will hopefully be more input heavy, while the third and fourth draft will be more structural, stylistic, and grammatical/correctness/readability focused

02/18/2021

My apologies for last spring being a little shitty on the phone. I have been really bad at socializing. We were talking about the restaurant Glenn’s which is about a ½ mile from my house and I tried to crack a little ribbing at you by calling you a dick for not connecting. That was an unnecessary fucking joke and I regretted it as soon as I said it. I regretted it because it did make me sad that you were in my neighborhood and didn’t stop by. This is something peculiar about the density of the city. Distance does not mean anything. North Park is just over there. Never go there. Downtown is just down there, have not been there in 7 months. My sadness came from this isolated feeling that I have had for quite some time and have been running from. Running for my family, kep ahead of it, keep you head down, make money, figure out a career, figure out a better work-life balance than you have been able to achieve over this past decade. Working weekends, working holidays, shitty vacation offering has really fractured or at the very least sort of dulled a lot of relationship with family and friends. I feel like I lack the wherewithal to really connect. I am either in focused writing or coding work, both of which have ambiguously developing arcs, somewhat uneasy to share about. Am I going to come off as conceited because I am doing such good work or am I going to come off as just fucking crazy because I have been writing and studying so much, but am still as yet unclear where we are headed….

*A moon into our journey*

*we passed a bob of seals,*

*and though they barked fair-warning*

*our ears were dumb with zeal.*

*Heedless ahead we sailed and sailed,*

*Ever doomward on.*

Just started reading *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. Love the fact that within the first 20 pages of the book earth is completely whipped out. Our insular politics and religiosity gets swept away pretty quick when the whole planet is liquidated. This aspect of Sci-fi, plot devices that encourage you to move beyond what you know, what you accept, how you frame your thinking on things. All this nuance is enough to make a Frenchman blush.

How do you explain to a partisan that yes, you love them, but you find it off putting how partisan they are, when everything they say is grounded in their own mind in faith and conviction, and moral correctness. Will they know we are Christian’s by our love? Will they know we are Christians’s by our politics by our heartfelt prayers for Rush and Donald and Rudy. Our prays for the Oath Keepers and the Promise Keepers and the Proud Boys and the MAGA masses and the Steal Stopping patriots and the law inforcement heroes. #metoo means you can’t call women beautiful anymore and it is sad because women are beautiful and they should be told that. And if their hair is pretty and interesting it should be appreciated and perhaps even touched, especially if it is an afro, I have never touched an afro, I would happily touch and Afro unbidden because it is something that is beautiful and something that deserves to be appreciated. See. It is beauty and love that we are about.

02/16/2021

The inconvenience of creating. Time intensive things that don’t contribute to our immediate economic stability are very tough to commit to. What is this selfishness. This intuition to DO. And then how can you even talk about it without sounding pretentions or just super self-iinvoled and insecure. We have to be the embroidery. We show the carefully strung line. Dot, dot, creating a simple, clear image. Or boxilly crafting letters, words, perhaps a name, a beloved name. This name is perfectly constructed. Now turn over the embrodiry. It is a mess on the back. A rats nest of intersecting and tangled lines and loose ends. This is the backend. The part no one is suppose to see. I used to think it was important to show people this back end. That it was perhaps dishonest to (as dictated by polite conversation) deny the full import of the backend. To deny that that is where you live. That is who you are. That is where your hardest, most substantial living takes place. All those wild loops and shortcuts just to string together an A with another one and an R and so on…. A magician never reveals their tricks. Nor their CONS. Depression lead you into a sort of CONMAN mentality. You have to surpress and hide. You have to construct and deflect and avoid and courtesy laugh. And it is exhausting. And then socially, so wanting to be honest and transparent. To really connect soul to soul with the souls you meet. To feel the good wholesomeness of community and friendship and intimacy, but its at this point that I am worst. I am the unconstructed self. The primordial soup of memory shaded by mood and dearth of energy, where is my processing power, where is my renewable energy? There is nothing ahead. There is nothing behind. The past is an illusion. The future is an illusion. The past a reconstruction what might have happened put through the lens of what’s to come. Old acts regarded through the lens of future fears.

Let’s accept that everything is a bit of a CON. And that it sucks to be stuck in someone else’s CON without being able to make room for your own CON.

CONFIDENCE SCHEME, CONARTIST, CONSIDENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, Every minute a sucker is being born.

Separate INTERFACE from IMPLEMENTATION.

PROS and CONS.

How do you put to rest that fundamental fear and engage humorously in the Drama of life. And this is where the laughing Buddha came. Wind and sun. Sadness. Worry. Frustatration. The meter is running. Unemployed. Scratching away at the wall with my spoon handle. I am trying to get the fuck out of here. Scatch… scratch… scrap.. scrap.

Oh, wonderful you’d like a 2.00 carat or larger G color or better VS2 or better with a triple excellent rating for its cut, symmetry, and polish. Well, let’s get you into to something like that right away.

My process for trying to do things has become way more messy and convoluted and wild and wasteful and selfish and dishonest angry and hurt and emotional (the ravens just flew over again…)

Broken… at long last…. Broken… or broken in….

CON the children… everything is fine… sure daddy is in a great mood. I would love to hang out with my family in this state where I feel so fucking conflicted and distracted and kind of like creatively hungover if not literally hungover and staminaless. Drained. Emptied out and in need of a fill up and they are not filling me… or are they… how the fuck can I just get over myself and work and partetn and not be so fucking conflicted about the necessary interplay of the two activities…Don’t get made at me but…

I am not mad at you… I am maybe just mad? I am under pressure which is so removed it can’t help but turn into this unsettling existential mist that surrounds me and influences my thinking and robs me of openness to the present moment with my family. My responsibiolity towards them, somehow inspires me to lock them out. This is pretty easy to do when you are heading into an office,

John Fahey living in Motels and pawing guitars to make ends meet. Alan Watts living in a shack in Mill Valley drinking and smoking himself into his next life. Jack Kerouac drank. Hemingway. Fitzgerald. Fill my belly, fill my head. You know nothing John Snow…

I have truly been lost at sea much of these last 6 months. In the most horrible, delightful, suffering, birthing, confused, wasteful, dragging, intentional sort of way.

The hunter lost in the wood. Laying down my lines. Laying down my traps where \

I don’t want to hurt anyone… but I’ve got a family to feed.

Nobody gives a shit about how hard it was for you to do that hard thing. Who fucking cares.

Anger, resentment, time management, needs being met, needs not being met. Negotiations. Necessary and so fucking soul crushing due to the monotonous loop that we have been turning and turning and turning in.

Odd numbered highways north south… (41)

Even numbered highways east west … (U.S. 42?) Runs southwest-northeast from Louisville, KY to Cleveland, OH, running through Cincinnati. Constructed in 1926

02/15/2021

For a helluva long time I felt locked out of my favored intellectual peregrinations. No time. No space.

Peter O. Whitmer and Francis Fitzgerald Anecdote. Popular culture. Popular knowledge. Language. Semiotics. How do we create meaning and represent meaning.

Then Alan Watts showing up in “A Time of Gifts”

Jewelry industry—this sense of symbolic meaning… watches were easier, more story, more extensions to other activities that could be tied into the watch, Jewelry is all emotion. A jewel… so precious.

Then the family feed and the jewel being polished through suffering. People beating the shit out of their rings and destroying the beauty.

The shroud of Turin being an undisputable material proof of Christ’s existence. If you don’t believe this then you are an idiot.

You can believe the journalists, or you can believe me-- the doctor.

That Ken something guy, the young earth guy that thought all scientists are idiots. My dad loves hearing that. And it is like the humble, rural pious retreat into values. Their knowledge is delusion and has led them into a values wasteland. IN the city when there is hardly any land for the individuals.

In my family its like the 99 sheep and the one. Except in my case the shepherd’s don’t come looking for me they just stand at the fence and holler for me to come back until they resort to more visceral though equally ineffective hurling of invectives—arrogant, ignorant, selfish, narrow “liberal” mind, self-excluding, lacking a sufficient spirit of inquiry.

02/14/2021

Likely the coldest weekend of the year.

Musical encouragement

The importance of culture and cultural work

And rhythm and breath and language—Kafka musical quote from that book review I read on brain Pickings.

Are you guys frozen this weekend? Snowshoeing, skiing, hibernation—walks, writing, most days not in car.

02/12/2021

A little note here that I feel like I have opened the flood gates. I am trying to talk about African Jazz and Sunday I am waxing on about the physical differences between my father and I. We are going to keep this balance and keep this forward momentum by staying disciplined and continuing to move ahead with coding. This is what your email to Ivan can briefly touch on. This conflict of trying to really find out what is going on and what the timeline is. I have been trying to build confidence in my trajectory. Oh, the confidence game. Convincing yourself that this is a sustainable process. Not freaking out and falling into unproductive loops of dithering and indecision and uncertainly. Not wasiting energy and forward momentum fretting about contingencies that we have already considered and made allowanaces or arrangements for. Anxiety is great front bringing front of mind time sensitive priorities, but one must also trust their own personal executive decision making ability, especially, if you have made a good faith effort to analyze and assess the options before you. I have assessed these options and decided that the most judicious way for me and my family to proceed is for me to continuing developing my Tech skills while at the same time pressing further on on this newly reached plateau of mature process. It is good to be here. Fear has been responded to with effort and expression and planning and structure and honesty and iteration. I am truly trying to CON myself into the understanding that the destination does not matter. Maybe this is the ultimate LIE because the destination does matter. Success or failure is important both MATERIALLY and also PERONALLY (spiritually, intellectually). My hypothesis is that if I can unencumber my writing from any MATERIAL/ECONOMIC considerations/anxieties and can come to a sustained UNDERSTANDING of its PERSONAL benefits (intellectually, psychologically, spiritually) and by really meditating on the immense value brings to me beyond the material and moving ahead with the confidence that my TECH endeavors will be able to provide for us ECONOMICALLY has been truly liberating. Not to mention the synergy with my research and writing process. My most developed rough draft is LOUSY with HYPERLINKS.

It does not have to be the best. It does not have to be the next visionary step forward of literature. It can simply be the work of one person who live at a particular time.

Man took a picture of a stop sign. Then another. And another. And then for five years all he did was take pictures of stop signs all over the country.

Look back behind you what do you see. Look to the left—what do you see. Look to the right— what do you see. Look ahead— what do you see?

Sweet Mary, please don’t tarry

Dirty Harry’s coming for your son

Father’s lost in his papers again—

His puns, his effigies, his guns

Oh, so lean thanks to ol’o-lean

Much obliged by for the constant runs.

Ass raw and on edge

anticipating deeper analysis,

Perhaps a good squeaky clean cleaning,

even as we speak.

Sweet Mary, don’t tarry

Dirty Harry has come undone.

She came to his room and perfumed his bed.

Skin scraping claw

Carrying stress in your jaw,

Your back, your chest, your shoulders, your skull, your legs, your feet, your ankles, your gut.

02/08/2021

There is no way that this can come across as anything other than melodramatic but I am beginning to conceive of October 2020 as the formalizing of my EXILE. Firmly and finally leaving the home of my father. The home of my mother. The ideological home. The homeland. Firmly and finally rejecteing (re:rejecting) their America and entering finally, in some, explicitly claiming mine. Ours. The future. Hope. A certain outlook and perspective. All of this is metaphor and shadow. Image and connotation. A grye. A flushing toilet. The flagging swirling in contradictory eddies. The shadow play of political theater, political rhetoric. Political rheotoric come catch phrase, phrase of thinking, contextualized transfiction. Believe fiction. Clung to facts. Blaming the windmills in Texas for power outages with an “Shame on you for doubting big oil sort of snarl” (Isreal concurrently has oil slicks affecting 90% of its beaches … 90% after a rest tanker spill… with is apropos to nothing in many ways … just another fact that does not support my ralling against the emptiheaded idealism of “Greens” or worse Liberals who are all a bunch of dead beat communists who probably do traffic in children or would protect people who did if it brought them power and money so blind with ambition and immoral greed they are.

And after all of this desultory, fractured, fragmented exploration, I realize all I have ever been doing is looking for America.

I realize all I was ever doing was looking for you.

I realize all I was ever doing was looking for myself.

I realize all I was ever doing was looking for America.

We just want to emote until we are dead.

And the ship goes soaring up into the air on a pillar of water before crashing down to the ocean surface, splintering mighty ship into match sticks (could put the Pynchon quote in here).

I’d rather have a hard talking president that a smooth talking one that sells out the American people.

My family is America. I had moved to the city and become more progressive. They had remained in Gladstone and turned gleefully conservative both religiously (converting to Catholicism) and politically (long time Limbaugh “Ditto head”, they felt VERY comfortable in the Trump camp) it is safe to say that these things has at time freaked me the fuck out, been enormous elephants in the room, and seem to be the ideological underpinnings of a familial cold war exacerbated by my parents aging memories and attention spans, unhelpful generalizations and aggressive right -wing jargon (Governor Nazi, well why do THEY think they have the right to just throw a birck through a window if their not happy about something.. . wait… sudeenly my position is to defend the rights of people to put bricks through windows. This doesn’t really feel like a fireside chat all of a sudden. Can’t we try to break down the socio-economic and historical substance unpinning this civil symptom. What is going on here? What happen and how can we improve the situation in a wholistic, long-term solution, process, attempt, effort, consensus, goodwill, rallying, allying, identifying, advocating, crusading, participating, courageously overcome the hate that we encounter whatever the stripe. Because our love comes from a harvest of abundance, not of blight. We have sewn our seeds of self and cultivated our interests and sacrificed for our family and wrestled with our demons and called out to the gods and written a thousand miles of letters in the sand, figuring and reconfiguring the swept of the stars on their course. Talking the pulse of the ocean from what I have know of smells and tastes of salt, cries and protestrations of gulls, buoyant detlas and estuaries yawning great sludge-mineral bays wild with undercurrent eddies.

She was mad. This wasn’t about anything in particular. This was about some anger. Some spoiled nostalgia. Recreating the big family and the Catholic ritual. Coming back into the fold of the cycles. How far back were we Catholics I wonder. That would be worth knowing. That would be interesting to know. If my family’s politics were not so hostile, I feel like I would be much more inclined to read up more on the Catholic. Given that I am now kind of sort of culturally Catholic, I think there is a treasure trove of tradition and ritual that I would be interested to learn about at my leisure and I am sure it would give me some more understanding of my family and their religious/spiritual practice. Which would be great! I mean who wouldn’t want to learn a little Latin. As if was she implying that she was mad about something and want the to be abcle to brick somethihgn, or that this election was somehow about punishing THEM for throwing bricks through windows. Like if OUR HERO is reelected THEY will finally face JUSTICE but it THE ENEMY is elected THEY will just get off scot free for throwing bricks through windows just because they are unhappy about something which is unAmerican and the Conferderate flag is not a racist symbol. We believe. We think. There were a lot of good things about the south. Holding my daughter my mom gets on her inevitable soapbox about abortion, painfully drawing the analogy directly to my daughter and how much it must pain me to think about all of those slaughtered babies when I think about how much I love my daughter, because I love my daughter right, you love her, just like you love all babies and all babies have a right to life or do you just love your daughter only in as uhc as she is an extension of yourself? IS that what it is? You just love your daughter in as much she is an extension of yourself. That is what you are saying if you vote for Joe Biden. And you are going to hell and hell is Cancel Culture. Just canceling out anything you don’t agree with until you are in your own self-created hell. Am I in hell now. No. It is not complete yet. When will it be completed? Sounds a little confused and defeated by this and now I just am started to feel mean. I do not push back. I just say oh, really, and kind of talk back key points to her to make sure I am understanding her correctly. And I believe that was the final straw. That was the spark that ignited my rocketship of independent living and indepent thinking. It was the fulcrum from which I could redine my relationship to substances and my lived practices. Finally for the first time in my life full embracing my instinct to write and finding a new level of balance in my body in the parallel practice of yoga which during this time melded together with writing as a truly symbiotic practice. A separation one from the other no longer exists.

Having listened to your twice-told tales,

Hear tell three times of mine.

Let’s annoit ourselves in rhyme,

Flesh away our mortal days.

Seek the company of sorcerers and whores.

Besmirch the name of Christ to all who’ll hear.

Defile the cross, wear women’s lingerie.

Fornicate with strangers

And masturbate out in the hay.

Consume a sea of drugs,

And slash a score of throats,

Then raise a stout-walled castle,

Encircled by a blood-filled moat.

But do not worry, we’ll stay in touch,

Watch for stiff dispatches from my solitary cell,

As I while away eternity in my beloved hell.

I’ve been called, I’ve been called

Herald of the coming Lord

I’ve been called to return with him to glory

I have wondered, I have played I have whiled away my days

But by the blood of Christ I ride on glory bound.

02/06/2021

The process of the yellow river has created an artifact- over 3000 yellow lined pages poured out with my accruing computer knowledge and my vomit mixed rambling on family and politics, religion, and writing and art, and travel, and vocation, literature and history and myth and fantasy and poetry and psychology, physiology. I have felt at times that I do not have themes. I do not have a message per se. I am not a prophet and this is no great matter. An APOLOGIST is the only legitimate writer. As if writers are sort of fey lawyers providing the IMAGINARY and EMOTIONAL infrastructure to the IDEOLOGY. I think growing up I kind of had the sense that Max Lucado or C.S. Lewis were the literary ideals. They wrote emotively and descriptively and lively. LUCADO’s descriptions of the passion of Christ were way better written. Not to be judgey but Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John aren’t exactly Dan Brown acolytes. The ideology is all there. You just have to pretty it up. It’s like the MACY’s windows at Christmas. We know the form, we know, in general what should be in there, but if we can keep freshening it up. Sync our SACRED and POLITICAL and COMMERCIAL latencies the PANTONE of the moment.

Does the fact that I am trying to be intentionally literal undercut the sincerity of my letter. Isn’t expression too contrived if it is planned and drafted and redrafted and sat on and shifted around and cut and pasted. Could anything this “constructed” be true?

Having first row seats to Esme’s journey to literacy I am feeling much more inspired by the “artificialness” of the process. Language is an act of perpetual becoming. Language continues to take on new shades and stage pitched battles in the streets and comment sections everywhere. Esme’s literary journey is creative and iterative and inspired and incorrect, occasionally incoherent and illogical, but always with this seed crystal of emotive and intellectual expression. She is unafraid to be misunderstood or to offend or to confuse. She gets inspired to use a word (an inspired that has been formed by experience, either lived or read about in a story by herself now, but also likely to have been read with her mother or father or teacher in a close, intimate, caring, interested, emotive, sympathetic, empathetic act. Has her 6 year literary journey yield Truth? Truth has something to do with the totality of things. I don’t think truth can be an abstract conception of things. I don’t truth can be a system. In fact I don’t think we can even quite full apprehend the totality of truth… this is why we need each other. This is why we need the rich interconnectedness of humanity. Diversity.

What it has yield though is an incredible richness of language and laughter and discussion and examples and poems and stories… something in this process also aided her into testing into a Chicago’s gifted track which was not a huge focus of ours, but in this year of super challenging schooling, we are very grateful that she is in a pretty small class and is engaged and being challenged.

This openness to language is an important part of the culture of our family. Which seems like a funny thing to have to state, but as I have been working through how all these things are connected in the world at large and in my world at small and as I inherited a worldview that recognized only one capital T truth and that being the one that Jesus Christ himself was crucified to and the watershed of judgements on all things of this world that could not be threaded through this needle eye of orthodoxy.

I am a cypher. I need input. Not always a lot. But I need some. I need a chapter of John McPhee, a couple chapters of Joseph Campbell interviews with Bill Moyer, a couple Wittman poems and some Emerson quotes. I suppose we have been trained in some way to react with a lot of very complicated personal responses to very compact and interconnected symbols. Unpacking these symbols beyond what they viscerally illicit is incredibly complex if we give ourselves over to the complexity of I, open ourselves to the complexity of it.

That is kind of a thing in life isnt’ it? Being open to the complexity of things. Having the wherewithal for the complexity of things. Sure, many of the complex things are beyond us, or PRACTICALLY beyond us, meaning perhaps they would be obtainable, or understandable or useable if we gave them some of our attention. Unfortunately, shifting attention to something new necessarily means releasing or lessoning your focus on something else. We have a PIE of attention and unfortunately that PIE is no infinitely expandable.

How do we justify what gets intention? This puts us on the whole wide loop and the inability to answer this could either be taken as the follishness and impossibility of the project or as proof of its robustness as an engine of thought and consideration and language. As a cypher I am only as good as my metaphors. Input comes through my metaphor laden mind, metaphor laden, metaphor tinted, metaphor influenced, metaphor hungry, metaphor manufacturing, metaphor seeking. I am but this mirror and I think I have been afraid of what I will find in there. Something shallow? Arrogant? Impossibly fragmented with pieces missing? Who the fuck really knows. Maybe it is something really good. Maybe its my true self and acknowledged existence and robust sense of self and self-confidence and the key to reconciling all my issues with my family (AMERICA).

The insane aspect of all of this is that I am America. Despite my “dropping out” and digging way deep in that I have ever heretofore gone, I feel that I am more America than ever. And the America that I found that is going to sustain and endure and that is sustaining and enduring, literature, music, this country, rivers and lakes,

“The way we look at the world is the way we really are. See it from a fair garden and everything looks cheerful. Climb to a higher plateau and you'll see plunder and murder.” Jack Fate

I hadn’t been looking to poltics

She begins to SUNDOWN around 3. Grandpa gives her a glass of wine, not two because then she will fall asleep and he can’t carry her off the couch, Grandma pipes up that he won’t give her two because he’s afraid that’s she’s going to RAPE him! Grandma’s dementia is quite progressed, but to everyone’s delight she is super happy and loving. Way sweeter and affirming and kind than during her executive years when she was kind of prickly and gossipy and seemingly perpetually annoyed with my Grandfather and not without good reason.

They live in a ranch and sleep in the back bedroom where my Annette and unlce lived for years before they finished their lake house and retired early after the sale of their in town gas station to a couple from India.

But that image of grandma and grandpa laughing in bed, in the dark, in the dead of winter, in the middle of a pandemic that has taken the lives of over 470,000 people , many, many of them in my Grandparents demographic, aged, weakened, isolated by the pandemic, with the razor wire of the medium security prison where two of my uncles worked for decades gleaming in the moonlight out on the main road into town. Grandma sleeping and laughing in her sleep, so goodnaturedly, so contentedly that Grandpa starts to laugh too.

And my parents cruising up and down that road in cars in the 70s. Feeling their teen years. Getting high, going fishing, hunting, making Kung fu movies, camping, scuba diving in inland lakes, kegger parties, the drinking age was only 18 then.

02/02/2021

Chasing pages to find my voice.

Ad nauseum until the novelty of writing has worn off.

Fomo, focused shattered, pulled in many directions, blocked in many directions, lacking interfaces, broken down by interfaces, overwhelmed by interfaces, spread so thin, nothing left over to stew. Starving for things slow cooked.

Its not worth it to argue with you, mother. Honestly, what do I have to gain? Do I want to disabuse you of your worldview… aspects of it yes, but will that really improve either of our lives. Your happiness and contentment and perspective and groundness and moods are your own business. Something out of my control. My 2 year old has emotional cycles that I cannot control. We have to communicate with her on parallel planes. This takes energy. We need patience and wherewithal and often need to subjugate our own perspective to fully grasp where she is coming from. We have to slip into her tiny shoes and enter into her emotional read of the situation and attempt to balance things out from there. This is exhausting…

The problem isn’t the problem or at least her problem with the problem isn’t my problem with the problem. We are both trying to solve a problem, but the problems are ultimately not the same one. We are not on the same problem. And in the end, like many problems between parents and kids the problem isn’t even about the problem at hand, but some larger struggle of will which likely has something to do with the natural ego/personality building that is incessantly unfolding with a child. The sequence of the resolution is as important to the resolution. We have interfaces. I love interfaces. Be it books. Or a sale. What’s my interface? I have an ability to put myself into a very neutral mindset. I think it is a learners mindset. It is something akin to depression. Or at least there is some cross over with a depressed mindset- loss of interest in many things (in the service of focusing on one project) or at least this is something I have worked to cultivate. It’s kind of a dangerous game. It puts this moat of shit between you and creation and your ability to wade through the shit to get to the citadel of creativity is the whole gig. Will you be consumed by your metaphor? Once the incubus is attached, will it strengthen you, or suck you dry completely.

01/30/2021

The incredible artifice of this whole thing is kind of incredible. How could expressing honestly, openly be so fraught, so intricate, take so many passes (stabs) to get right or rightish or closer, try, try again, fail again, fail better. Should I send instructions on how this should be read?

Our interfaces are broken. FOX news doesn’t talk to CNN etc. Talk radio has fucked our ability to communicate. Femma nazis

Feminazi, a clever portmanteau of Feminist and Nazi.

I have built this distance. I have sought out this distance. And I have built this distance. Through purging. Through discipline. Through reasserting my values and my perspective on what is the most important. We each have a pie of time. That we divvy up daily to satisfy our needs, responsibilities, our wants. How much of my pie does politics really deserve? How much of your pie do you give to it? I have only ever sought to be. My life edifice built up of scrapes from along the way that have caught my eye. We’ve built our life brink by brick despite our poor planning. Despite our occasional blindess to the very important things in this life, which are sneaky and shifty and not always true, or at least not always true in the way we preoprt them to be, or hope they will be. Our magical thinking has limitations and but yet sstill we cannot survive without it. Without the tacit faith statement that yes our efforts will be enough. We shall fill the inchoate requirements whatevercomewahtway and we shall reap the programmed rewards: peace, security, relief from pain physical and mental, our hungers shall be satisfied without damaging our bodies, our curiosities will be filled without damaging our minds. Abstraction comes out of order, not chaos.

The capital will be stormed. There will be blood.

Drunk in my underwear, crawling up the four stairs to the top level of my brother’s tri-level. Their community has flourished with Devos money. I am drinking, happily, having the conversation with my sister-in-law about how they have a $0 premium for their health insurance, a conversation we have had several times before. I am too kind to tell her we’ve had this conversation before, and not kind enough to judege her for not having a memory of it. My brother says that we have to charge extra for insurance to cover the costs for all those people who arent’ covered… we have reached the chicken or egg inflection point. Now its just about power and money and convenience. And then I am drunk, perhaps shouting. Make America Great Again. I am beside myself, this political disaster, my despair, my family’s joy and enthusiasm convinces me of the rupture that has existed for some time.

Now I am drunk and unreasonable. Making a scene.

Now four years later listening to Wayne Dyer read the Tao te Ching I feel like a fool. I have been very foolish. I have worked very hard to work my way back. I have sought modes to help me work my way back. I have found essay writing modes and Chinese writing modes and code writing modes and story writing modes and poetry writing modes and fathering modes and husband modes and healing modes and destructive modes. I do not need to be prescriptive. I do not need to tell anybody what I have learned, but I can write about it and if ssomeday somebody wants to read about it, or if I feel compelled to share it with someone I will be able tot do that. I will be able to share my thoughts that I have collected oer time. Thoughts that I have combined with quotes and feels and then distilled over time to parts that still have some of the protean shimmer that first attracted me to them. We live in this vale of opposites where our judgement is forever forcing us to choose with conviction between a peanut gallery of relatives. We do our best to work well in thse channels. We do our best to work with these materials. These dark collections of obsidian. These smoky shards of dragon glass.

My poems have become collages of sorts. Something from this and something from t hat. Something that pulls together comphrehensively from a protean collection of ejaculations and mutterings. Giving myself time and space to work through aldl the half formed bits in my stream of consciousness. You find yourself in a certain form. You find yourself in a certain frame of mind. Stoned. Or clear. Or focused. Or despairing. Recognizing that these are all natural modes of being and not allowing yourself to turn them into an existential crisis. Finding your own rails. Installing your own rails.

Important to me:

1. family and friends (including me)- physical, mental, spiritual, financial etc.
2. vocation (read the protean vocation scholarly article to coalesce more ideas on this theme.

Music underpins all of this. Not in a pretentious I need to bring my musical truth to the world, but rather music is our best chance at truth and peace and spiritual connection. Music imbues words with life that allows words to transcend their mundane meanings and uses. Music has a way of renewing words. Just like the music of speech can renew the meaning of a word.

Does this have any connection to the thought I had about our responsibility to configure our own cultures? Some people take the prepackaged route: Convention over configuration. Culture is like a platform. There are a lot of prepackaged options for meeting our needs—food, clothing, shelter, love. Our pursuit of fulling these needs can be a creative, self-sustaining act, or it can be a depersonalizing, fragmenting, and self-distancing and stultifying process of stuckness and unconsidered conformation and obligatory consumption. Drunk on the coach with the action and the advertisements of the NBA washing over me in waves of earnest activity and passion-plea messaging. Never settle! Don’t compromise! You are worth it! You deserve the best! Get something special! Spend a little more than you think is necessary to emphasize the importance of the occasion! Go on and treat yourself!

**01/22/2021**

Alone, astride highway 41,

ahead into the haze.

Oh, my mercury mind

Oh, this mercury maze.

beyond attachment,

beyond responsibility,

beyond interaction.

being branching infinitely away

A steaming stream forthcoming

Infinite intricately cut channels to fill.

Morning breaks, will run till noon.

Mother’s love has a tough crust, a sharp tongue.

Daddy’s mad and dumb.

Positions of the Papacy—

cure-alls for all that disease an idle mind.

Lemon piquant, artichoke sublime—

eyes react to the flower of a tongue.

Young no more, but still you run.

**01/21/2021**

I feel completely elate that this process is proving to be successful. The simple fact that you are reading this proves the whole process correct, exact. Rightful thought of, planned, executed, and delivered. The wild, messy organic nature of the affair, the raw Adam’s clay exhilaration of it all, the carried with me necessity of the thing, I perhaps will never know if it comes across; let’s just saw it was fun to right. Fun and hell. Fun and fun, of course—because it was life. Yes, yes, the elixir again. I’ve tapped the maples aggressively this spring. I will wring the sweetness of their life, I will sap their aching existence with the deep snows still frosting the sub-tundra earth old and lugubrious in her late spring rigidness, in her cake clay , mud-brittle dumbness, needle-pine longings, still solidly petrified in the perennially hard-thawing earth.

**01/15/2021**

Armed tooth and nail with the sublime,

blunt headed instruments of our personal ideologies

we cudgel one another with abandon.

The parties are cults of punishment.

Ideology is a disguised penal colony.

How to be engaged without being enraged?

Are we necessarily only moved by negative language, negative messages, negative emotions? We need to be more emotive about positive emotions, positive things.

My mother seems to believe that saying whatever comes into your head is honesty. I would disagree with this. Our heads are full of other people’s truths. We are collect messages: personal, political, commercial, religious. These messages attach themselves to us and follow us around, spreading freely to those we spray with them, perhaps taking root, or dwindling away all depending.

You are the only person who has ever called me arrogant. You are the person in my life that has most consistently attacked my confidence and attempted to erode my confidence, seemingly both intentionally (with your repeated Christian perspective religious and political condemnations—attacks that are particularly resonate since they deeply affect my placement and sense of belonging and acceptance within our family culture, which you have clearly circumscribed as one marked by judgement heavy conservative Roman Catholic practices and rage-filled right wing politics.

Negative messaging from parents is particularly impactful on children, no matter what their age is. iMy independence of living and practices is helping me heal in this regard. Consciously growing a buffer between the negative emotion aspects of this familial disaster and collapse. I have attempted to keep my homeland alive and pure and whole, by punishing myself for having abandoned it, attempting to approach the family from the genuine humility and contriteness that I have unearthed as my understanding of this “exhile” has sharpened and clarified.

**01/09/2021**

My thoughts have been so fragmented by work, by family, by parenthood, by politics, by the pandemic, by my lack of vision…

How to be true to a truly insane year without coming across as insane.

Panoramic, kalidescopic, spectramatic.

What the hell is my mother and father and brother going to say about the capital atrocity? What could they possibly say to put me at ease?

What is your song writing process. I feel like I have finally made some moves to get into a song. Something has been blocking me out, whether its talent, or confidence, or whatever… I really like reading poems aloud. Seeing the words and feeling their flow. Making my own stylistic choices or just going where the material leads me. I have always wanted to same with music.

1. Practice was always a fraught affair, I believe I developed some weird psychological catches with practice. Coding has somehow been a bone to this. Its okay to be wrong. Iterative learning a powerful tool if you are dedicated to the process and not caught up on your own limitations, dug into a position where every wrong note is proof of your worthless abilities rather than a dissonate harbinger of the mastery (or adequacy) to come. ITERATIVE, OBSIDIAN STONE
2. Perspective is a fickle master … these seasons are but weather after all (I write this to my parents prepared for their condemnation. And maybe they won’t condemn the sentiment, but they have condemned other things that condemned this sentiment would relate to, so really, who knows, but then is my defacto response to feel tense and tight and browned out by this potential judegement elicitation from my parents, or should I allow my ignorance of their opinion to exist as it is, as ignorance is, nothingness, a non-entity deserving a non-response, not positive and reward lavishing, not negative and punishment administering
3. SPACE artists need space… well, no, people just need space. I have nearly yelled at my daughter for the high crime of just talking to me. No mind you, this girl begins talking in the morning and carries on right through the day, sometimes to the point that it feels like some sort of highly specialized torture, in which all productive and necessary thoughts in your head are slowly shredded and clipped and scrambled by an incessant influx of a toxic mix of love’s attention and life’s demands.
4. Parenthood is a kind of depression- conflicted thoughts, lack of flow, foreboding about the future (trying to steer a shipping vessel)

I like the idea that God takes the minds out of poets and uses them as seers.

Rhapsody:

Rhapsodize:

Combining, connecting, drawing a through line.

The illusion of consistency, fluidity, focus, simplicity, clarity, single-mindedness.

The nominal first draft on this letter began on March 27th, 2020.

I feel like I used to regard

Do language.

Language is relationships….

Did Trump break language?

Rush Limbaugh

These words are Rorcake tests of associations and impression.

Political\_array = [“Rush Limbaugh”, “Kamala Harris”, “Climate Change”, “Abortion”, “Guns”, “China Virus”, “Rudy Guliani”, “BLM”, “Breanna Taylor”, “Kyle Rittenhouse”, “Kenosha”, “Minneapolis”, “That woman who died on Ashland”

def impression(word)

puts “What is your impression of a #{word}?”

response = gets

if response.include?(“+”)

end

It is okay to do language. It is important to do language. Language is a powerful designer, assigner, analyzer, record keeper, flirter, hurter, dirt digger, language is real human.

The thing about language that is so interesting to me is how human it is! How cultural! How connecting! This constant iteration of what do I have to say and how can I be understood and how can I make the other feel understood and heard and affirmed.

So just to be up front, some of this shit is not exclusive. Some of these rhapsodized components are modular. Let’s call it an influence from the programming I’ve been doing. Trying to figure out how to print a hyperlink, looking into QR codes. Just needed to get one more technological reference in here.

Introduce Wing’s of desire… getting caught as a character actor… getting typecast… I suppose this is what I know how to do…

And then U-Haul truck ripped straight through the façade of my place of business. And just like that and just like Marlon Brando, Laurence Olivier, Jimmy Stewart and James Dean, Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, Peter Falk, Clint Eastwood, Robert Redford, Burt Reynolds, Charles Bronson, Bruce Lee, Robin Williams, Roger Moore, John Wayne, Patrick Swayze and Sean Connery— I was done acting.

Yup, been down since the end of May when the U-Haul truck smashed through the front of the jewelry store where I worked. And the next night half-dad drunk on the couch, kids just to bed, flopped on the couch and the 9 o’clock news was some sort of a Grand Theft Auto pastiche with the news helicopter following the most elaborate police pursuit that I have ever heard of in Chicago.

There used to be a problem with TV actors. If you played a part too long you kind of became that part. Peter Falk, despite being involved with a lot of avante-garde theater people and filmmaker’s hangs his hate on being Colombo.

(Could introduce the Longroom- that intersection with the cemetery down the street…and then build up to the car accident)

It left a 36 year-old-mother dead half a mile from our home, betsy, just catching the Dukes of Hazard style craziness whizzing by on Irving Parkway in the 60(613) from our back porch which was rebuilt by tacit Russians who drank two liter bottles of Faygo and chain smoked cigarettes. Bragging of their exploits in jibber-jabbers. Is everything such a fucking urgent matter in their language.

So much more polyphonic when you give time for different voices to bubble up.

So much more dynamic, when you bring the mind of many days to a project.

I am a mind of many days. Wanting to Roll like K but being too slow.

pressure/current \* resistance = voltage

resistance is measure in Ohms- named after a German, voltage in amps- named after a Frenchman.

And I run around and around the Graceland cemetery. Along Irving Park Between the Jewish and the Protestant Burial plots. Along the east sing of Graceland where there is some parking below the elevated redline and then a strange strip of land that’s an enclosed dog park and then a quarter mile or so of secuded dirt trail on a ridge like mound along the cemetery wall below the elevated train tucked behind a row of three flat residential buildings with their variously designed wood and metal back porches adding extra lines to the already very erector set like el tracks that always played incredibly with the light in the late day. It was about a 5K loop to run around the cemetery. He was doing it in sandals now. This was a newer development. He liked it. He felt much more connected to the ground. Used to get these weird “zingers” in his leg when he would start running from a light, if he lofted his first step too much. Now he did not spring like that. I danced like a fighter, like he was jumping rope through the 5 K course. He was feeling much more agile on his feet. Fleet of foot even. His lungs were not in great shape, but he just might be able to turn that around soon.

He had been having a productive day and he was hoping to more productive in the future and he knew that if he truly was in a good solid productive cycle then he would likely be running and not smoking which would be a double win for his lungs and would mean improvement for sure.

Coding has given me a new vision for what my n working life can be. Obviously, toiling away with my demons and making a buck off that would be lovely, but what if that is not to be. I’d rather not stress the fuck out of my family attempting to realize my inchoate dreams.

Susanna Clarke’s new book, *Piranesi-* a mysterious tale that examines the nature of fantasy. I imagination pales at hers thus I can’t imagine her new book being anything less than wonderful. It sometimes bothers me that there are so many wonderful books and films out there that I do not have the wherewithal to think about, much less watch or read about. Sometimes the good books on my shelf have mocked me for my inattention. As I reach for my phone to check CNN for the 5th time today. Today much, what is the fucking point? Would not once a day get the job done? What not once a week just to check in with the narratives. Where are we at with the story? The reality TV. Our democracy is strong. Despite the challenges. How can the Conservative party be so skeptical of the status quo. Did they suddenly realize that the status quo is always progressive, despite our best efforts to retard things?

Lost to the process

Literal sabbatical.

One year in seven when the ancient Jews would leave land to lie fallow for twelve months.

This law was founded on Exodus xxiii, 10 etc. Lev xxv, 2-7, Deut xv 1-11. In certain American and other universities the custom of allowing professors every seven years are full year during which they are free to study or travel without the obligations of teaching or lecturing.

Yellow Submarine. Yellow River. Yellow Railroad.

It was like our local chapter leader had gone done. We were all just cut loose. Gone. Free. Falling through the big black pitch pit of the gyre, arms splaying and legs splaying as I wildly spread eagle into the abyss.

I love spending my days being nourished by eclectic music and reflecting on my photography and my life and how I want to continue improving my life and the lives of my family. And how I want to improve my ability to work. Working on projects and questions and issues that bubble up from my ground of being. My PIECE TREE and DEVSITE have provided me with the digital base to more forward creatively, personally, and professionally.

Cause, you know, language is pretty magical.

Illusions, feats, loping lines in the sun. Just like Kanji!!!

a b r a c a d a b r a a r b a d a c a r b a

a b r a c a d a b r r b a d a c a r b a

a b r a c a d a b r a c a d a b r

a b r a c a d a b r a c a

a b r a c a d r a c

a b r a c a c a d a r a

a b r a c

a b r a

a b r

a b

a b r a c a d a b r a

a

a b

a b r

a b r a

a b r a c

a b r a c a

a b r a c a d

a b r a c a d a

a b r a c a d a b

a b r a c a d a b r

a b r a c a d a b r a

Hilda Graphic novels and television series

Feeling wise about the reading. Has not yielded a yellow brick road to vocation (as yet…) but it has set our household up as one that loves words and one that words come out and come up naturally and frequently. And I love that. This language that draws us together. Helps us at a family level to express our thoughts and feelings and our mutual understanding or disbelief. We mold our words of praise, our words of grief. We mold our lives and the language of our love in the womb of our family world. This is a fine project to pursue. This idea that writing is not simply the solitary act at a typewrite hacking away hopped up on something earnstwhile.

Rembrandts Chiasmic

{ o || o }

Background Painter Mirror Painter’s image Background’s image

Helio’s Embrace

Obsidian stone.

Another block- why does “the truth” need to be so intricate, so meticulous, so circumlocutionary, so loquacious. Doesn’t the wind speek in silence, doesn’t the sun speak direct, eschewing the language of man and speaking with the breath of fire. And element syntax that any baby would seek to avert its eye from, any plant woult “even small potatoes in the blight strive today the light.”

But how

I’ve been writing a lot. I shouldn’t really be writing this much. I should really be coding more. This tension I believe, may partially be a reason for my recent success. And by success I mean production. Let’s focus on Quantity. And Quantity seems to breed quantity, which is a little bit of a problem, because I should really eb colding right now. But in the same way, I am leveraging the neglecting of my coding to write. I hope to in time tact back and tack back and utilize the strong wind of my writing to get my coidn going full blown again. At which time I am hopeful that I will find some synergy in tacking back and forth between the two streams- perhaps sometimes even cross them. I’ve got to do it though. I’ve got to write. I don’t know about you, but, damn, if production simple equalled the speed of your pen, every half literate kindergartener would be out there printing money, or propaganda or whatever writers do.

Instead, writing for me has become this strange Kabbalach ritual of contingent circumstances and moods and body states, dates, moon cycles, I am trying to break the old magic, the old fashioned way, the Joh Henry way, unmechanized, matched against the iron beast with his broad shoulders and pickaxe, hacking his way through the mountain, and when he broke through in the rays of the new day show upon him, confirming his victory over his mechanized for, over the inertia and substance of the stone, over his own limitations, he died.

*The Ecstasy of Gold*, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, read more about Morricone, reread Blood Meridian.

*The Ecstasy of Gold*- the song begins with a good 50 seconds of orchestra building before the vocal arrive and then when we have been introduced to this angelic motif, seeming to suggest the marching parades of Hannible’s elephants up and over the Appian Way or the Isrealities passing over the river Jordan into the promised land or a wagon train passing over the Rio Grande, and then the crescendo with the horns building in stage, slowing for dramatic affect and then bursting forth as the whole herd cattle or cavalclade of Isrealites or charging Crusaders, or Germainc barbarians bearing down on the Roman Phalanx, everything jolts forward across the scorched yellow earth, the jaundiced dust of our mud existence this side of Eden. Cast out, cast out into the equally cruel and caring duality of this world we have dreamt up. For we have dreamt it up. Snowfall and sunrise certainly not, but custom and fashion and myth and ritual. Grounded in the dark anabolic souls of our very organs, all of whom are instances of the great genetic chain, diligent in the darkness within us, mysterious all with the coded gnomic knowing. Archetypes residing there- flesh and blood recreation of all that has come before. Systems of tolerance and intolerance. And so on and on away from Eden *clip clop clip clop clip clop*, Ya! Ya! The affirmed need for speed. On, on toward the horizon, on to the long thoughts, on, on toward the spirographic collages of consciousness. Expressing all, communicating nothing. Leaving all the real soul work for the interpreters. A compression of several obsessive thinkers thoughts. So out of Eden truly (though do you know we have never left), but with strive madly for the horizon line where the mountains begin, prophetic rays flood the roaring cavalcade with light- dazzled, feverish, stampeding, racing, flying, cantering, galloping, all of the lonely, hollow *wah-wah* and the chorus of clone Virgins of Guadelope, full throated Dia de los Muertos effigies death dressed in Grecian robes, chanting through their corncob teeth in the dust and haze of the scrubby, abandoned land, pristine and free from any imprint of god or man. A dream world where the mythological tale can play out on the various levels of the story. And then back into a full gallop, back into a breakneck commitment to the next, to expectations thrown far out ahead and always just beyond my stallion’s steaming muzzle. Also, if James asks, perhaps he already has, how many seconds old you are. You’ll more or less be turning 1.3 billion seconds old. Which incidentally is also approximately the population of China. 31,000,000 per year which is the population of Ghana or Canada (give or take 6 million). You reach 1 billion seconds around the time you are 31 and three quarters old.

109 of our earths could fit across the sun’s diameter. There is a blackhole that is 6.5 billion times larger than our sun.

Dear Erik,

Coffee ground, coffee brewed, facing west in the morning at more standing dest, breeze north to south east. Humidity just under (what’s? comfortable?), the ambient temperative is between that ever important range of 64-78, I am well fed, watered, exercised, the girls are down, betsy’s engaged, the cat’s been fed, his litterbox scooped.

I nearly called you the day I heard Ennio Morricone had passed away.

You introduced me to The Good the Bad and the Ugly. Of course I had heard about it, but I just didn’t really have an interest in it. I am not really sure what catches my interest. Typically I find myself, so overwhelmed with interests that I am trying to subtract what I am paying attention to. But these films are great and worth paying attettion to right… after all the other tasks are complete. The mortgage is paid, insurance premiums topped off. Settling in for winter, how is the furnace after all, anyway, after all these years?

*Disney’s Robin Hood*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Hilda (*based on a British graphic novel), *Charlotte’s Web,* anything by Roald Dahl-  *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory, Danny the Champion of the world,* Beverly Cleary books- *Romana*,  *The Mouse & the Motorcycle etc.….*

I have literally been writing this for years, but you don’t need to know that. So I am not going to mention that and instead lean into the fantasy that this all happening in real time.

How to you get the whole thing to flow together with all of these disparate parts. It doesn’t happen overnight, I’ll tell you what.

Would it be a generosity of spirit to unload on a friend. There are reasons why people stop writing you back. But a big part of me doesn’t care. A big part of me sees this as something that just needs to be done. Like I have to write and I have to get myself into a good place so that I can write. But writing about this incessantly does get old… accidently wrote “does get gold” right there…

I have been obsessively smoking pot. Really just giving into the inclination.

My parents were here and I was mostly relaxed around them, but it is like off-roading in a minefield.

My dad is such a good guy. My mom is such a good and sweet lady and I feel like a lot of here traits that annoy are really just annoying becouase they are proof that she feels pain and has given a lot to give us kids a live. And it was enough and more than enough and not perfect, but she left us with a helluva lot of agency.

My pulling off a career will be proof of my agency.

Back into poetry. Doing *readings*. Something of the absurd. Enjoying it so much.

A light. A way. Back into poetry. Back into that inchoate

Luxurious desert

Skin folds folding over

Shuffling the way my grandmother taught me.

Her hands curled up, gnarly reptilian appendages ravaged by rheumatoid arthritis.

Divide the deck. Use your thumbs to fan the two stacks at each other.

Arch the intertwined pile, snap the two into one.

Draw three. An angelic figure emerges from the inchoate pile blasting an annunciation. The naked corpses arise from their tombs and outstretch their bloodless limbs to the heavens. Yeat’s “The Second Coming” comes to mind. And so I read that too.

There are some things that cannot be explained and we in our ancient wisdom we have made it so. We resist commoditizing these secret intuitive delights. These are the quiet moments, the moments of line. Draw me a cloud. Draw me the light. How does it feel when the babies weight shifts from wakeful sleep resistance to deep, trusting, committed sleep in your arms, on your shoulder? Deep trusting, limp bodied rest.

My vision is worsening. Not critical. Mostly inconvenient as I shift between distance and driving and digital screens. I have been looking long less and less. I have been thinking long less and less. So yes, my vision is slowly worsening, the gradual decline we have all been anticipating through our third decade. Is the fourth stage acceptance? Older, but not yet so old, no? So my vision is worsening, both close and into the distance, but perhaps, though I am willing to admit its an illusion, my sample size of epiphanies is as yet still too scant, but just perhaps my peripheral vision has also marginally improved. Can’t quite look directly at things now can we. Isn’t that how snares work? Misdirection. You see the trick, but not the magic. Slight of hand. The fool comes to mind. What a piece of shit. We hate him so much. The Clown. The Mime. The glass eyed-china doll.

There was a massacre. Where? He tells me. I look. I don’t see anything. Russian Cossacks. Amur River. I have a room now. Our third bedroom with its west facing window- Midwest sunsets, Starbucks coffee, the spire of St. Ben’s Parish. A dramatic list of betsy’s various supplies and tools- scissors, markers, paintbrushes glues, tapes, various fasteners, a bag full of chenille stems, two sewing machines and a surger, a shelf of old notebooks packed with scattered thoughts and directions and numbers and addresses and various marginalia from various years, countries, states. A cat puppet. A bat puppet. A small painting of a Grasshopper leaning against a tree in a mystical wood with a mysterious light emanating down to the forest floor, bathing a good natured goat in an illuminating bath of energy. Our printer, my screens, guitars, pens, pencils, books, my body, the unaligned sinews that pop and crackle when I move my neck just so while wiggling my spine such as. The tension in my underthighs where they rest against my office chair and is this creation or just some elaborate fillabuster?

No response necessary. There is no response. My parents. Coming for the weekend and I am disappaointed that its such a strain for me to host them. I am apologetic, defensive, tried, uncertain, on edge. Party of it is sure my pot in tact and part of it is sure something else like maye the fact that they are very religious and can be judgemental and they are politically right and offended by Black Life Matters and Rainbow shit and what ever other symbol that doesn’t jibe with their political beliefs… or am I projecting… though, no, my mother definitely referred to the governor of Michigan as Governor Nazi… which was kind of hilarious because her last name is our last name- Whitmer… and its German… so… hilarity… right… no just brush, brush keep on walking through Lincoln park under LSD past all the piles and piles of brush, root systems ripped up. Trucks split, canopies downed. A downed tree while a very sad thing to see and a vivid reminder of nature’s awesome power is also kind of an incredibly designed public urinal. With a few jungle gym manuevers I walk right into the top of the canopy and am completely obscured as I let loose the 12 ounces of beer that I had carried with me from my kitchen, on the “el” up to Uptown, and finally to the lake where, as if summoned by the mass and pull of the big lake before us, I returned the contents of my bladder to the Michigan shore.

*Gratitude*, Beastie Boysfollowed up by Radiohead’s *Optimistic.* This is from Matthew. It is the beatitudes.

Epiphone guitar, A30 VOX headphone ampliphier. Music has been hitting me just right. I want to right songs like I have never been able to. My approach has never been just right. At least up until now and certainly for some time to come I have not and will not be able to write songs intentionally. I have to write diagonal and then tack real quick back toward some imagined center, some non-linear thought process that is revealing the unknown plot. I am an excavator. I am a driver. I am a drover. I am a diver. I am climber. I am spitter. I am a shitter. I am an egg throwing a leg tapper.

I have been spending time reading! Reading and note taking and digesting my notes and thoughts and writing poems with the scrapes I have pilfered. I am the equivalent of an industrious city rat. Industrious is the key. Consistency. There are things to leverage. Now. Now that my main preoccupation is Coding, I can waste all the time in world writing in order to avoid actually following through on something.

I aggressively collect and tally. After I tally and collect. I seek and strain and stuff and tape and glue and twist and flip through my thesarus and double check copywrite law. Translation to this language. All right, now back to that other one. Is it cleared now. Is the process making it all come clear?

An object rightly seen unlocks a new faculty of the soul. Beaudalair, Mallamre, Valry, Borges all have keys for unlocking new faculties of the soul.

Love the fader in and out. Adding continuity to seemingly disparate transitions. Such is is life. You don’t have to write things like such is life though.

My writing process has been wonderfully naïve and wildly messy. Tried of waiting for my anointing tongue of fire, I have doubled down on my process for carolselling ideas. First thought, best thought, has been replaced by lest have lots of thoughts and enjoying thinking and give ourselves an opportunity to write all sorts of things and then get back to them in a timely manner t see what they were all about. I am feeling it extremely satisfying to pass through lines and lines of text looking for something with a little bit of life to it. Or something with not enough life to it, or something that is a fragment of an idea, which is worth carring along to the next go around, t see if we can’t find something to link it up with. I have no idea what I am doing, but I am doing it and it feels like a the good, necessary work it takes to become a writer. The big development is that I don’t feel fucking conflicted about it anymore. I had this very intense two week period where I pumped out 350 hand written pages of notes and sketches and I am now carving through the material, unsentimentally, panning for a shining line or rhyme or idea. And then depending on how the spirit is moving I will then expand on the nugget, or if I am not quite ready I will save the nugget and cast off the rest of the detris and continue on the ebb and flow and giving light to words and thoughts and snuffing out other ones. In this way I am attempting to drill down to language of real concern. Language of realy import. Language of real

“Why was it so cold during the Vietnam War.”

“There was a draft.”

What can be said to loss?

Looking out to sea

the horizon observes us in return

from impossibly far away.

The insane watch market

The esoteric nature of Patek Philippe

You either get it or you don’t

The emperor has no clothes… no he has clothes and they are impeccable quality and of breathtakingly pure provenance.

Reading

Writing

Running

Jerry Seinfeld and his chain

Discipline of doing

Anxiety of not being sure what you should be doing at any given moment, this is something that has followed me fo decades. But Yoga seems to be making a breakthrough. Grounding. Opening my root Chakra, hold my belly different, stand different, poop different, eat different, drink different, smoke different, write different, read different, differenting my way to a new set of escapes

Exhaustion

Laziness

Escape

Creativity

Engagement

Life and growth

Music

The healing power of music. Carrie and Lowell. Swirling symbols. Images. Associations. Michigan, Illinois, Oregon…

What is the difference between being a crank, a success, and just kind of like a fine writer. It certainly is something that the public has a say in and marketing and publishing and so forth. Do you have a good sense of what a book is going to do? How do you gauge interest?

A personal work. Seeing yourself. I have already sold myself, or at least my time. The dehumanizing and depersonalizing affect of this on me was not insubstantial.

You become your roles. Over the last decade I transformed from an enthusiastic, engaged, amature linguist and writer without any clear path to a vocation that would allow me to be the sol bread winner of the family without taking more time out of the workforce. I suppose I could have taken loans out and gotten in to some kind of program, but the only program in Chicago did not accept me and betsy was unwilling to move. This is one of those flex points that I have immaturely returned to over the years in moments of weakness and pointed my bony finger at my wife and say— see, see, my vocational impotence is your fault! I was ready to apply to any midwestern program that would take me, but she was not feeling Columbus, Ann Arbor, East Lansing… etc…

I could bitch and moan about this, but as much as I was trying to figure out how to get out in the world and make some money, betsy was in the equally intensive process of nesting and preparing to enter motherhood. These roles have obviously dominated our lives since 2014… we have two wonderful girls, after moving 3 times in 5 years we have now lived for the last 5 years in our dream apartment (which is not to say the dearth of extra space- storage or living is not a challenge, but given that we essentially live in a tree house and have the health and wherewithal to have our three flight walk up be just a part of our daily conditioning, I hardly ever drive my car, a fact that just seemed sort of natural when my job was owning me and I was commuting downtown by train and generally not feeling much like going anyway on my non-consecutive, floating days off. Our neighborhood has facilitated a bi-ped lifestyle. I can’t quite express fully my deep lovely of the Divvy bike. The value that it has to my life and to my way of life is pretty huge! Certainly worth the $85 a year. It’s a bit like those old westerns when all the hero has to do is whistle for his horse and it comes galloping up. It’s a bit like that for the Divvy and me… and now they have electric assist Divvys— good night!

01/05/2021

I’ll spend you money

I’ll drink your wine

I’ll spell out my name in cigarettes and knives.

You can Make my name in smoke screens and lies.

Sneakily pursuing back door ambitions—

Some way through to a successful life,

Without having to deal with all the trappings of a successful life.

We are all experiments in living.

01/04/2020

Practicing strength.

Practicing breath control.

Calming to breath.

Calming to work through what you need to get to the work that you need to do.

Making small changes where need be.

Chasing the dragon with improving practices.

My life, a sort of Nordic hope ode.

Big, bold, loving of the day.

Strong, expanding.

Letting the glow flow straight through you.

12/23/2020

LIFE, GUN, GOD, TRUMP.

I am not blaming, I am looking for symptoms to trace back—I am looking for rivulets to follow down, puddles on the floor, slightly sloping floors, woodgrain and cracks therein, lines into the labyrinth, steadily descending towards the source.

We cannot eat time—and have no land for time to grow on.

My career hustle has brought us to a certain point in our lives— and I am glad about this point. Heartened. Thrilled, in fact—we can live from this point—I can work from this point.

Feeling something welling in me—is it rage or just energy?

A deep conviction that between me and my future is time and effort alone.

Sneakily pursuing back door ambitions—

Some way through to a successful life,

While avoiding many trappings of a successful life.

We are all experiments in living, no?

Desiring a deeper understanding of BODY and HABITS that emanates from that understanding.

Desiring a wise peace about politics. People over politics.

12/18/2020

Writing is a river.

My harvest is the flood.

Writing is a river

The river is my field

My harvest this brackish mass.

Tributary, tributary, calling all her back snakes

Home to the hibernaculum, breach the banks and swell my being

Every little rivulet a certain percentage of the whole.

Pull to your womb, pull to your room.

Breath bayou night think with water below and water in the air all around.

A surfeit or nothing at all. Learning to anticipate the flood

And finding channels to contain it. Not producing to fill the channels, pairing back the blanket river with her undulating folds, convince lugubrious to settle in the mold, full and ever expanding. Not an end, a never ending. A koan poem, an interface to pass the torch on with, the WORD, the tongue of FIRE, the flame of thought and wonder and hunger and caring and despair. An Obsidian Stone momento to pass hand to hand and ear to ear among the traveler you meet.

Hello, I see you, this is my cherish lexicon. This is my magic book of words. This is the onder of my life and being. Suspended in this mercurial act I find my highest form of being.

Just have to keep following the river and keep its tributaries clear.

I had no idea what I was doing then. I still don’t really know, but my sense of purpose is much stronger.

12/15/2020

I left the Protestant church without zero drama. The rest of my family converted to Catholicism, most of them quickly cozying into to its fold on the far right.

The are rural.

I am urban

They are conservative.

I am progressive.

Try as I might to not antagonize—

Somehow my mere existence

Seems to cause offense

Or remember them of liberal thing

That made them go godamned bezerk.

12/2/2020

Tired of the fear cult, the end times, the SECULAR (with is really just HUMAN, no?), I think I feal very little guilt from God. God can come talk to me any time he wants. The guilt is coming from my mother. Why am I 41 years old and still trying to get a piece about my relationship to my family. My role in the family. It is truly annoying. It makes me want to pull further away from them. We are all in the midst of raising kids and we are all probably just hanging on by the skin of our teeth and there are so many practical ways that we could support and encrouage one another, but these religious and political tensions keep muddying the relationships. We have never been a good planning family. Our strength has come from our flexibility to just get together and figure it out and since there have been a lot of kids around fro the past decade plus there is always a party, but it is pretty exhausting and frankly not that enjoyable. Not feeling at home. My dad suddenly spiking roid rage over some super partisan political news report. He’s fuming. Other people are telling me that the mayor of Chicago is scary! And that he is so glad he deson’t live in the Twin cities.

Also, why should we be worrying about other people’s sex lives.

Honestly, I do not have the wherewithal to worry too much about other people’s sex lives, especially if they are not victimizing anyone.

Why is the OT God so mean and brutal and the NT God is so loving? Especially if God is beyond time, doesn’t conform to linear timelines and seemingly wouldn’t really develop over time right cause from the start he was GOD… I like the idea that God can evolve…

Also, if God is so concerned about the abortion rate, why did he invent a world in which until relatively recently (thanks to human science and innovation often pursued, historically, at odds with God’s earth assigned administrative task force— the church) childhood mortality was above 50%? I am a good God, a loving God, I will ensure that it is immoral for anyone to kill you before you are born, and then I will personally flip the coin myself in order to determine if you will make it past five. Heads!

12/17/2020

One of the beautiful truths of children is that in them all of the “mistakes” you have made in the past were suddenly all forgiven, within the sci-fi context of any past decision potential putting us on a completely new timeline… ergo moving forward and especially because I still have the possibility to produce any future actions that I engage in, especially if they have a high likelihood of producing a human life… the most important thing. The most precious thing… if babies are the most precious thing why isn’t there more of a market for them. Why hasn’t the free market lowered our abortion rates to next to zero?

It may be a nice snapshot to reflect on how little any of this matters. Something like, despite everything, all the fuck ups and intermittent laziness and disultry thinking about the future, we have somehow arrived her with so many goddamn blessings. God must be good.

12/22/2020

I believe that God, should they exist are good. I believe that God should they exist has a very cyclical view of history and time, way more Asian than our western mindset allows. And so rise magain rise agan Asia. Is it fair to say that one of the reasons for the decline of the Chinese empire was the elites getting so out of touch with the common people, but what did that look like>? There were bloody revolts. The 19th century was a rough one for China. What did the 18th centru look like. I should read a few more articles. We are running through the history fo the world, finding our feet beneath us. Blowing smoke, trying to be a cool cat among the cats meow pajama atrends. I can be a wetern leaning diplomat with my back scratched to stuck up straight against the wall, the top of my spine spitting the qi out in to the sky leaing me up right and rfeeling tight in my chest, like Bruce Banner about to break right out of everything, but his blue jeans.

12/06/2020

Our culture has become very hyper. Maybe I should cut back on the old caffeine.

How to throw yourself a perfect mid-life crisis

* Arrange for a global pandemic to throw you out of work
* Arrange for a U-Haul truck to drive through the front of your place of business just days before you had been planning on returning to work despite the pandemic.
* Ensure that you are fired by pushing more than you know you “should” to get some kind of communication on what the plan / timeline of reopening.

12/23/2020

11/30/2020

The brackish was. Do I remember the boat? I did write a fair amount in St. Andrews. My lover was on her way. And we would travel and fight. And we missed her host family in Ireland. Because they were having their second child on the day that we. Were trying to get ahold of them. And they are still there now, in Cork. And probably Grandparents now. We wander around cork and argument and smoked. Major cigarettes. And then we went back to Europe. I was coming to the end. Had I changed— not a great deal— Home to the roof and house and runs with dad and basketball with Casey, Trying to figure out the next step.

Feeling low because betsy and I had broken up.

11/23/2020

Thought for a while that the game was about getting real learned and prescriptive. That seemed to be the playbook of the elders. But fuck that shit, I’m just living.

11/22/2020

He wanted to say everything at the say time, or at least wait until he had the wherewithal to say it all at the same time in the right order with the correct weight and emphasis given to each item and fact and contingency. Until all of this disparate factored aligned though he would conspicuously maintain his ambiguous silence.

Sorry for not recalling the boat and the amusement park— that was a pretty great sourjurn and then you put me up at your cabin the following fall. Thank you. Really. Those were some really incredible stretches of days. Somewhat have an arc, direct line to right now, set up a sort of pattern in my life. Not much money nor really consuming much, cloistered away, limited channels, focusing on practices and settling. It’s been a bit of an exile.

11/20/2020

Checklist for things necessary for writing:

* Yoga: stretching, meditating, breathing
* Sunshine- greeting the sun, greeting the moon
* More conscious of sunrise and sunset and moon rise and moon set.
* Open window, preferable with breeze.
* Standing desk- made from old drawers removed from kitchen cabinet to the left of the sink where our landlords installed a small Bosch brand dishwasher. David and Silvia and her HR newsletter playing up American and German stereotypes and laughing about them, but not in a restorative or mutually instructive way, just sort of restating the stereotypes and seemingly reinforcing them. The uncomfortability with African American humor that seems to do the same thing, especially with the long, inglorious traditions of black face and minstrel shows.
* Coffee- Stephen’s coffee, plying his craft in Brooklyn after Cinncinati and Chicago and Romance Arkansas where Bela like Bela Lugosi and Ed Wood died out in the woods and was buried, then Korea, and LA, and Portland and Seattle and the Bay Area and Sonora, and travels to Central and South America, and the Sarahs that he has married his fate too, sweet girls who somehow leave him in the end, can’t deal with his brokenness, his family situation is murky, father spent time for underaged sex crime with a boy under 18, his Texas family is has exes and prison time and half sibling and a friend whose wife has been fighting Lymes disease for many years and can’t hardly get up off the couch or even stand being in a room where the fluorescent lights are on.
* Water in an oversized, almost unwieldy and jug-like mason jar with ice cubes suspended in it clinking against the thick glassy sides of the jug when I hoist it up from a hydrating swig. Chicago’s finest, WATER-FIRE-WIND-EARTH, calling to have water delivered to our 7th floor apartment. two jugs carried up. Do we get one or two? Back in all your water. Boudary waters. Portaging. The old man carrying the fridge up the stars on his back. My mother falling in the dusty dim light and slamming her ribs and having broken ribs the rest of the trip. Breaking her ribs in England sliding off the end of a bench that had a cushion that was too long for it, getting some sort of parasite in Beijing and circulation issue from the heat and the walking and ending up in the hospital shitting herself and making her own medical calls (starting an antibiotic to knock out a parasite) having this do the trip, but being kind of traumatized by the whole thing, still jet-lagged, years later going to England during the Pandemic and being super annoyed with all the bureaucratic protocol to get in and out of the country, meanwhile my dad contracts it and continues coach track, outside, with a mask, coughing, feeling sick, but pushing through it despite being contangious and breaking every protocol that has been put in place to protect the community and the students and the families of the students. My dad has always been a sort of, yeah, but the rules don’t apply to me, and if no one notices does it even really matter and if they notice would they even say something and if they say something I would happily offer to purchase the item and if they are not interesting in having the item purchased then that is their lose and I am fine with that. My father had a toddler’s wicked sense of the obvious gap between rule and enforcement. A libertarian streak that his self-directed and motivated and nature dovetailed into nicely.
* Noise canceling headphones, off brand manufactured in China like many things manufactured in China, the chair I’m sitting on, my cellphone, this computer, these pens, in China the only products I found from America were some imported craft beers and the bowling balls at the underground bowling alley near the purple bamboo park just outside of the third ring road. The one where the whole gang from the post-college drama “Struggle” took place, sort of an earthier 90210, but complete with moody break regret montages and impossibly drawn out misunderstandings and personal ditherings. The gang on one of their early ethos establishing late night friend fests hang out and bowl at this underground bowling center all night and only emerge in the harsh light of day, where the inspiration and camaraderie and effortlessness of the night is replaced by the squint if not concussion inducing assault of inputs/sockets from the outside world. Our eye sockets, our ear sockets, our mind sockets (that which our mind allows through to process. How much control do we have over this?)
* Yellow notepad- yellow river with two main currents—tech and writing… all flowing between the IN and the OUT stream. All ultimately offering up their content for review, contemplation, further study, or addition to my much more organized and consolidated digital note base which I use to cultivate my projects, build my base of reference, and organize my work and study.
* Jar of pens— favorite souvenier from my time in Beijings. The ceramic yogurt cups with the paper lids hld on with rubber bands. Meant to be consumer while standing in the narrow rambling alleys of Beijing. In the dark of the evening or the unfolding of the morning. This one I took with me and cleaned and it is an earthy gery and a very satisfying paperweight balanced container that is the perfect height for pens and writing utensils and feels like an object that has been earned, or whose history has been earned, a kind of talesmen of my lowkey expatriate experiences. The heartwarming expression of my internationalism, the way I express the sentiment that “I am a foodie and I used to live in Italy and I love to go to Eately and eat Italian food though sometimes its annoying because someone will offer me some cheese or something and try to tell me about it and I will kind of laugh and say, well yes that is really great cheese it is made just down the street from where I lived in Italy for awhile. But if you don’t go around brandishing your ego and broadcasing your experiences, how will people know? How will people know to treat you as you are and what you have experienced.
* Printer- recently got a new printer and to accommodate it in our cramped office/work room/studio I had to tear the whole space apart. To the point that I had the door closed and the door could not be entered. For a brief time the room was an actual fire safety because of this printer. Once the dust settled though and after staring down betsy’s steely incredulousness— she doesn’t like people messing with her stuff. Especially me and she doesn’t always trust my sense of organization, though in my defense I am flexible and open to suggestions and compromise and when I am in a certain mindset I can really go into full on Marie Kondo mode and declutter some built up junk.

The natives inability to gauge what the foreigner knows and does not know. The foreigners inability to gauge what the native knows and does not know. That awful feeling of having someone over explain something or mansplain it to you, seemingly having zero conception that you also may have some experience with this thing and possibly even some understanding and insight into. How do you respond without saying “No shit.” How do you respond without saying “No shit” and not just completely checking out of the conversation, because you are obviously not having the same conversation, you are obviously not “on the level” and I don’t mean as a quantitative, value judgement, but more of a qualitative, understanding or at least trust that a good faith effort to gain some mutual understanding is under way. This is a delicate dance that takes two parties. It is a train coupled to an infinitely long line of inertia and it takes two committed tracks to keep from getting derailed. If one person feels like the other is not engaging in the conversation in good faith then it just feels like you are bring told who you are and what you believe, rather than completely flipping the tables and turning your statement into a question, which both invites connection, and if not agreement then at least venting and self-expression. Don’t be afraid to question the underlying presuppositions and context of the conversation. What is our ultimate goal here. Be Proactive. Come up with topic ideas. Questions. Curiosities. Information to glean. Begin with the end in end. What IS your ultimate goal here and not just politically, but as a family and as a father and son and as a mother and son, brother and son etc. Think win-win. The relationship and the joint mission is more important than the argument. The mental health and self-esteem of my mother is more important than me taking a half-hearted ill-tempered swing when the pain and alienation and defensiveness

Is the task structured correctly in your head? Is the task structured correctly in your life? Is the task contextualized correctly in your life? Is the task prioritized correctly in your life? Our undone dishes in Lund house and Ander’s annoyed, pleading, angry caustic, passive-aggressive notes about getting them down, my current obsession with order, if not a need for ddep clean, at least a desire for order and accessibly, reset, ready, preparation, anticipation, completion, closure, personal responsibility, blowing up dirty dishes into this unmistakable sign post of life, blowing up unmistakable sign post of life into this moveable symbol and linguistic key and cypher, a pivot point from which to consider the implications of words, the framing of reality, cultivating judgement for what is harmful and what is helpful, what is necessary now and what will be necessary in the future…

I am approaching writing indirectly. I am approaching writing and the important topics to my life unsystematically, but with a system in place to store, organize, edit, and develop the writing that I am able to sidle up upon. I am tried to write directly. I have tried to write out of my own personal abundance and largresse, only to realize that I am just a complete cypher. I am a turbine. Capable of generation, but in need of a constant flood of input to start and sustain my thinking process. Which is a reassuring realization really. One it underscores what we all have known or at least been told for a long time that INPUT and OUTPUT are pretty tightly linked. Any sort of consumption has this virtuous or vicious cycle. Eating healthfully. Media diet. Language diet. Attempting to change the wiring and processing and hankerings of one’s mind. Altering or affecting our internal loops and processes which ultimate direct the arcs of our projects and the trajectories of our practices.

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?

11/18/2020

A snarl is a knot or complication of hair, thread, or the like. Difficult to untangle; entanglement; hence, intricate complications; embarrassingly difficult.

Otters have a pocket for their favorite rock.

So fucking blessed.

The Peak of Stupidity

The Valley of Despair

The Slope to Enlightenment

The Plateau of Sustainability

She chose wind.

He the fire.

She passed breathless.

He consumed by desire.

Is Britain waning on the world stage? Oh-no, Britain is still powerful 9and sexy), but in secret, you see, like 007.

11/17/2020

Y vertical axis = confidence, X horizontal axis = wisdom

When learning something new that you really jump into you will find that if there is some sort of resonance between you and the subject matter you may advance quickly and perhaps ever break through a few previously imagined barriers, setting yourself on a blissfully precipitous trajectory straight towards the “peak of stupidity”, because, yes, my friends, because just when you have christened yourself a dilletante with potential, perhaps even cresting to to some sort of impossibly broad shelf of “intermediate” level acqutaince with material and competency with key concepts and applied techniques, your increased awareness and broadened understanding of your undertaking suddenly alerts you to the fact that withoi n the larger scope of knowledge and ability , despite your early gains, you know approximaelty noting and now, only for the first time in your life can truly appreciate the depth and breadth of your lack of understanding, Welcome to the “Valley of Despair”. From here it is a straight on fucking slog up the “Slope of Enlightenment” towards the “Plateau of Sustainabilty”. This is the place where most of the people who quit before the the “Peak of Stupity” get off. It is the part where you put in the 10,000 hours and make all mistakes and miss all the shots and get all the injuries and work generally lose interest in most other things in your life to cram in as much computer related learning as you can. It’s the reason why you start going to bed early and getting up early. It’s the reason why your touch typing has reached some new level of man/machine connectedness— a nice bonus for my writing as well as my coding.

11/10/2020

Molten stone channeled through the empty bands of the Brule.

Radiator heat like heat and west in the bowls of a big ship.

11/08/2020

Magic => transubstantiation

Alchemy like, elevating substance

Logical accident => the SUBSTANCE changes but the ACCIDENTS remain the same.

The Process keeps branching off new projects or themes or whatever they are. Repositories or writing with a similar gravity. All of the projects- ranging from essays to short stories, to a novel, to my “organized” slow exploration of how best to balance out the body. Am I dying or being reborn. I have passed through the rate gate.

**I write to keep an inventory of my thoughts. I write to pin my thoughts to a place and have a place to return to them and consider them and turn them over and grow them. I am not here to hide. I am not here to prepare even. I am here to live because I love to live in words and writing allows me to enter words more immediately then speech because there is so much more context that can be created with writing, or not created, you can communicate in impressions. You can allude. You do not need to set up or respond to something that your companion has just said. You can be slow but appear quick. You can marry your reticence to your most pointed, casual, let slip delivery. Feeling and weighing before speaking. Six months since I fell out with my family and no direct considered response. I want that. I want honesty. But I also do not want to write some bullshit expositional theme paper on why I am right and they are wrong. I believe we both can be right, but you believe we both cannot be write. Which seems like a very magnanimous, or perhaps arch position for me to take, but it is what I believe and more importantly how I am living my life. You apparently want me to feel conflicted about this. Well, you keep bringing it up and feeding out grapeshot proofs that your side is right or superior or righter or more moral or more flourishing or whatever. Its this moreness, this sense of competition, this zero sum game that I have been seeking to understand. Accept. Grow past. I don’t know. What is possible?**

11/04/2020

And maybe its just art, you, know something sacred, or maybe it’s just walking, which is pretty mundane, but also pretty goddamned sacred. I love walking. I have been walking less these days. I have been writing more, because I need to, because I do not the choice to not write and still live a happy, contented life. My intuition knew what I couldn’t quite dream, that I needed all this walking to get to where I need to be.

Laugh with my brother,

Laugh with my soul

Gnostic sky above,

Consecrated hole below.

Despite all of the duality

There is no ultimate ledger.

No zero sum game.

Our incompleteness is the heart of our humanity.

As is our ability to grow.

The parallels between the fall of 2020 and the fall of 2002 are striking. Cloistered. Body work. Back to the city- moved in with my brother smoking weed and drinking white Russians before going to play basketball.

We live new a fire station and hear sirens blaring all the time.

11/14/2020

Your words were supposed to be mints

But the stink of rage has tainted the fresh smell puke tang

Strangled— I am left jabbing and jabbing, searching for a vein.

Pressure + resistance = current (flow)

11/02/2020

There are rockets in your sockets.

Daggers in your haggard mien.

Something evil, bloated and breeding,

Burrowed deep in the pus slush of your necrotic spleen.

And, so, yes, I refuse your offer,

Find yourself another queen.

And so I came up with a plan— get back to a watch shop. Code and write and study Chinese as much as possible to keep my other fronts progressing as I made some scratch for my family. Keep us in insurance. Earn us a holiday or two. These last 7 years have been a portage— now mind you, there has been a bit of flow at times. A portage to polish my obsidian mirror. Pass through the gate, pass through the gyre, the fall, the fall, where will it lead. Laughing Buddha, mad with releases. There have been times of contentment, excitement flow. The leather bladder of wine and the Woodman bounty has lifted my mind from my mule existence as times, my good girls growing and blowing my mind daily, impressing upon me the need to give to them, provide for them— but all in all it has been mostly portage, my main effort, my spent sinews have all gone to slogging through the muck and mire, up stairs, through dense thickets without room to manuever, feeling old and dumb with my Duluth packs too foolishly full. Endure, endure, you have a plan, you have a plan, a vision, a possibility, a dream. And then the rat came back.

11/01/2020

You could stick around and sweep up the glass, or get down on your hands and knees and scrub up the blood. Or you could kick the dust from your heals, and walk through the door, the gyre still pulsating, a sub aural drone that buzzes in my heart, and exit this decade of dislocation. Step on through, enjoy the fall, let’s save the landing for the big surprise finish.

What to make to these inchoate feelings? What to make of these inchoate times?

Esme’s literacy has grounded me deeply in the magic of language once again. The wonder of WORDS! These subtly shaded abstractions, strange stews of connotation and rhythm and rhyme and image and logic, sensation, sentiment, something of stone, something of ether.

And my turncoat heart- out to the Valley of Anchor in my new Babylonian coat. Bottom of the well with my beautiful coat striped from me and my eldest son’s beard shorn before me and his brain’s bashed in with rocks. Lord of the dirt, Lord of the sky, Lord who will know my bones where they dry, Lord to know my drenched, saturated, suffused, spit and roasted in my own juices, preferences, habits clinging to me like a long neglected stink, sick rabbit, aging old yeller, just waiting to be boiled up and bashed in for love.

10/16/2020

Shakespeare first folio: 750 copies produces, 235 known to have survived, 56 know complete. A complete folio sold for $10 mil in October. In December Dylan sold his complete catelog of over 600 songs for upwards of 300 million.

Nature:

We know more about nature than we can at will communicate.

Nature abides as an emblem of man’s mind. The invisible world with a all her latent meaning disappears a the advent of the visible.

Traving the circumference of the invisible world…

An object rightly seen unlocks a new faculty of the soul

A well turned phrase, long contemplated maze.

Overcome by the gestalt. The images are all encompassing.

Well supplied- the city is a fine place for a hermitage.

10/15/2020

If it is not emotional will it attract us. If it is not emotional will be even give it attention.

That grain of sand grinding against my psyche, I’ll losing my mind, drooling my viscous brain juice all of the place. Pearls of wisdom like kidney stones, always in production.

Adventure. My brother reading Edgar Rice Burroughs John Carter of Mars theories. He reflects and says the books are interesting. They are thought experiments. You can tell he likes this thought. It sounds profound, or at least it is referring to something that is profound even if the thing itself is just a tired late evening muttering from a father of 7. The Manhattan project was important. I think it was very important.

We use what we talk about to expand our self-importance. Wedge the other into our world. Get the beat on Our topic. Hold court. Expound. Drowned. Drown. Beat up. Beat down. Clown. Frown. Get down. Put down. Let down. Trail off with regret. I’d don’t know…muttering something about Jesus Christ is his Lord and Savior and he is enthusing. He is witnessing the gospel. And we are in the middle of His prospering grace. Generations grounded in the land. Clean living. Hard working. Education. Opportunity. How would you like to live?

Unstuck? Or just sick in the head. Depraved. Denying my children the paradise that I had scorned Codemning us all to hell. Raising my children as … liberals.

I was seeking great autonomy and independence from my family with technology while at the same time really cutting off social media activity. Both borrowing in deeper into technology while getting more intentional about my media consumption. Trying to make my “compulsive”, “at ease” reading Chinese or at the least a book or magazine and not just the latest Fox or Cnn head line is.

Travel. Blood Meridian. The desert. The River. The Mountain. Cherry picked allusions. Cherry picked illusions. Confusions. Revised. At least. To some extent at least. Revised. At least revised. At least to some extent revived. At least. W.G. Sebald *The Rings of Saturn*, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Svetlana Boym), Benjamin?, and Josephy Brodsky, Russia, Germany, Susan Sontag *Under the Sign of Saturn*, Alan Watts, yoga stretching, diet, weight loss, toning, Herman Hesse, the gifts of the IDES, the Ides, The League, the commitment to something that might be madness. That is ultimately madness and will end in death the unravelling. It always does. Its hard to compose when you are so very obviously on the verge of decomposing. My Grandfather’s unfinished letter. My letter to him.

Why do we write anything. To express. To put into perspective. To shine a light. To questions. To remove. To expedidte. To source. To lend. To borrow. To take. To given. Memory. Memory. Memory game. Memory heartache. Memory pain. Tension stores here in my shoulder. The good ones I try to keep in my head. 8 year portage, cloudy waters ahead. Through the stone, the mirror, the memory sage, meet the old man at the table, his hands held palms upraised on his lap before him. Breath, squire. Breath, squire. Respiration is how we measure if we’re still game or not. Get to know it. Own it. Control it and you might still gain a good reputation with the girls.

10/21/2020

12 Year Cycle

What if I had told you in 2008 that you would live in Beijing for two years and then struggle to find an in for your Chinese and then fall into luxury retail and work that for almost 8 years during which time you will have two daughters, first an African American President will be elected for 8 years followed by a nativist Donald Trump, and then aided by a global pandemic and a generational legacy of racial violence freed up to focus on my dual vocation of writing and coding.

Making peace with technology, making peace with language, making peach with my family, making peace with making.

4/02/2020

The freshest eggs and steak available in the country, shipped directly from farms in refrigerated train cars. Pan-size wheat cakes staked six high, quarter wedges of hot apple pie, and cup after cup of the best damn coffee these cowboys had ever tasted in their lives.

f: Seven of Cups (reversed)

Terrifying. Twilight zone. Monochromatic 50s existentialism. 7 different offerings. The snake, the resurrected Christ. The face that launched 1000 ships, Phallus fort security, riches and treasures, achievements and commendations, fowl fate and disaster. A decision or a game of chance is at hand. You dear Querent are the pawn in play. Please step ahead.

Fairy favors and images of reflection. Imagination and sentiment. Contemplation can lead you into this gambit. Consider and choose. You have the will and determination to complete your project. Keep grinding at it and find updated ways of working along the way. “The Three Languages”- the son learns useless knowledge (language of dogs, frogs and birds). His father banishes him, but he walks into opportunity and success at every step due to his years of study and knowledge. At the end of the story he still is unsure about how to proceed, but the doves are with him whispering the mass into his ears.

The reading is about to begin. They dim the lights and a spotlight you hadn’t noticed illuminates one corner of the café. The room is full, expectant. There’s a moment after the shushes and the clicking of glasses and shuffling of feet has settled. Silence, but for a soft, almost mechanical purr of some light material in manipulation. A golden youth stepped into the spotlight and we listened to a recitation of Mills’s *Door to the Sun*. The golden youth briefly said, This was dedicated to Kenneth Becker:

Clouds swollen with rain

Like a purple bruise

In the yard of a deserted house

Blue wild flowers wink tiny petalled eyes

Among weed and branches

The only light left under gaping windows

You have died

I hear weeks after

To think of our talks

And the shape of your hand

Something slips away with you

Back over trees and water

Through grains and leaf skeletons

Where the last drops suddenly glow

In one of your paintings

A northern forest and lake

Burn up into yellow sky

As if black bones of pines falling

Touched a door to the sun.

The room claps and even cheers. They are a good match. There is much to celebrate here. The room shuffles, then settles, and the second reader steps into the spotlight. It is the Knight of wands. He regards the crowd coolly and makes a courtly bow.

The Queen of Pentacles closes out the ceremony with a song? A speech?

Tarot

Pandemic

Presidential Race

Midlife Crisis

Sheltering Family, being present

Writing and creative Process

Pushing beyond myself to write big projects. Create big projects. My kindness and enthusiasm for my projects and my hopes and dreams extends to other peoples as well, though I refuse to go very far with causally cast around anxieties and frustrations that I am in no position to alleviate or even really address. What do you do with other people’s cantankerousness? And what do you do with your own?

There is much that I am free to say here and write here and leave after I say and write it that you make possible that you have made possible. It is helpful to have a target for these ramblings. Does a priest affect the confession, does the therapist affect the expression, does the salesman affect the transaction, the writer the silent conversation, I want to write well and be “in control” but part of writing well for me is getting beyond that “control” getting beyond that didactic tendency to “share” information, oh, yes, I know something about that, and I spent time reading about it and I haven’t had anyone around to appreciate it so I will unload it on to you. I have always had this writerly tendency to accumulate information like a camel, held in, contained, carried with me to what end? To understand reality? To become less naïve and a little more worldly? To make a good face effort to expand what I know and make peace with all the things I do not know. To make peace with my unknowing.

We meet people who know things similar to us, or who experience things and have reads on things, texts, experiences, music that resonate with us, we travel with these people, they become our friends, our family, we pass our ideas back and forth and our enthusiasms.

David Whyte’s *Consolations* is going to be really helpful this, and *Brain Pickings* will be helpful for framing where I am going here, as well as the *Red Right Hand* files, as well as my more meticulously selected media inputs and the time I have taken to write and reflect and edit and vent and collect and note and organize and plan. I am writing myself. Regardless of whether or not my writing ever becomes the economic engine of my line directly, in many ways and in many of the most important ways it already is. It is driving me, it is providing me with a life-organizing goal and rhythm and focus. By intuitively following my way into its labyrinth of twists and ever unfolding fates I have finally begun to write. Not learning writing or dabbling at writing, but practicing it. Entering into an unclear process. Doubling down and then doubling down again as questions and doubt unearth themselves as I rip through the earth in my necessary mode of burrowing.

And will any of the writing be great? Will any of the writing be any good? It doesn’t matter. But the answer is yes, some of the writing is going to be pretty good. I am going to make sure of that, because I am going to just a shit-ton and a goodly tonnage of that is going to be shit and I will have ample systems to deal with those inevitable road apples. I will delight in my road apples. I will make overflowing wastebaskets of crumpled yellow legal note paper the emblem of my progress. I shall burst through the thin atmosphere between not doing and doing, between foibles (bumbling indecision, unempowered dithering, and concerted work).

Unempowered dithering and concerted work. Kept from concerted work by fear of pretension which is a code for self-consciousness born out of insecurity and fear which is I believe the source of most pretentious behavior.

I am a writer and I am always writing and I am writing everything and I am writing nothing and I am writing with a life dictating effort, effort so encompassing that it ceases to be willed and is simply lived in, loved, realized, kept close and nurtured, accepted, prized, continually used up and restored. Iterated on, taken in from a revolving progression of perspectives. Contemplated. Scoffed at. Set up in awe. Poked at. Prodded. Thanked. Given breadth. Latitude. Asked for forgiveness. Enlisted. Allied with. Not crossed. Crossed. Cowered from. Lost. Forgotten. Broken. Mended. Pawned. Sprung. Reunited.

5/2/2021

How do you engage in big a long process, complicated skill set without allowing the long process and the difficulty of the process and surrendering to the process and enduring through the process of zoning in on the work and zoning out and ignoring many other competing responsibilities and interests. Finding this balance of internal and external pressure I have found to be some of or impossible alchemy that has made approaching creative projects dangerous and intimating and self-defeating, like an electrified fence, like rolling acres of strung barbed wire, which at some times strikes me as fascinating and attractive and compact and power pulsating, inspiring, the golden trunk fro pulp fiction, the green light of Gatsby, the mermaid voices ascending to my ears in my crumbling tower, hand prints in the caves of Tierra del Fuego, ranting soliloquies to purge the overflow of messages cascading through my soul.

Between the poet and the maniac: editing alone.

The graphomaniac

What about the excess of the process.

Can you approach the process and share the process without letting it overwhelm you?

What is polite conversation? What is art? What is polite art? Impolite? What is the point? Do you have some arch oul that knows just what the earth needs or are you more of a product of your culture and your experience and that you are a cypher that is processing all of these disparate pipes of information and experience and occasionally snipping off and isolating pieces of that WORK. And the work is living really. The work is processing and contemplating and combinging and noting and noting and Creating and Reading and Updating and Deleting. In short. Just being.

Ira Glasses framing of creating as a process of judgement creation. How do you get to that point of laying out all of these things that have brough you insight and encouragement and settling perspective to your process of living and working and stretching and creating and writing and learning which are all the same thing which is why your thinking and feeling about them are so convoluted and inarticulately nuanced.

05/10/2021

At times during the composition of this letter I have asked myself if it has not reached an unwieldy length, or has all together just become too weird and burdensome to write, I’ve had to remind myself that in as much as we partook in the moveable feast so solid, clear, straight, clarifying prose (I have always appreciated the athletic tautness of a dictionary definition.

How do you jump into the river fully, completely, naked, unrestrained, committed, wild-eyed and optimistic, full of spring’s mad gladness, brains awash in sun warmth conjured serotonin. Sap running in the sugar bush.

Fake band names:

Slow-motion Maniacs

Carlos and the Poinsettas

Karen’s Badass Band

Daniel and the Hittites

Quest for long thoughts. Extended communique in which I wasn’t selling. But you’re always selling no? Glenn Garry files references. Coffee’s for closers. I have closed. I have let walk. I have walked. U-Haul smashing through plate glass window, through double glass door. Choppers over head. Oh, my God, oh my God. Smashed up Ford Explorer, run through my a police cruiser at Ashland and Irving. Grand Theft Auto broadcast live on 9 at 9. 酒. Heat and alcohol and sweating into my shirt on the green couch we purchased in the northern suburbs from that amazing house that was all windows and woods surrounding. Calm and empty and controlled. Some people have much. Some people have much more. Some have less. Some have much less. 100 + mile per hour blow by, caught from the porch by by wife where she had run to spontaneously when the Cubs had won the series. When the girl was 2 and now she is 6 and a half. And the streets are full of cruisers in pursuit of a suspect. Red and blue, red and blue, sirens screaming, choppers overhead on the television.

It wasn’t something I started to do consciously, but it seemed to work so I went with it.

13 years ago now. Grateful for work. Value. Competency. Knowing where things go. Who to call. Connecting people. Having a ready answer. Feeling like the organization is headed in a positive direction. Mutual respect and appreciation among co-workers. A sense of being valued and necessary to leadership and reportees. Accomplishment. Status. Regular sleep. Diet. Low carbs. Not too much drink. Fats. Sugars.

Written all out of order, scramble together ordered somehow distilled down, drafted, cut up => #1, #2, #3.

Anything can inform anything.

Anything can become anything.

Anything can slip in and out of anything.

Objects with multiple interfaces.

Collage confluence of influences.

Connected ideas and images and communiques.

Feeling that old, slow growth momentum, learning little by little what I need to know.

What do you need to know? What can you get by not knowing? Or even just having a tenuous impression of? What can you fudge?

5/11/2021

Coding has given my language doing a dramatically pragmatic and practical edge. Somehow it tapes into a similar place of wonder and order scrambling, descrambling that my writing has always demanded of me. Not in a prescriptive way, but in a more passive, intuitive way. Actively gathering images, lingering on words, attempting to reconfigure them all in ways the surprise even me. Especially me. Writing to impress, to inspire, to get ahead of, to out run, to find that catharsis that one fcan sometimes find when effort and consistency push you through the ceilings of your former thresholds. Whatever those were or are, whatever those limitationos were or are, internal or external. Finging the freedom to be as you need to be. There is a lot of selling. There is a lot of meeting other people’s needs. Filling roles. And these actions are necessary. We are Subjects that contain a multitude of Messages and Behaviors. Multitudes as Wittman say and Dylan echoed. How to encapsulate in any one WORD any one PHRASE, POEM, STORY, PAINTING, PIECE, GESTURE, TONE, ATTEMPT.

Try, try again, fail again, fail better.

And speaking becomes selling. How can you ask and how can you tell. What do I include, my work has become self-salvage. Self-mining. Self-deconstruction. My work has become doom scrolling and fire breathing. Attempting to dissolve myself into the LOGOS, the ATMAN, that which stretches out beyond the slippery subjectivity of the isolated soul. Everything fucking thing feeling fraught though. How do you stay above the fray when every fucking thing is so fucking fraught! Nothing is easy. Your wife can’t get up in the morning. You daughter can only go to school in person two days a week. You other daughter has a cold that is hanging on which has been messing up all of your sleep. You mother is upset with you, coolly judging you in her Trumpian Rebel word of the Righteous. Hail and healthy and mad as hell. Living out the Golden Era of her sense of self-righteousness. With her golden brood as proof of her goodness and the bountiful return on her investment. And but yet still I have such a hard time not absorbing and evenly reacting to her caffeinated, often politically and religiously tinged fretting and snarling rage and judgement. There is a fierceness to her passion for Christ and the moneylender table toppling rage she feels entitled to.

In a nutshell she is a mawkish churchland, obsessed with the earthly concession of expressing her self-righteousness and temporal and eternal rightness and correctness through her politics. A political rhetorical that has been honed over decades of exposure to a conservative propaganda machine that that seeks to demonize the opposition even while trumpeting the internationally and by extension universal superiority of our system and institution. Our system is proof of the God inspired Genius of our founders. I am self-secluded from your apocalyptic politics, your out of hand apocalyptic interpretation of change and progress.

You are not wrong— with regards to your earthly fate— only doom lies ahead.

**30JULY2019**

Words to Erik while reading *Ulysses:*

The words just sort of wash over me sometimes. The marginalia of the previous reader is incredible. Insightful. Did they have a guide book? The internet? Their questions are often my questions. Their answers become my answers. And so the wash of words and sometimes a spotlight: “The cold smell of sacred stone called him. He trod the worn steps, pushed the swingdoor and entered softly by the rere.”

Ecce Homo- Christ with crown of thorns. Crawthumpers. Shiftylooking. A secret gift of my family’s conversion to Catholcism- a new door into *Ulysses*. I enter hat in hand. Eyes wide, compound words on my tongue, repeated from the page. Ecco Homo, Christ in thorns upon the cross. The year of big books. About as literary as I am alcoholic. Half-assed, but aspirational. A cat about my ankles- mewing, contemplating how hard to nip me for his meat. Inked characters fast fading on the frayed breaking paper. Thanks to the Little Flower. (*Ulysses* 91)- While bloom is reading the Obituaries in the paper on Bloomsday.

And what if it cannot only mean one thing? What if it refused to hone its message? A wet dog on the door step. A tangle of relations to disentangle before convictions can even be meted out. And my use of meted right there is exactly why I love writing and believe that it is at least a little bit magic. I have not thought of that world in a very long time, much less spoke it or spelled it, but then right on time, just at the right time it shows up to say Hello.

**07/30/2014**

And so summer rounds the corner into August.  Three floors up I hear the grind of street dis/construction.  The light of the sun is on the full green leaves outside the front room window and the ambient light is in the room, on the floor.  Damien Jurado doing his winningest Neil Young is on the radio (sourse: Grooveshark).We are moved again moved.  From Huron/Wood where you knew me to Augusta/Damen for a six month hiatus and now to Schubert/Western where we can imagine years spent tucked in behind X-sport Fitness’s parking garage with 90/94 close enough to keep us companion at nights.

Here we have light.  Light and closets.  A bathroom the size of a Manhattan sitting room.  The vintage of the building, the barn like qualities of the back walkup, and the nearly farflungness of its locale triangulate the rent just right (but shhhhh, we are nowhere, and yet close to everything.)

betsy’s belly grows, betsy’s belly grows and grows and our days are made by flutters.  Let’s call it the majesty of the mundane.  I look around and all these rambling people have been flutters too at one time or another.  Super common, and yet here we are with our own personal miracle.  It does feel good doesn’t it.

You desire to unwire is absolutely understandable.  I continue to struggle with how to be with the black hole attraction of digital dimension ever present in my pocket.  My latest ploy is “Hoy”.  Everyday on my wayhome commute I grab a Spanish language newspaper from a streetside stash.  I run my eyes over the words and purse my lips trying to channel a Latin panache.  My Spanish is still ridiculously limited, but something about the print and the jangling exchange between the content and my brain sends me traveling.  I am Hemingway at a Pamplona cafe, I am myself expat-ing for a month in Xela, Guatemala.  I am traveling.

Here is a short poem about career:  Work you jerk, you fucking selfish jerk. Fuck you.

Actually since my G(eneral)M(anager) and D(istrict)M(anager) both resigned within a day of each other, it hasn’t been too bad.  There has been some stress associated with preparing for the Level 2 B(asic)P(roduct)K(nowledge) test since as the B(outique)T(rainer)it is on me to coordinate with the R(egional)T(rainer) to get every buddy up to snuff on such throbbingly important subjects as the color of a Rattrapante calibre’s column wheel and the year in which OMEGA produced the world’s very first Chronometer certified automatic Chronograph.  The answers are blue and 1973 if you did not know already.  This preparation culminates in a call out of the blue from the RT who then administers the 40-45 minute test orally.  This Kafaesque inquisition is a stress placed upon the good staff of the Chicago OMEGA boutique in addition to pushing to meet at least 80% of our P(ersonal)G(oal), beaing L(ast)Y(ear) as a boutique and achieving our B(outique)P(lan)- a number apparantly pulled from the air by an aged and greedy Swiss Watchmaker who has spent too many years in proximity to powerful synthetic adhesives.  As I mentioned though with the departure of the GM and DM things have definitely improved as we are freer to do our real job (ride the macroeconomic trends of the moneyed elite) freed (mostly) from the passive/aggressive crackerjack management techniques of our pervious superiors.

Relatively content I am currently only half-heartedly looking for other work.

My Interview this past week was with New York Jewelers.  There is a lot to say about NYJ.  Where to start... they are located on Wabash between Washington and Madison on the infamous Chicago strip know as Jewelers row.  The EL creaks and screaches street side right above them.  They are neighbors with the Twisted Kilt.  Four brothers run the joint which in addition to offering a wide selection of timepieces is also the largest wholesaler of diamonds in the midwest, as well (at least according to what I learned during the interviewing process) one of the main places where the Chicagoland Roma come to pawn their jewels.  The interview process involved a carosel of conversations with Jim and Sam and Steve and Phil and Mike all of whom I only have a tenuous understanding of their position at the store.  Jim was super tired, Sam told me about getting his business degree despite drinking and smoking his brains out and then goading me into using the words “Fuck” and “Shit” (I think it was a sort of test to see if I could hang in a pawn shop cum largest midwestern diamond distributor environment). Steve told me about the gypsies, Phil and I talked about the UP and Mike gave me the history of the store and a general outline of how it runs.

Every part of me except the wannabe writer (who is like there is certainly a novel or at the very least a sitcom in this experience) says that this is not a good place for me to work... that said it is also a Salary position... when in retail could be pretty nice (depending of course on what that magic number is).  The other hook is that they claim they get busloads of Chinese watch shoppers dropped off at their door.  I think the magic number they give will support of belie the veracity of that statement.

The one dark cloud over this week has been losing one of our cats.  In the midst of my Mike and Steve and Phil carosel I got a text from betsy and in this whirling moment where I was late for work trying to wrap up this nutty interview process and get back to my wife in crisis I found out that Kasimir had intestinal blockage, which was most likely cancer, as well as second stage kidney failure. With that revelation all the symptoms which we had been desperately ascribing to the stress of our most recent move and the notorious finiky palate of Siamese cats made since (Kaz had been losing weight for weeks, not eating, and drinking tons of water).  During his decline we had been taking him to a Vet who did tests, gave us bills, and the reassurance that our cat was totally fine and just stressed out.  Kaz at 5 lbs, down from his full 10 lbs. weight seemed way more than stressed and so betsy took him to a cat specialist to get a second opinion.

Facing the choice of essential hospice care, aggressive surgery and chemo, or saying goodbye that day.  We made the choice to sad goodbye.

We waited for the vet in the room who was in surgery.  We waited with out cat on our laps, burying his head into our arms, so skinny and weak and calm.  At one point he rested his head on betsy’s belly.  He was dying, the Peach was growing to live.  I thought of my sister Beth and the twins she lost in the 35th week of pregnancy.  A lost that at the time had been painful to me too, but also very abstract since I had been in China during the whole of her pregnancy and had not had very close contact with her through out.  And I myself had not been an expectant parent with an expectant wife.  And I had not experienced the connection you can have to growth and flutters.  The lose of Kaz pulled in a lot of different loses in my life.  Pulled them together close and they pulsated with pain and longing and somberness.

The next day there was a post on facebook by Sarah (Doyle) about the death of her cat, Oscar, I vaguely remember this cat.  I wasn’t really into cats when I would have met him, but there he was on facebook in pictures with Sarah, and Heidi.  How old was this cat.  This cat loved by Sarah, loved by Heidi.  Oh, Kaz, such a gentle easy going cat.  The cat I could throw over my shoulders like a lamb.  The cat who would wear a leash and go for walks in the park with betsy.  The cat that always seemed way older than his years, especially when confronted with our younger cat Hugo who just wanted to play and who would tackle Kaz Calvin and Hobbs style and who could always best Kaz unless Kaz was feeling a little peppier and then would put this incredible hex on Hugo by staring at his and raising one paw which would slowly, slowly, intensely send Hugo, who outweighed Kaz by at least 6 pounds.  And my sister, my sister with her heart shaped uterus which has made all of her pregnancies tenuous and tense.  Her three girls now that should have been five