01/31/2021

David and Marie in Beijing waling the wall, wandering into that town, not bringing guide book, trouble getting back to Beijing, overnight double decker bus-- took a mini Bus to race out and meet it-- how does this all work any way. People getting off a bus to ride on motorcycles past the checkpoint.

You wake to realize that

You lead with love, but are led by lies

Wake the body, wake the mind

Connect that which has been disconnected

The automobile, the football, the atomic bomb,

the convenience of power,

the convenience of the convenience store.

Lost amidst a massing crowd

is the vastness of space

still accessible within you?

07/05/2021

Have been meaning to write. *They* say that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. *They* say a lot of things though and in no particular order, or with any particularly clear ranking of importance and/or urgency. *They* send many, many messages. *They* are profligate message senders really. A nuclear meltdown of messages, come cast, some let slip, some blasted from cannons, megaphones. Others muttered. Many merely inferred, made apparent in the confetti constellations of needs and wants, insecurities and aggressions. Kindnesses wasted or not. Messages all just pouring out of them—the naturalness of this profligate message sending is impressive, impressing. IN/OUT. OUT/IN. Though at times, I must admit, I am sometimes overcome.

Glad to be writing. Have written much since September. Something of a process having coalesced, though the whole factorial systems is more fox hunt than General Motors. And the foxes are truffles spored over night from mythical seeds I sneezed up decades ago—all these years I believe that they have been growing, growing, growing—winding, searching tendrils—the ever budding green of being.

My pen and keyboard tap through time—forward is reverse is stasis—*past and present are perhaps both contained in time future… T.S. Eliot Quote*

Ralph Waldo Emerson Quote:

*“The two parties which divide the state, the party of Conservatism and that of Innovation, are very old, and have disputed the possession of the world ever since it was made. This quarrel is the subject of civil history. The conservative party established the reverend hierarchies and monarchies of the most ancient world. The battle of patrician and plebeian, of parent state and colony, of old usage and accommodation to new facts, of the rich and the poor, reappears in all countries and times. The war rages not only in battle-fields, in national councils, and ecclesiastical synods, but agitates every man's bosom with opposing advantages every hour. On rolls the old world meantime, and now one, now the other gets the day, and still the fight renews itself as if for the first time, under new names and hot personalities.”*

* *Ralph Waldo Emerson December 9, 1841*

**Trump**. The word in such phrases as a *trumped up affair*, *trumpery*, etc., is the same words as *trumpet*; from Fr. *trompe*, a trumpet, whence *tromper* which, originally meaning “to play on a trumpet,” came to mean to beguile, deceive, impose upon.

**The last trump*.*** The final end of all things earthly; the Day of Judgement.

*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. – 1 Cor. Xv, 51,52.*

**To play one’s last trump.** To be reduced to one’s last expedient: a phrase from cardplaying.

**Trumpet.** *See* Trump *above*.

**To blow one’s own trumpet**. To publish one’s own praises, good deeds, etc. The allusion is to heralds, who used to announce with a flourish of trumpets the knights who entered a list. Similarly, *your trumpeter* *is dead* means that you are obliged to sound your own praised because no one will do it for you.

At my desk, in my chair, feet on the floor, four for the chair, two for me. Six feet on the floor. Very stable. Until it is not. Drop. Descending. Solidity becomes the squishy stuff of being, the tacky, viscous blackness that can seep into each proffered crack and fissure. The silence of existence. The exhilaration. The cacophony. The persuasion. Advertisement. Slogans. Sloganeering. I am swallowed up and falling, descending into the welcoming blackness, my stomach drops out and the wind rushes around my ears. New babies being born to people only known peripherally, high water marks. Receding beaches. We have gone away. We have become over-come. Descending, descending, Gideon stamped scriptures and dry fleeces and tarot cards flutter and flit in the ever shadows. Roads, miles of paved paths or unpaved paths, cemeteries, sports fields, sirens, helicopters. Messages, text, behaviors, being bash and crash against me catalyzing thought, action, sensation, distraction, rambling, segue way, digression, pun, partition, unexpected connection. They attacked my hidden stash of wherewithal. Empty out my subconsciously collected cache. Seek the silence. Fall into the calm. And after all the splattered everything at onceness, a nothing without which the everything couldn’t be.

Arriving in a room of forms.

This one is dressed imaginatively. This one is in a conservative suit. One inch of white shirt peaking at each cuff. Pocket square. Four petaled silver Geneva cross emblem pinned to his lapel. The dark one. The light one. The ebullient one. The broken one, his achillies shredded by effort and the tendon snapping rigor mortis we learn to begin to just accept having passed through the fire of middle age. One staggers, one flits…

Dream of selves, intoxicated, distracted, scattered, disciplined, teacher, salesman, Chinese speaker, the mystic, the materialist, Endgame into with the ladders up to the window.

What do they see out there…

Subdivisions stretching for as far as the eye can see… all of the evocative names, the precious unreal estate of our stagnate imaginations.

06/14/2021

Has been a gorgeous blue sky and billowy, pillow cloud kind of day, Helena— now 2 and a robust towheaded brute— and I are out in the yard and she is ambling over inquisitively toward our small garden plot, bee-lining, in fact, straight at a recently planted maroon and forest-green shock of leaf-blades.

“Do NOT pick my Chard!” I preemptively scold, nearly adding “or I will spank your bottom,” though I do not ultimately add that last part because I know how deadly serious I am, and I sense how deeply uncomfortable it would feel to threaten a child with violence over a salad.

Little backstory, recently she has been insisting on picking the buds and leaves off all of our botanicals almost as fast as we plant them. I, being somewhat more experienced with these kinds of things, find this approach to gardening messy and self-defeating.

We had a similar difference of opinion just the other day about whether or not it was appropriate to re-pot a goodly amount of loamy topsoil into my tantalizingly sweating mason jar of chilled water.

Years ago, before I had kids, I was once at a brunch get-together where I observed one of my friends, who was already the father of three, being a little short with one of his girls over some issue with a cup of orange juice or something. At the time I remember feeling kind of surprised at how impatient or even almost unkindly you were addressing your angelic little Tomte. Maybe, he’s having a particularly stressful day I had thought at the time. Now I realize he definitely was having at least a partially stressful day because, you know, he had children and he was likely not being mean to his child at all, but was, in fact, exerting incredible, if not saintlike-level patience, artfully teasing out and expanding just a bit more your reservoir of that most precious of parental commodities, that greedily gobbled up resource that well before this cup of juice or even this very morning had been pulled and stretched as thin as a gossamer shroud though still somehow holding— together and true through some miraculous act of superhuman effort. Love?

I also now realize that our children are in essence sociopaths that we have been charged with by fate to reform as penance for our own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is certainly not to say don’t have children, but just, you know, brace yourself… for love.

Best,

6/11/2021

Thank you for all the music over the years.

Recently I have been out of the loop of listening to music. But have still been thinking about music a fair bit.

3/22/2021

Music- Of Montreal, The Fiery Furnaces, Zeus, The Flaming Lips, Bill Calahan, Cass McCombs, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, The Kinks, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, John Fahey, John Prine, Claude Debussey, Radiohead, Chopin, Serge Gainsbourg, Bossa IV, Ahem, Artic Monkeys, Alex Turner, The Strokes, Albert Hammond Jr. , Deerhunter, The Velvet Underground, Destroyer, Sufjan Stevens, Afrobeat, Fela Kuti, Solfeggio Frequencies, Alan Watts talks, Vampire Weekend,

02/15/2021

The Totoro book was so inspired and kind and superbly executed. Helena’s love of Totoro is so pure and enthusiastic and just the mention of the name Totoro (or if we need a little extra help) keying up the theme song just completely turns around her bad mood. She is delighted and free to dance and cuddle and laugh, it like pulls her, up and out of her bad mood, her unmet need, her inarticulable frustration or hope. Art elevates

02/12/2021

How to be hyper-productive without being manic. Or at the very least appearing manic. Where is the grace of the swan, calmly lollying through the water, with her flipped feet wheeling a million times a minute below the surface. And if it is manic, if it is a big effort and the whole process takes every last shred of your wherewithal, should you even try to expend any energy trying to explain it? Explain what happened. What you are doing? Perhaps goals are enough. Get a job in tech. Develop my writing. Develop my Chinese skills. Overcome my digital dislocation. Working to the overall end of improving my vocation/family balance. My life balance— my life being a balance of the vocation I love and the people I love. How to hold to these truths in the midst of self doubt. In the midst of the necessary valley of despair, when you truly face your ignorance, your lack of discipline, your poor adult habits that impede you from being the parent, partner, worker that you wish you were. Making an honest effort on all fronts and feeling stretched between each, without a clear path ahead. And in some ways any path would do. Committing to any path would do. But only the existential despair of infinite possibilities, which obviously was not a true casting of things at twenty nor is it at 40, but the many resaoble paths do feel inifinite when your life seems to be running parallel with those million other different ruts, but without the hope of ever crossing. And you have jumped ruts before. You have keeled over you’re your education track which took you to Europe and Asian and created the experiencial basis and context for your adult life and launched and solidified the most important partnership in your life— your wife. And then when the prospect of having kids entered the scene and the need for stability and steady, increasing income and savings and decent health insurance and a mangeable yearly rhythm of vacations and holidays to stay connected with friends and family. But then finding your moved to rut feels increasingly narrow and rough sliding and the balance you had dreamed of is all gunked up and cemented in, the run off of working 8 years of working most holiday weekends and holidays, and attempting to agilely maintain relationships with shattered weekends and paltry vacation to make it up. We have ridden the silver linings. We have accepted the increasing distance being economically out of sync with the rest of my family (I do not have a house that is condusive to hosting large families, nor is street parking super convenient for my brother’s unwieldy 15 passenger van). My whole family is Catholic with 17 potential godchildren born on to this uncle, I have exactly zero godchildren because we are not suitable godparent material due to the states of our souls and the infinite amount of time between now and our last proper confession.

I truly do not want to be dismissive, but I want to be real and honest and thoughtful and good-faith curious and loving and supportive. I want to overcome your cynicism and mine… which is its own kind of idealism no?

12/10/2020

Ruby method which combines two arrays— one of natural, religious, or mythic descriptors and one of elements of the natural word:

Descriptors = [“Odin’s”, “Calm”, “Bittersweet”, “Crestfallen”, “Rolling”]

Elements = [“Glen”, “Brook”, “Fell”, “Nest”, “Cascade”,

Could have two branches: “A + B” and “The + B + of + A”

Right some rules for adding and dropping “s”, pluralizing, making possessive etc

What is the SHAPE of the Union?

What is state of affairs?

SQUARE

CIRCLE  
 RECTANGLE

PENTAGRAM

PENTAGON

Bizarre love TRIANGLE

And another day with Lincoln. RGB dead. Half-mast old glory. Lincoln looks with his face cast in resting contemplation. My how did he learn to know how to look like he knows so much. Has so much understanding. Perhaps is a president thing. So wisdom of ages awarded by the office. Perhaps one of the benefits of spending countless hours within the power vortex of the OVAL.

Think of Linoln because I see a Lincoln magnet on my white dry erase board . Reflecting on the prevalence of Lincoln’s visage in my daily mise-en-scene I turna round and look out our east facing Window a block away to diagnol southest to northwest stretch Lincoln Avenue. Just cross Lincoln avenue I see the visage of ol’ Honest Abe looking craggy and color faded on the Lincoln Restaurant, a neighborhood breakfast institution for many years, now closed, building now leveled, only the sign remains.

Looking straight up from Lincoln there is the moon low on the horizon. Officall seeting time 6:31. She is a waning gibbus and full and surrounded by color as the sun is new and early and fresh and just up himself (5:48). Transluscent golden panes and pastels that were belched up from a space volcano.

I have not done well with my letter writing. Certainly a symptom of something greater in my life. Some sort of fundamental embalance that is keeping me from connecting with the people I appreciate and doing the things I love. Creation in all forms is elusive. I have been feeling good about the tech stuff.

My current musical fave is a song called “Black Women” by band Women. They are apparently a (now inactive?) Canadian noise band. Streaming some tunes I came across a great track by them that is not noise rock at all. Instead it sounds like an Animal Collective or Panda Bear song with more of a pop structure and more of a straightforward 1960s wall of sound coming at you.

One of the study bonuses has definitely been having more opportunity to put on headphones and listen to music. I often study without music, but it is

A crow lands opposite me and regards me coolly. I take his regard as an invitation to do a three card Tarot reading for it. A stand-in for nature at large, including myself, to the extent that I am able to escape my construct and acknowledge my intimate membership.

The TOWER (reversed)- the beings flung from the tower take to the sky, fleeing fire and weather and a crown toppling into the disappearing haze below.

The TWO of CUPS (reversed)- and so we take flight. Wings to lift and support our union. An exchange of cups with our feet up the green land. My mottled Babylonian coat tailored by stones in valley of Achor. And in this union peace. And in this union our copse of trees, solid roof above, firm earth below. We hold our cups level in trust and respect. Sister wife, mother-daughter, dear of all archetypes of the night and day. Sweetness from you lips to mine. Mine is thine Thou are thou and I am thou.

The EMPEROR (reversed)

And old man mountain, undone by thin blood, concludes, ingloriously, that arrival is conclusion. There seems to have been some sort of confusion about the point of his becoming. Concrete vault for a home, slab of street corner a one-time throne. Peat moss in a chalice, blue dome of the palace above and over all. He wobbles, wavers, then lifts his bourne water to the sky to your health, to your health, “As I begin to prophesize”—

Invest your talents, collect your coin, take your place in your place at the base of the mountain, the center of all, the heart of the source where the purest spring runs forever, never ceasing, ever feeding the ocean of all at repose in the poem of her tidal breath.

12/01/2020

Hello- it feels like its been ages. Still have not cashed in my stationary coupon, but I sure as shock still got it. and Finally at long last gotten my mail game going, so who knows. Though I suppose I have been doing more postcards of late. “Poem cards” with a few poems I’ve written recently. I’m really fond of these poems. Not because they are so ruddy well written or insightful or transcending, but more in the experience of how they came together. I think in the past when I have tried to write I have always sat down and said okay, now let’s write this thing about “X”… GO! Much like running I would start at one place and have in my mind what place I was heading towards and then I would try to muster up all the ideas and energy I had to make that linear journey come to pass. This was always a tiring, inertia plagued process. One that would often leave me with a sour feeling. And unfortunatly a sourness that would sink straight down into my being. One of these types of conversations- “you seem to be very drawn to writing and your idea of a being a person who is drawn to writing and who finds a lot of satisfaction from composition, and but yet still you don’t write all that much or when you do while there may be a few isolated moments of inspiration when the writing feels good the effort is so fragmented and scattered through space and time that it doesn’t seem like a “process” at all. It feels like stabbing at something. Taking stabs. Repeatedly. Slapping at the gunman. Running through the smoke night in Kenosha, not firing my gun, but slapping with it, getting my arm blown off.

This mid-life crisis we’ve all been surprised with this year has afforded me a bit more time than the norm to write and I have been so delighted about that. Writing for me seems to lead to more writing so to be in a flow is just wonderful. It feels like growth. It feels like living. The rest of my life stretching before me as some mad dash towards more material. Push it through the meat grinder—time to make the sausage, etcetera, etcetera, per aspera ad astra!

At any rate, hey, hello, here’s hoping your pandemic dimension has not been without some beneficial shufflings. The extra time I have had at home with the betsy and the girls has been so good. Helena, since March, has gone from a fledgling walker, to a full on runner, dancer, climber-of-three flights of stairs (though she still retains the right to be carried when she is not in the mood to climb by herself, she has developed this really affective full body flop to express that she would prefer to be carried). She is now a speaker of words. Her favorite being her self-invented “Na” which is her catch all word which boiled down generally is used to make an insistent request for “that” or “those”. Incidentally, this was also the first word that betsy and I learned when we moved to China, as the Chinese word for “that” is also “Na” (那 nà). We got a surprising long way with 那. Especially when paired up with its partner in crime “this” (zhè 这)

While Belle Belle (nickname that developed from many renditions of Helena-Bo-Bellena) has yet to develop a “this”, which at this point seems unnecessary as her pointing ability is really quite advanced and communicates quite precisely, especially paired with an emphatic “Na!”

Here other swiss army knife catch word has been “ga” which means finished or all gone. Sometimes she will even combine them, making one of her first multisyllabic annunciations sound like the name of an African nation of 30,000,000 million.

10/24/2020

What would you say if I told you I was an awestruck agnostic?

How about an eclectic symbolist?

How about an esoteric liberalist?

How about a material mentalist?

How about a fundamental pragmatic progression sampler?

I actually do not know what any of those are, so do not judge me to hard.