**BROTHERS / 兄弟**

[MOON](#MOON)

Push body to adaptation.

Push mind to adaptation.

03/24/2022

My brother evangelizes to me repeatedly in a really bullying, alienating way. Devalues my life and values, repeatedly excommunicates me. And in perpetually drawing lines flooding speech and family communication with sanctified Catholic speak. Dogma dialogue. The way people in Cults speak. It is what it is, but its not nourishing, nor does it feel very loving. You don’t want to know me. You just condemn out of hand what you do not understand. You’ve made this the interface for our relationship and its tiresome and unsatisfying and you seem to offer no exit ramp from the loop save joining your cult.

I try and offer relationship, you offer me dogma and a demand to bend my knee before you antiquated super conservative brand of Catholicism. A prerequisite for our relationship reaching a beautiful, harmonious place is for me to be an echo chamber of acceptance and support for your world view. Until I accept your worldview I will continue to be sent the message that I am failing and inauthentic and building my life in a defective, pitiable way, a miasma of my own selfishness and stubbornly satanic soul.

You come to me with dogma that oozes blanket statements of judgement and abstract context over my life. The particulars of my life evaporate, dissolve, you have boiled my existence down to its essence and have found it lacking.

The actual content of my life the text of my life is uninteresting to you. Unimportant even once you have established the status of my soul. You don’t care about these things, you just need me to agree with you that you are right and enlightened and have a super intimate relationship with God. My brother has an extremely intimate relationship with God.

I think you have some serious anxiety and performance issues that are frankly completely unrelated to your spiritual journey.

You don’t want to admit your spiraling cycle of spiritual crisis might have very little to do with your soul and way more to do with the very human trauma and emotional pain that you have experienced and inflicted over the course of your four plus decades. There is a lack of peace and confidence and security in you that either speaks to the flaccidness of your religion or your unwillingness to seek out the psychological help that you really need. Certainly not as a replacement and a stand in for your spiritual practice, but something to augment it, support it, give you a space to isolate some things to gain clarity and healing form that tangled morass of middle-aged self, family, and community life.

We all have an imblanced psyche at times, but it is not always for purely spiritual reasons. I believe this is a fallacy that our family culture has propped up, with the over reliance to spin things towards pollyannish all’s well that end’s well type conclusion. An unwillingness to look hard and focused at the facts and the reality at had. *God be praised*. *To God be the Glory.*

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

03/22/2022

Begin with abundance the Youtube Second Brain VideoCast had extorted. This guy is a doctor. He said he’s a doctor right. Muct know what he is talking about. But he said. Yes, you have to gather. There is no originatility. It is all just collected and reconfigured combinations of things. He regrets not having started at like 15 as a dedicated note taker. Capturing all of his ideas and thoughts and building out modularly shareable blogs or speeches or presentations. I extended this to my own desire to produce letters and postcards and poems and stories and songs and apps and maybe articles or at the very least distillations of my thoughts on exercise and health and work and so forth. What this guy was talking about made complete sense to me and it seemed like something that I had already been trying to do.

And I had been engaged in an intense collection period, but at what cost?

A near complete collapse of self-- how does one come back from something like that?

Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Aeolian

Here we are at the beginning of the journey. My brother gathered with me here. My body strong and capable. My mind strong and capable. My will intact and calm. Victory shall be mine.

Dear Brothers,

We have journeyed deep, but now we are making our return.

Try, try again, fail again, fail better.

There must be a clearing. We know all of the reasons that our current habits have been blocking us and we can move past them and back to a deeper intimacy with my wife and settle fully into a stable adult parenthood. Holding up my end of the parental burden-- with my full wherewithal and energy and resiliency. Not locked into some artificial stimulant and withdrawal pattern.

Alienated. Finding my place of solidity. Good weather today. Good weather on the horizon.

My process has been kind of mental and reckless and undisciplined and fragmented and manic-- I am attempting to dig myself out of a hole-- I have gone into the depth and am attempting to extricate myself-- avoid self-mythologizing, but at the same time finally allow myself to regard life with the appropriate level of seriousness.

03/18/2022

Brothers, let us write poetry and run in sandals, code our way into a new professional world, build a second brain to back the first one up with, underpin the whole affair with stretching and meditation,

Eating mostly vegetarian, not drinking so much, keeping close to home and cosy, living day by day with my loving girls.

I don’t feel separated from God. But you say I am separated from God. I am a heretic. Heretics try to keep a low profile.

When I was younger I couldn’t relate to Joyce’s whole Irish Catholic exhile position, but now it strikes me clearly and cleanly and inspires me that there are other ways to live than upon the bosom of the Patriarchy. I feel like an exhile now. I left the village for the city, to write, to seek language, work , make mistakes, have an open heart, mind, body. I want to write throughout my life. I want it to be an interface.

My family has turned me into a Faustian character. My writing project seeks to take on heave itself. I on the other hand am just trying to figure out how to settle into a fulfilling and stable middle-age that will put me on a solid trajectory familially, vocationally, and physically

03/11/2022

Hans: Just thinking about our conversation yesterday, I wanted to clarify what I meant about Marcus entering adulthood. Getting a college degree was not my point. He's always been a dreamer, like you and like me. Maybe like everyone. But he has struggled to consistently take the steps necessary to achieve his dreams. Its seems like he is on that path now and he's been consistent enough to begin tasting the fruit of his labor. To me, the path of adulthood is defined by our journey in relation to this path of a fruitful life. All I want for you and Marcus and all who I love is to eat of the fruits of a life lived well. I don't believe this life of surpassing fruitfulness can be lived without an intimate relationship with God. Who has lived such a life apart from God? I pray that you will come to know God intimately because His love is so good, and you need His love. Your wife needs His love.

 Your children, your precious children, need his love. Admittedly, I am a flawed spokesman for His love. But please don't let my shortcomings keep you away from God. May God bless your efforts my brother. May He lead you to the peace and security you are seeking for you and you beautiful family. Reach out Aaron. He is waiting to take your hand. I love you and am always here for you as best I can be whenever you might need me. Peace🙏

I know what you need right now, you need an alter call.

The existential burn when your actual needs are responded to with an alter call.

Maybe I just like being told what to do, he says, when we are discussing stretching. This resistance to my ideas and the my practices is real. He comes back with his compression gun and how it has an app that tells him how much he should us it. My point is that I have been trying to get more in touch with my ody. It’s limitations. It’s inflexibilities. I have been working to build a body that can work at a desk for a long period of time without falling completely apart-- soreness, caught in the shoulder, upper back box, hips super tight, Achilles tight, hyper extended knee, pulled Achillies, trying to stay energy free which transitioning careers and life-stages.

3/11/2022

My brother texts me this long evangelistic text.

During our conversation he kvetches about wanting to lose weight again. Aimee doesn’t want him losint weight, being hungry, told me about how Kris Dosh lost weight by learning to be hungry. He’s told me this at least two prior times.

Hans asking the VanAntwerp girls about PB -- Paul Bunyan, Peanut Butter-- we could have gotten out of it, but he couldn’t help himself from telling them.

Talks through stuff to process too much.. overlap with stuff he feels confident about. Talks out of his ass.

Coming to Chicago when I was a Freshman and sleeping with that girl he met at the club and then feeling terrible about it and then calling mne from Grove City feeling suicidal and me trying to talk him down from feeling so bad, but I couldn’t. The racist and embarrassing way that he communicated to the Chinese delivery guy, his awful speech at my wedding, his comment by the pool about the local talent-- teenagers wearing bikinis at a super 8 pool where his own kids were swimming. At the UP state fair talking about all the Granny’s that must have dies to make the selection of Catholic religious icons at the UP state far so abundant and at such good prices. He has several bags of little polatiques and icons and things with quotes and verseson them. The Virgin Mary, praying hands, An angelic looking child. Most people have enormous plastic cups of lemonade or cotton candy, my brother is decked out in his sporty dad wear looking kind of skinny and hungry carryihng his bags of religou siconography aslong the Fairway with the Gravirtorn ad the grungy looking kids and the American falg this and that t-shirts and the punky looking kids and the couples and the shadow recognition sometimes of people he had known a long time ago,b ut had not seen in a long time. He had left the context.

Calling me from the Sam’s Club parking lot-- the prices are up. Talks about Ukranian War-- gives his speech abou t just liking biking and waxing “thoughtful” about they that is and then meandering through the list of reasons why its good -- again-- something he has done with me multiple times before-- fucking again, and then texting me about how my precious family needs Gods love.

Accepting others. Protecting self. Moving forward with resolution. The past working in the present to support the future.

My extended family’s need for a cohesive narrative, ensure that things are crystal clear, sides set, lines drawn.

Self-satisfied that your ignorance is sufficient.

**3-Mar-22**

Tension, rivalry, different momentums. Burning hot, trying to break through the atmosphere.

Wind’s rising

Calm-- smoke rises vertically(0)

Light air-- smoke drifts with air

Light breeze --weather vanes moved by the win; leaves rustile

Gentle Breeze-- leaves and small twigs in constant motion; light flags extended

Moderate Breeze-- small branches sway

Fresh Breeze-- small trees sway

Strong breeze-- large branches sway; umbrellas used with diffifuly (6)

[**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.

10/20/2021

Dear Erik

How does one absorb the chaos and entropy and seering forces of change and distance and separation. Does everyone feel as alienated as I do. I can’t complete a single page letter to a friend because I don’t have confidence that my handwriting will hold up-- I don’t have confidence that I will be able to hold the thought or the tone or the style-- a stylist lives for these linguistic furnishings. How can I get to the place where my words do not seem crazed. Where my words do not demand a retreat into a million different directions. It’s like if you gathered all this material for a wild statue and you gathered it and collected it and then you realized that you lacked the wherewithal to actual pull the thing together, you are just left drowning in all of this material.

He is lost in an artistic vision-- he was pulling together all the junk and crap in his life and making a sculpture of it in his yard and he would take all of his shit-- commonplace shit and he’d make something cool with it-- he’d pull together something artistic and impressive from his mundane, garden variety depression and underachievement and dead end intellectual ramblings. He’d make something solid, concrete, which they would all be able to see. And touch and take pictures of or spit on, or whatever. He didn’t care. It would be out there. That would be it. It out there with them and that would be it. An interface-- an invitation to the community to come and enter into another mode-- curiosity, whimsy, hope, perspective settling, nourishing.

My mother with her low self-confidence but strong sense of innate rightness. This has all gotten away from me and I don’t know where I am going. And all the echoes I receive back are unpromising and unencouraging.

Don’t send people unsolicited art.

I am getting there.

I need to be patient.

I think it is fair to say that this whole process has kind of tweak me a little bit-- I have been falling and falling and falling and at last I feel like I have the ground settling under me a bit. I am pushing into the upper intermediate stage where the content begins to get more interesting and the gooeyness of your foundation begins to solidify and support your further learning. A lot of the arbitrary mechanism of programming are beginning to line up and make sense. The language, the platform, the operating system, the file system, the database, the data modeling, the routing, the testing, the development through testing, using testing as documentation to make your code more understandable and maintainable. A principled design approach to identifying appropriate and highly maintainable information solutions.

**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**

**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.

12/13/2021

Priest -- the inquisitor -- dog faced and serious beside a candle at the moment of the first confession.

Jewels -- polishing my jewel -- mindlessness -- I want out of my mind.

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.

10/20/2021

I have not been able to find my sober stride-- but this is my chance-- I think breaking from the cycle of THC, caffeine, and alcohol would be a nourishing and worthwhile experience. Finding new ways to settle in with my family, loving them more intentionally, programming for them more proactively,

Dear Erik,

What a year. I am writing a novel. I am learning to program. I am trying to fight for my sobriety and health. I am trying to overcome my alienation with literally everyone on the face of the planet. I am in the midst of a mad dash to rewire my brain to make me both more employable, but also a better husband and father. The unboundedness of this mission, the stacks, the dwindling resources, the exacerbated tensions. Free time-- there is no such thing as free time. We pay for it all. Some of it we have purchased on credit and we have to work our asses to get that debt paid off. Some of us are so fucking afraid of that ledger that we just sell all of our time to our nest egg, with the hopes that later on we will cash in on all that deferred time. We lent that time out to work so that we would have more of it later-- not free, but value added. How do we value add our time?

My body has revolted at times-- the physical stasis required for my stationary pursuits has brutalized me at times.

Alienated from my parents for political reasons and religious reasons and geographical reasons and staffing issues.

Betsy battling back pain, depression, an unwanted pregnancy, an unwanted abortion, alienated from parents…

**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

06/03/2021

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

[Theology of the body](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology_of_the_Body)

11/10/21 => Bit your tongue and shut your mouth-- back tracking, he was kidding, it is his sense of humor when he is called out on it a year later. I called "Fucking Abuse" and you said it is a case of your sense of humor coming out differently than it seems in your head. What is that process of thinking of something and then processing it and then deciding to say it-- sharing one's heart? What is the heart? Instinct? Conviction? Impulse? Inspiration? Intuition?

11/07/2021

I try to call him out on his sanctimoniousness, and he acts like he has no idea what I am talking about. AN dI believe that he does not because he is in sanctimonious mode and receives the csriticism woodenly, strategically so, you can see him thinking through it. I suppose kind of reflecting on it, but not really.

11/05/2021

Mawkishly disappointed that Marcus isn’t doing it “the right way”

They have worked very hard-- their hard work and sacrifice and suffering somehow bolsters their sense of rightness. It has to or else it is a fucking waste.

**8/21/2021**

Back from the trip.

Hans is such an ass. How can I get over this and accept him when his home WAY is just something that I want to avoid.

His snide jokes— harvest of Catholic religious iconography from elderly victims of Covid. He’s all jazzed because he got a bunch of icons on a big sale. I mean usually like the cheapest painting thing you can find is like $35. I got all of this for $38. He shows me the virgin of Guadalupe. And some Mary imagery. And he had just come from visiting the Grotto on the campus of Notre Dame. Just amazing. Just incredible. And the food was so good. We just had such a great time.

That combination of oscillating from SANCTIMONIOUSNESS to OFFENSIVE BOMBAST .

I don’t care.

Loved being with you guys.

What is this tracking that I am doing— what am I trying to understand. How can I have a relationship with my brother and keep it from being both dismissive as well as confrontational. He says so many things that just make me feel tired. The closer people are, the more comfortable, the more likely he is to say something inappropriate. This is natural, but his scope of who he feels empowered to say inappropriate things to is pretty broad. He says things assuming a certain shared knowing or perspective or shared sense of humor, sort of attempting to force the moment to its crisis. Insensitively abstracting things. Making light of really serious things. These declarations are caustic and callous and express a sort of trans-pessimism. A freedom from the horror of what the jokes humor is implying. I didn’t mean it. It was just a joke. I didn’t mean to imply that it was funny that so many elderly people have succumb to Covid and that there is thus a glut of used Catholic iconography to sell at a big discount at the UP State fair, so that you can spend $38 dollars for a few bags full of meditations knickknacks and Virgin Mary iconography. We stand in the sun watching Papa and the girls go round on the big Ferris wheel and betsy and Esme approaching the front of the line for the Ski- run (Artic Runner). The Virgin of Guadalupe. Like G who our medical doctor mother has already declared will be slow but that that was God’s plan all along and so it is really special. Just like Beth’s lost kidney, the twins she lost in the 35th week of pregnancy, Mariel’s terrible vision and dyslexia, Gianna’s hearing lose, Adam’s bad back, etc, etc, two year old G who is largely non-verbal looks around with he stunned, but kindly wide set eyes. Breathily repeating creatin things. Saying Ya—asking for her Ya, ya. Madeline was also a really slow talker. Just saying “Ma” over and over again.

**6/14/2021**

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 all just to say, I hope you both are well and that your kids are well and that everyone is keeping the sociopathy to a loving minimum.

Best,

**5/24/2021**

The omelette what is it about the omelette. The instensity. The unnecessarily elevated words. The woodenness. Done in a sense of play? Insecurity? Exactness? Revealing of your anal exactness. The detpth of your practice. How fulfilling you find this omelette-- this best omelette with the white pepper, the chives, the onion gives it something different.

Did you do something different with the Quinua salad he keeps asking and he asking during dinner. We had to feed out questions about their house and he seemed stressed and like he had been living on a ship for the last few years. Hopefully the bedrooms were super cozy. People put up with very many different inconveniences. There are no good restaurants around sometimes implies that there just aren’t enough people around like me who would appreciate good restuarants, or something about this place is not evolved or developed as the place that I came from. How do we talk about things without unintentionally poo-pooing them, shitting o

That omel;ette is very good. Everyone loves the omelettte and he can make it over and over again the same way. Bnaging the pan and making a racket. Melting the butter all over the top. The omelette is good, but it gets a little too much attention. It is served as part of a pretty dire dining experience. People not really eating togethering. People just consuming calories. Butter and egg. Richness. Custardy, at the table with the walls closing in all around.

**5/21/2021**

People believe a lot of different things. People have very personal experiences of God and religion. How can you mandate how someone experiences God. This idea that you know so much better about how to experience God is truly an inhumane (though very human sentiment).

That sense of superiority. We’re not like them. Mom and Dad will pay for it. I deserve this…

**05/20/2021**

Your awkward use of language baffles me— weirdly causal and jokey about really important things and really sanctimonious and serious about others.

Beard oil.

That’s the kind of story you only tell your wife, buddy.

Ave Maria University.

Connected with the bartender.

Later— man, that guys parents must be really disappointed with him. He’s got a law degree and his running a bar. Give me a break.

My brother was always saying these cruel things about people behind their back. I remember being at his wedding and having his groomsmen bitch about him and what an ass he was. This was after one of the groomsmen have gotten divorced and just a few years before the other one did. They were both kind of assholes, which I had always kind of gotten the sense of, but had tolerated because I was younger than them and perhaps deserved some stern patronizing for all the important things I still had yet to learn which they had learned years ago and were now so bored with the information that they could hardly be bothered to go into it… but it they must… eye roll, head eye, minor seizure trying to access the deeply recessed esoteric fucking knowledge which has incrementally built up in their grey matter like feces impacted into the block colon.

**05/17/2021**

You and Madine were just here. Seriously good to see. You. I am glad it worked out to use us as a stop over. You an Aimee will need to come back. Get some couple time. Impossible. Betsy and I are pretty disconnected. Have you ever despaired about your career every day of your life. Trying to cope by working. By grounding myself. By changing and evolving. By becoming myself. By settling into myself. By no longer feeling so fucking conflicted about everything.

You an Aimee have so much on your plates have some sort of saintly wherewithal about you to keep your troop a running.

You want to become a deacon in the church. You want to discuss the lion’s front office and slowly, slowly become a competent cook.

So, yeah, I got real judgemental about carbs and given that I was not expending as much energy as I was previously, work on consuming fewer calories, especially empty calories which are often carbs. Candy, sweets, chips, corn chips especially, I love them so, but I was not longer commuting like French Voyager. My eat all, drink all, hustle off all excess calories was ultimately a stress coping mindset that was getting the job down, but running me at about 30 pounds overweight. This is a little frightening, considered even at 30 pounds overweight I was considered slim and fit.

I like the feel of my trimmer form, my slimmer physique. Its strange how a body changes over a life time. It has been nice to be in my 40s and have a positive change occur. I think what has been key to this is the stretching and really working my stress and tension and frustration conscientiously out of my muscles and common stress holding locations. The drill has been to follow the tension, follow the tightness: extend, contract, find connections and ways to resist and build tension. Staying within yourself. Focusing on the subtle body. Finding lines of engagement throughout your body. In your upraised wrist and forearm, down through your shoulder and upper back and along your hip and down your femur and through your ankle into your heel where you feel yourself planted and pushing up as your simultaneously feel your hand on your upraised wrist curl its fingers in and stretch the forearm with a twisting grip, the burn connects through the body to all of the parts you have been following and so you follow them again up and down the chain, holding what you can hold, releasing what you can release. Thinking about extending and contracting. Flexibility being strength and balance being strength. Being patient. Making the time. Greeting the morning. Having a defacto activity. What should I be doing right now? Par-core of stretching. On the porch. With a rope. In the tub. In door frames. On a chair. On the couch. Getting leg up on all manner of things. Railings. Dressers. Mantels. Finding baseline strength with planking and pushups only encourages more planking and pushups. Being more mindful about not overdoing it. Different mindset. Not about quantity, but frequency and comfort. My calisthenics have become much more stretching focus. Less about achieving some arbitrary quota of reps and more about getting into to certain positions with a certain degree of frequency. The idea being that strength follows flexibility and balance. And flexibility and balance amplify strength. Strength and performance have dominated my thinking about athletics for way too long. I’m over that conversation and much more focused on flexible and intuitive body maintenance, health and nourishment, and promoting these things in our culture— nuclear family, extended family, neighbors, etc.

I tried to show you something of my stretching and you didn’t ask a goddamn single follow up question. It’s like if uncle Paul had come to visit. We are all so stuck the fuck in our heads. Our worlds. Stuck in our worlds. Stuck in our fucking worlds. The artist does not need any other world. The artist must learn to pretend to care about other people’s worlds. These types. My family loves fucking types. Categorize. Analyze. Natural ability. Lots of talking. What does it all matter. I had very little support with basketball. I just went out and fucking did it.

Is it healthy that Madine seems to want to be out of the house constantly. And now Ceci is rebellious and in her moods. She is into appearances. Hair products and skin are products.

He father stirs the eggs over a low heat and is weirdly tetchy and argumentative to the facts that I state. Oh, yeah, you have to get this pan fairly hot. Well, this kind of omlette can’t get too hot. Oaky, why the aggressive tone. Is this guy fucking wound up like a top?

He analyzes my pan concedes that it has a couple of inches on his. He asks if wee have chives and white pepper. He’s not good at multi-tasking. His kids love it. He loves that is cheeseball little 4-year-old asks for white pepper. I am uncomfortable about how self-conscious he is about this whole thing.

“Children learn to see the world through the eyes of their caregivers,” Lis warns. “If parents are putting themselves down or are fearful or distrustful of others, they are likely to pass down these traits to their children.”

And you talk up how anxious you get before the races and you talk about it multiple times. And you ramble on about it. And I realize it is an emotional bowel movement and I am being asked to wipe your ass and I am forced to decide if I am up to the ask of wiping your ass or not. Should I just do and then ask you to wipe my ass too? Is that how this works.

I don’t trust you politics, your religion, your parenting style, your diet, you family digital culture, possession culture, consumption culture.

You spent a while breaking down the body types of your kids deciding who had more natural ability and what kind. And then emphasizing that they are all very unskilled. Very raw. Their athleticism is seemingly not being supported by the parents. Direct engagement. Camps. A hoop at home. A paved area to dribble etc. It feels like date puts a helluva lot of time and energy into his sport and developing his talents— “learning new skills”… that accomplish exactly what for your family? Burnish your self-esteem a little bit? What is your intention here? You are excited about this and need to share it with someone. The rock garden. You told me about the rock garden like three times. And the odd cat that taught you about it and what a gift it was for him to have the chance to share his gift with you. This was the real gift of this whole thing.

As he visibly struggles to maintain his conviction that this whole trip was worth it. He is so tired. He has hours to drive home. Back to the kids. The grind of meals and cleaning and laundry and screens and activities. He doesn’t know if one of his daughters is in choir. I know it is hard, but if it is important, if it is your responsibility you make yourself an expert at it. And if you have to sacrifice your preoccupation with Detroit sports and your obsession with your training and race results then there you go, there is a concrete sacrifice that you could make to free up time and wherewithal to be there mentally and emotionally and physically for your kids. You are the constant gardener.

I have abdicated a fair amount of this to betsy and I need to recalibrate. Many of my reasons for doing less of these things has to do with work responsibilities and the necessary time and energy I cordoned off to finally and definitely answer my vocational conundrum. The affects of not having this question definitely answered are corrosive. Especially in our capitalist society where so much identity one’s adult identity and role in society are all expected to be tied up in your career and the resources that you have at your disposal. Money in the abstract does not appeal to me, but money in the sense that it gives you access to any and all resources and offers you protection, support, and peace of mind, abstracting a lot of the pressures and tensions in life. The money will provide a dike from deeper despair. This is obviously not always true, despair can always sneak through, it is a very complicated and contingent creature.

Many of these issues are unsolvable. Much of what we achieve is in the tone that we set and the love tone we emanate. What do we leave in our wakes. What vide to we put off. If a couple of chords can change a room around then what do you do to a room. What are the unconscious seeds of your legacy. What might they be. What d you hoe that they are? What do you hope that they are not?

How’s the stretching going.

We are tense beings humans, in general, Whitmer’s perhaps moreso.

In my effort to conserve enery, lower calorie intact and cut down o the amount of time I spend on exercise (getting ready, warm-up, work-out, cool-down, showering), the periodic stretch sessions that I do throughout the day that have some light (resistance more than repition) strength training components.

I am feeling more limber than ever.

I think a lot of my stress release from not building back up can be attributed to my general hopeful outlook on things—

Despite ll the turmoil, I am home with the girls and we are set, all things being equal to comfortably tick along another 6 months without income. But the ticking continues….

I have been wearing my speed master most days recently. It seems a little silly to be sporting around the most expensive thing I own, but the symbolism has been earned I think and after looking at the scree all day it is kind of nice to look doen at the Matte analog display of my Speedmaster. And isn’t that the same view the Astronaughts had out on their space walks when they checked the time on their Speedmasters when they were floating above the earth? I also, actually use the chronograph function to time little “focus” bursts (as in, okay, 15 more minutes on this and then move on to something else, this is a means I often use to redouble my efforts when I feel my concentration is slipping. I often find that the 15 minutes turns into a bit more, something about giving myself a split goal or a tangible goal, objective, parameter to hold onto in that moment when I am floundering around is super helpful.)

I have no %$#@ing idea what is happening….I want to throw the computer out the window. Trying to become a littler bit more Zen about the shit you don’t know seems to be a big part of this gig. Your forced into this brutal feedback loop of grasping for what you do understand and starting to trace the connections back from there. I think this is ultimately where my experience with Chinese study comes into play— still to this day when I read Chinese, I have to read creatively, focusing on what I do know, sometimes in a sea of unknowns, or only hazily grasped tangibles, much less connotations. Knowledge is a strange thing and the way we know things. I have learned to know things many different ways. By sight. By sounds. By impression. Faith is a whole other sense of knowing. The doctrine of faith being a gift

The doctrine that faith is a gift is something that I shall put faith in. I have had a hard time in the past with feeling guilty about losing my faith and the chasm that that creates between my family and I. What the @#$% did I do? But if I am to truly accept the faith that your God is offering, then I too am subject to the … oh my god… I am so tired of talking about God within the context of why I don’t believe in your very specific God and set of traditions that I only hve a tenuous connection to. I am fine with this exhile. I have been searching for a more solid ground since leaving your plain and I have attempted crudely to moved about without ever really planting down a flag. Which was really only a hypothetical solution and one that entailed me just playing dumb a lot of the time. We are tense people and I feel like you make me more tense than less tense and thatn is too bad. I hope we can move past that someday, but for now that is the reality. And I want ot forgive you Dad and I have forgiven you Dad but still there is this distance and I don’t have to curse it. I rode the train out to the dam and sat their awhile and listen to the locusts scream in the late summer mug.

Hot personalities.

Nothing is decided.

Perparing to die to preparte to live.

Don’t want to be a prescriptive writer.

I desire to be an experiential writer.

Or that is a least one thesis I have put forward.

I don’t know exactly what I am doing, but I am working hard at it

John Henry as metaphor for my attempt to work.

Coding, writing, Chinese, family, body, middle-age, Manopause.

And that feels right. I am finding a way to work that works. I have worked in other ways and at times well in the other ways, but the overall arch of the effort was a bit tweaked. Something about this blast through mentality. This John Henry mania. I will show them, I will push through all this darkness to the light. I was trying to take the hard effort, head down hack through the mountain approach. John Henry makes it, but then he dies on the other side. His strength literally killed him, his capacity for effort doomed him to an early grave. You never hear much about John Henry’s kin in this scenario. Where were they? What of his widow? His children?

Here I am out in the desert.

It feels like the conversation has been completely tweaked. It seems all questions have a trigger in them. A trap door standing by. This divisive politics is apparently affective.

Hans,

Pistons

Midwest

We shall not go hungry.

Talk therapy- I can go Monday or Friday of next week.

You called me and went on and on about the Lions organization. I don’t care. I really don’t care. I think we find ourselves at very different places in our lives and very different people. I can appreciate you. I can love you. But we can stay distant. I am fine with that. I don’t think either of us really have enough time to put much into the relationship.

03/22/2021

My apologies for my part in the chasm that has crept in between us.

Sufficiently all fraught up in our own lives we lived past one another with ease.

Do dream of a better, more family friendly yearly schedule. My technological deep dive has been 100% motivated by reconfiguring my professional life.

It hasn’t been easy. Concurrently I have also experienced an unprecedented creative impulse to write. This writing explosion has evolved into a process that has spawned a bunch of poems, personal, letters and an elaborate warren of forking material depositories. I may not in fact be writing at all, but rather simply following some sort of nascent rodential instinct to brace up for an impending psychic winter of something.

At any rate the writing keeps surprising me. If you are reading this right now that is a solid sign that there is some flow. I don’t presume to have any idea what I am doing on the writing front, but I am trying my best to manage it and I am very grateful to at long last have a few personal letters to send out. Over the last several years it has been a goal of mine to write more personal letters, but the process always seemed kind of overwhelming, beyond me or any wherewithal I might have at any given moment. Somehow this new process has given me some ends around all of that inertia. Also, perhaps not the most efficient process, but I suppose that is part of the point as well. A letter is very different than a tweet and I think that is a good thing. And while there is certainly room for both—the letter and the tweet—is there time for both? The tweet certainly… easy, no problem, just slip one in here and one there. Easy. A letter though… the planning… maybe a little brainstorming… some calisthenics to … all of the procrastination that can go in…should I write it out by hand… should I type it. I could get the typewriter out…

Today I read up on RESTful APIs feeling stone over stone the mysteries of web-mastery realms. It is all very nerdy and I love it—truly. It engages my interest in language and structure and workflow design.

My weight has settled right around 190 lbs. Stretching and light calisthenics have really supplanted jogging as my baselines health maintenance practice. The stretching has really complemented my long hours of sitting or standing and a reduced carbohydrate diet is helping to reduce some of the excess flesh from my bones.

Stretching is a challenging practice, but one that found me at just the right time and has been in large part why this year has been so transformational.

Candida Monologue???

Commodity Monologue???

I have wanted to have longer thoughts.

I’ve been having more frequent long thoughts.

Letter writing has become a practice. A form a repetivie connection and reconnection. Ironically I have not sent any of the letters. , not because the content is overly confessional or I am afraid to send the text, but simply because there is no urgency. Time has collapsed. My sense of forward positions has ceased . There is only this process. This process holds together time. Contains time. Movement in time the illusion of remaining still.

WRITING IN 8:08

Losing myself in labriyths of ancient character based language and 21st century Japanese produced computer language. While simultaneously experiencing an explosion of creativity and connectivity with my body through ygoa and writing thanks to my new agile structure and process.

02/05/2021

Being at peace with music and feeling grateful for it. Peace that passeth understanding. Florida. Seeing Jurassic Park in the theater that too loud and too cold, and then fist fighting with my brother at the water park where our parents had trustingly dropped us off, he is egging me on and turning everything into some sort of embittered competition, he punishes me for his insecurity. I can’t stand his sneariness and am bewildered that he can be such an asshole even when we are supposed to be having such a fun time at a waterpark in Florida. Hans buys a multipack of *Spawn Comics* and I read them in the back of the van heading north feeling pretty stomach-

churning sick at certain parts. Swimming with the alligators. The pontoon driving tour guide whacking the side of the boat in a rehearsed gag that made all the tourists jump cause they thought a huge snake had just dropped onto the boat. Playing *King’s Quest* with my Grandmother. Eating shrimp fried in butter. Watching the Suns and the Bulls battle in the NBA finals out on the sun porch on their color TV.

10/23/2020

My brother is depressed. How can I help him?

Man is the sum total of some irreconcilable tension.

1/11/2021

My brother is so embedded in conservatism because he was never able to make the leap from the family fold. He clings to the conservative truth because he was too afraid to reach out beyond it. He ran home to Imammy and Daddy when the balancing act of finding a vocation on his own became too overwhelming. He sought financial and ideological support from a partner with the same level of commitment to his conservative vision of life, one very much patterned after his own parents. This seems to speak to a lack of creativity, a journeying on the path of least resistance. The fact that this desperate commitment is underpinned by a pious absolute rightness makes it a complicated position to approach. This act of desperation becomes lore as the embrace of right. The ultimate achievement. The ultimate success. The zero-sum win. Tired of not winning we reframed the issue as one in which we could not lose.

Please don’t waste my time with discussing the Lion’s organization. Who fucking cares? You are losing your goddamned mind. You are doing what you can do and I am doing what I can do. We need to stay kind. We need to stay positive. We are leading. We are teaching by example. We have committed to certain things and we have relinquished commitment to other things.

Perhaps we will find some aspect of closeness, but when? I was rather happy when You went off to college. My freshman year you were the one having the nervous breakdown and feeling suicidal, you were a senior

I am over caffeinated. Esme is shoving a super tangled metal slinky towards me- some kind of a metaphor there. Helena is knocking around my empty tea mug. Esme is saying, dad, dad, dad, wait, one second, dad, look, Helena is saying Daddy, Daddy and banging the tea wand against the metal thermos with a scraping metal on metal rap. I am over-caffienated and should break for lunch. I have spent the whole morning in writing mode trying to move towards my programming mind. Sometimes it is right there and I can just jump right in. Sometimes it is very far away and I have to spend the whole morning wandering back towards it. My simple conviction and simple commitment keep me from freaking the fuck out.

The quality and quantity of my wandering shall define my career.

My girls are good. My body is good. My mind feels good. We still have a least a six month reserve.

Time sometimes moves slowly and sometimes it suddenly begins to accelerate. I can feel something accelerating. Something approaching from far off. The SUBTLE mind is what I would like to understand more deeply. Just as my SUBTLE BODY seems to be more in reach. I want to find that SUBTLE mind. That stretching that leads to the pops and associates and connections. Finding that connection between all the parts of the brain. That’s interesting actually. Read Pete Egoscue as talking about the mind instead of the body.

Pursue personal music.

1/14/2021

Is the issue at hand you should feel bad because you don’t know what you would have done career wise without Aimee, or is the narrative that you have an incredible partner that answered that question for the both of you freeing you up tp answering a whole bunch of other questions and meet a bunch of other needs. Is it ideal. No it literally never is. Is it a disaster . No way. Iis it better than average absolutely. Is it the best possible child rearing situation ever in the history of mankind. That is a myth, but certainly a standard we can’t help bu adopt as a suicidal opponent. We set ourselves up for failure.

What is the question? Is it even a question? What is the issue. It is really all about how we frame the issues. This issue is the most important. No this one is. No this one is not in practice, but ideologically and so forth down the rabbit holes of our logical fallacies.

Becoming a writer is the hardest thing I have ever done. It has transformed me as a being. My body, my mind, my habits, my health- mental and physical.

11/18/2020

Shut your mouth, belly up, too much love, depressed? Buy something new. Shadows and light return to cycle through.

1/22/2021

When did you become such a fucking meathead? Your new home gym, intense cycling, fawning following of American football and sports talk radio and right wing politics. The government is not right wing enough for you though. Your heretofore political party is not right wing enough for you.

Religion is ultimately a PRACTICE catalyzed by faith.

What is religion to you? What is prayer to you? What happens after death to the vast majority of human beings who live and then die and never enter into the Catholic church?

If the election was a fraud, then where is the evidence. Why was every legal challenge so transparently insubstantial? Why did Donald Trump hold as rally on the 6th of January and then send the mob towards the capital? Why was he not immediately contrite and why did he condone the attack by telling the attackers that he loved them and that they were very special? Why did he say that the Corona Virus was just like the flu and that it would go away like a miracle? What does it mean that we are a nation of miracles. And if a black fly lands on a white head of hair on national television is it hilarious or kind of unsettling. How often do you listen to Rush Limbaugh? Do you think he is a kind and good hearted man? Do you think the way he talks about politics is constructive? What do you see as the role of the opposition party in politics? What is your definition of slander? What is the bible verse about bearing false witness.

Images of home gym.

Fat wife lifting weights in the basement with the low roof.

Cat’s litter box stinking to high heaven.

House going to shit.  
Dad off on some roid induced.

You are such a fucking meathead!

All man pain and animal achievement.

2/5/2021

Are you really an introvert or is that just your excuse to be lazy.

AM I judging you to make myself feel better.

I know you are just rying to hold it all together.

It can’t be easy.

Celebrate your family.

Iciclies are a symptom of heat lose.

That’s good that Madine is talking to people. Ideas are important and being able to talk about ideas is very important. As is being kind.

02/11/2021

“Washington Monument By Night”

* Carl Sandburg

1.

The stone goes straight.

A lean swimmer into night sky

Into half-moon mist

2.

Two trees are coal black.

This is a great white ghost between

It is cool to look at.

String men, strong women come here.

3.

Eight years is a long time

to be fighting all the time.

4.

The republic is a dream.

Nothing happens unless first a dream.

5.

The wind bit hard at Valley Forge one Christmas

Soldiers tied rags on their feet

Red footprints wrote on the snow…

… and stone shoots into stars here

… into half-moon mist tonight.

6.

Tongues wrangled dark at a man.

He buttoned his overcoat and stood alone.

In a snowstorm, red hollyberries, thoughts,

he stood alone.

Spirt of my silence I can hear you,

But I’m afraid to be near you.

And I don’t know where to begin.

And I don’t know where to begin.

Somewhere in the desert there’s a foreest,

And an acre before us

But I don’t know where to begin

But I don’t know where to begin.

Again I lost my strength completely,

Oh, be near me tired old mare

With the wind in her hair.

Amethyst and flowers on the table,

Is it real or a fable?

Well I suppose a friend is a friend

And we all know how this will end

Chimney swift that find me be my keeper,

Silhouette of the cedar

What is that song you sing for the dead?

What is that song you sing for the dead?

I see the signal searchlight strike me,

In the window of my room.

Well, I got nothing to prove.

Well. I got nothing to prove.

I forgive you mother, I can hear you

And I long to be near you

But every road leads to an end,

Yes, every road leads to an end

Your apparition passes through me,

In the willows and five red hens.

You’ll never see us again.

You’ll never see us again.

01/23/2021

Why are you such a sanctimonious meathead?

01/22/2021

The lies of Trump.

The lies of Lance Armstrong.

12/26/2020

If you were a farmer in a kinder garden

I’d compliment on your crops growing so strong.

12/17/2020

Throws a bean bag on the roof of the house in frustration when he gets smoked in cornhole by only more athletically gifted in-laws. In the fall tells me that the political diide between us and why we cdan’t talk about it is because we love each other so much. He cares about me too much. Which is why he told me to “bite my tongue and suck it up and a call to respect my mother followed by an implication that I did not appreciate the depths of her sacrifices and love for me.” Much like the January 6th attack on the Capitol building, this moment stands out to me as afn objectively lunatic moment in our family’s religious-political dynamic. On a feed that has already seen my sister’s Cambridge educated sister-in-law chased off for my family’s atrocious and insensitive reaction to the George Floyd killing and Black Lives Matter. Frachescka left with a pleasant promise to donate 5 lbs. in all of our names to BLM.

They flash forward a few months and my mother is calling for prayer for poor sick Right-to-life warrior and secular saint Rush Limbaugh. And then in the run up to the Vice-Presidential debate she posts a rambling diatribe on the diabolical nature of KH and how she represents the worst kind of darkness. My blood is boiling. I take a few breaths and simply request that we stick with the agreed upon “politics free zone idea” and the story is that I am so grateful for it! The family feed can’t turn into Fox News, which it has now with Tucker Carlson posts and “A lot of questions, not a lot of answers” sorts of tag lines. And Dad getting in an enthusiastic “Thank God for Great Americans like Tucker Carlson!”. The guard rails are off. I can’t say anything without picking a fight. I am the self-excluded. I have been trying to protect my IN and my OUT processes and paths and purposes. Your Tucker Carlso seems angry and sad. Is your Christ angry and sad.

I refuse to be your liberal whipping boy.

I choose not to be your liberal whipping boy.

I am a peace with my values, I am at peace with my path.

Your partnership and relationship and friendship and bond with Aimee is incredible. I marvel at you guys. I truly do. Two children have deeply split my psyche a couple of ways already, I cannot imagine the daily executive matrixes you two have to loop through. Hats off, my friend, hats off.

Or perhaps I am not deep enough, my liberal view too narrow.

Why do you seem so angry and insecure and threatened?

Are you enlightened? What does that mean for you’re your insight into the world as compared to someone like, say, me?

The way you politic is mean and unkind.

12/14/2020

Supported herself through PA school, built professional, high demand skillset career, has made 7 c-sections, works full time, willing to take on overtime and extra responsibilities to be a team player and build credibility of a leadership position by pitching in and learning the “business” thoroughly. But you’re having a hard time. You almost wanted to talk about it, but then you didn’t. You are her sidekick right? Or whatever arrangement the two of you have worked out.

Loving brother? Selling my toys. Making me “buy stock” in his gaming system. Nintendo’s flung at my head, basketballs flung at my head, Risk Boards flipped.

You were often such an asshole to me—making me cry and then covering up my mouth so that mom and dad wouldn’t hear, which would only freak me out more because I wouldn’t be able to breath between the crying and the hand smothering my airway. I do thank you for two wonderful lessons though provided to me by the shitty example that you set.

1. Sexual purity—however you want to frame this, but your enthusiasm for getting embroiled in sexual charged escapades. This was something that seem to really get going after college with you hooking up with younger girls. Connecting with them as a youth group leader, as a spiritual adviser, like those creepy well-groomed guys in college that would have girls up to their dorm rooms to pray. You creepy example really grossed me out and only deepened my guilt and discomfort towards sex. Certainly it remained a fascination and goal, but the whole conquest game that you seemed to get off on struck me as kind of sociopathic and pathetic. Why would you waste time going after a girl that you really weren’t interested in? I just couldn’t do it. That inauthenticity felt terrible, even if it got my lips kissed or my dick rubbed or whatever.
2. Money—you profligate spending and credit card blowing up ways convinced me that there must be a better way, like living within your budget and getting good at saving money and building up a reserve. Being more conservative about money was very helpful to me. Thank you.

And so did you convert to Catholicism to try and save face somehow. Seek a new flavor of redemption, one that you can throw your whole self into, catalyzed by a particular whole-hearted zeal by your acute failure and mental breakdown in Chicago. Mother’s path into medicine seemed to ride the rocket fuel of her shame at being a team mom, her doctorate was her redemption. Her committed, enduring marriage was her redemption, her 5 other kids and 19 grandchildren were her redemption. Her blessings have followed with force.

And Hans followed his father’s footsteps into becoming a Hausmann. Accepting the Hausman precepts as part of the gig:

1. Be handsome
2. Stay in great shape
3. Be up for taking care of as many children as your wife is willing to have
4. Be able to fix anything around the house
5. Be thrifty, good saver, good accountant

12/13/2020

Dear brother, I don’t feel like I did a good job listening to you. We were at a real moment. You were trying to say something. I ran over what you were saying with my own rationalization of the issue without really knowing what the issue was. I didn’t give you the proper environment to share you struggle or uncertainty or whatever you were wrestling with.

How much time do you spend a week reading about and watching sports or reading about and watching political coverage?

12/02/2020

I should have loved you more.

You narrow liberal world view.

Ignorance.

Self-exclusion

Selfishness.

Only care about my own children and only in as much as they represent an extension of myself.

I was at an incredibly low, stressed, beaten down, vulnerable, protean, addicted, unhealthy stressed, imploding states… and then to be told to “Bit my lip and suck it up and implying that I do not respect my mother or appreciate her.”

You guys made these rules and then you walk all over them and claim victim or go on the war path if anyone applies the rules in a way that you find inconvenient.

Politics goes from a basic difference in opinion to nastiness and derision very quickly in our family it feels like.

White man’s burden… I feel like you still kind of believe in the white man’s burden.

You seemed just completely bowled over by the fact that this Chinese man, who had had such a radically different set of lived experiences, could have such a different world view from you.

I feel like you kind of think you have it all figured out, even though you know you do not. Or you have some obligation to make up for all that you do not know with an aggressive conviction and absolute certainty about the things that you know or think you know. Which is a normal human defense mechanism I suppose, but it is still pretty annoying. Where is the balance. I am not saying going around feeling bad about all the things you do not know, or feeling like you can never speak to anything you don’t have a full grasp on… but your desperate attempt to move from certainty and speak with authority hamstring you from engaging in actual nourishing communication. You are regurgitating facts without only a tenuous awareness of your surroundings and the social and family dynamics. You disappoint me. You are cheesy and corny and too often your jokes are uneasy, perhaps too easy of a joke, obvious, but ultimately kind of meaningless, a distancing sort of humor, a are we laughing about the same thing here, for the same reason…

11/24/2020

Hans prays and he goes into that husky, super earnest Christian youth leader prayer voice that I have always found so fake, so false, so performative. Why so much performance at the moment when your being is the most raw. Addressing being itself. Address existence itself. There is nothing beyond God. The otherness of God is very strange to me…

Creepy ass, arrested development youth pastors. You know, God just sort of closed every other door except seminary. This was on you’re the back porch of your cabin with one of your dad’s seminary students. 20 years later I am still thinking about this woman and that delicate moment, that flex point where path can be both an admission of failure and a releasing of other paths while at the same time being a triumphant choice. Is triumphalism always and only just marketing?

2-20-2009

Dear Hans,

Can you feel it where you are?  Spring is coming in here. The land is shifting around.  Maybe not a permanent thaw yet, but the sun shines down.  It melts all the snow from three consecutive snowy mornings.  The new sun speaks to future times just as the snow woke me in the morning to the past.

I woke and looked out my window at the streets and the cars covered with snow. The big school uard beyond our apartment compound was covered too.  People moved through the snow at street level.  Beijing people all bundled up.

The sight sent my mind to snow country.  Snow country in my mind is Newberry.   Frozen in time, in photos and reamed memories that are what I return to when I return there in my mind.

The streets covered in snow in Beijing make me think of old photographs with rounded corners.  People in snow suits and hats with colored stripes and chimney smokes and kicking my boots off in wood shed entry way just off the laundry room at Grandmas.

It seems strange to have thirty lived years behind us.  Strange to have the old chapters of our lives be the stuff or photographs.

Nostalgia fell with the snow and I woke to find the whole world covered.

My birthday came and went and the new year turned over in transit from where I live now in China to where I lived before.  We boarded a train from Beijing in the evening- betsy, Becca Smith and Susan Golland- and traveled through the night.  We slept on bunks stacked three high as the train clicked station to station through the Chinese country side where lights are few.

In the morning we arrived in Xi’an.  The winter greyness of that city which threads itself through all of my lonesome winter memories of that place remains.  We stayed two days.  The sun never appeared.  Every hour was the same.  Noon was as animated as nine and three. After five it was dark.

We went up on the city wall at dusk.  Figures made of cloth stretched over wire frames glowing with lights inside of them were set up in scenes on the top of the south wall and around the south gate- decorations for the Chinese New Year.  There were scenes from Chinese fairy tales and Chinese history and there were dinosaurs and camels and an alien rock band and giant cartoonish insects.  The lights came on as the light in the perma-grey sky faded.  The power switched on and some of the illuminated figures which were automatons began to shift in sad semblances of real, animated motion.

And you came to Chicago from Michigan to watch the Pistons and the Bulls with me at the United Center. And the black athletes put on a show. And then we got a burger and had a beer at that place in Wicker Park you touched that black girl’s afro without her consent when you were waiting for the bathroom. And when she was offended you were like What? What?

I want a beer your annoying son yell on the bus, your annoying son yelled for a beer.

Uncle Billy bragging at the bank to Potter.

Accidently leaving his deposit in the news paper with the favorable headline about the Baileys. Potters inscrutable obfuscation. He has the money. He knows where the money is, but to press his advantage he calls in the bank examiner. George ultimately has the trust and love of his wife and his family and the community. A community that is grateful that he never left them and that believe he is a great man for being in their lives and showing them daily kindness and good will and good companionship and character over time.

02/23/2021

Esme’s brain scrambling rambling patters on. Psychadelic? Psychotic? Recorder riffs jar in from the living room. Betsy is just back from her late afternoon walk. My head is buzzing with caffeine and the white buzz of the forced air blower keeping us cozy in our third story walk up tree house on the lovely tree-lined Cuyler, two and a half blocks from the Irving Brownline stop, or just as close, not one, but two microbreweries. Our neighborhood encourages walking, rewards it. Trader Joes is just a jaunt down Lincoln. Jewel is up equidistant the other way. There’s a Mariano’s due north a mile at Lawrence. Took a Divvy there on Mother’s Day morning for some flowers and breakfast items, it was all very lovely even riding in the rain. The girls have definitely dampened the depth we’ve been able to dig into the many diverse flavors of the city. That said, doing so much more cooking at home has definitely taken us a couple of clicks deeper into the world of urban grocery stores. It is reassuring that I know several places where I can get like 100 different kids of Feta cheese.

07/09/021

My brother I am lost to myself. I lost some materials.

Back in January (1/31/2020) I had set a goal: 10,000 words a week and 25 miles. 10,000 and 25 seemed very reasonable to me. One long run a week would knock out a good chunk of the mileage and a string of solid, quite mornings would blow though my writing quota without too much strain. Plus, the discipline of it would give some ballast to my hyped up sales life. Sitting and thinking or maybe reading and sitting and writing in the morning before the second or third cup of coffee and the three flights down and two blocks to the train, two flights up, five stops to Belmont, fingers crossed that the transfer will be there to walk across the plateform to, then three stops to Clark, and three or four flights up from the underground and a three quarter’s mile hustle along Division or Elm to State and then Oak. And then my workaday sprint up and down the three stories of story front we occupied on the most exclusive shopping street in the city. I spent my day mostly standing or bounding up and down the stairs or striding the impossibly long distance to the back of the store, where my many responsibilities would draw me in an uncomfortable and imbalanced amount of time. More coffee throughout the day. Oh, someone brought donuts, how nice. And then off work and hustle home. Pound a tall boy and a bag of potato chips in the park outside the Newberry Library, like the chips and the beer on the train to Grand Rapids, wobbly on your feet bumming cigarettes in the Michigan summer night. And later trying to get cigarettes from that gas station that had just been rammed by a minivan. We went somewhere else and the clerk kind of put his arms up and shrugged at the mess all around him. We smoked cigarettes and talked about what, what… I have no idea what we talked about, but it was nice to hang out and drink beer and smoke cigarettes like a gang of beatniks after an earlier drunk on the train and taking pictures of the landscape and writing in my journal and journeying on and on without a destination.

Tried to get some reading in last night— but just felt tired again— just felt the oblivion of the night descending upon me and so I followed her into the depths and in the depths I while away the early A.M. hours on our green cat-scratched couch.

Writing, including details as they bubble up— suggest themselves, you know, what can you say to art— the million choices that go in to all that you would like to make— and some make and make it— and other fall apart angry and shitty— bitched out and mother consumed— you called the Governor a Nazi, you floated out highly debatable assertions into national conversations on race and equality and the like— social justice.

I want to fly over the tropes and the traps of white liberation. We cannot help but be sucked into the politicking of the moment though can we…

Would love to say that I only do politicks in the even of all out war.

Politicking is all about dividing. Setting up camps. Securing funding. Using the scalpel and the sledgehammer of language to railroad the conversation inti a narrow set of clear choices— it is the opposite of reality and the opposite of the free market— a proliferation of choice, ultimate choice, ultimate competition.

In the political arena there have been concerted efforts by both parties to restrict the “free market” of the political system— there certainly has been much written about this. I accept that we have a system— I recognize that it is limited and imperfect and I accept that.

Otters have a pocket for their favorite rock.

11/10/21 **=>** What a fall. Travel. and responsibiltiies and dehibilitating sickness. And health issues when responsibilities do not stop. What a seasoning season. There is a reason most parents are tougher than their children. Being genetically so similar I propose that it is this seasoning, these dragging seasons of travel and sickness, deadlines and dead mornings when we accumulate our grit. OUr red dust film, inurring us to weather to some extent, to accidents, to mysteries, head down into headline, we head long like crazed alchemists at the essences just beyond.

11/10/21 **=>** Wednesday morning. Trying to fashion a web capture my thoughts in flight. Morning light early, car sounds from the streets, low lowing of the cattle cud shuffling off to their offices. Me still out of work and ticking. Chasing writerly and coderly intuitions through digital deserts, isolated spaces.

11/10/21 **=>** Morning breaks and I am back hacking at my hyperlinked novella. Manic in my process of becoming. Unraveling. Cut off and under the gun. Bumbling.

11/10/21 => Running barefoot in the night, a quick snapping stride that I have been building up since summer. A strange little side project to help balance out my crumpling form.

10/24/2021

It had been saying rain all week. We’d had to move the party up two days. Instead of a Sunday afternoon “Animal Predator” seventh birthday extravaganza, we’d do it on Friday- the kids would come straight from school or chess club or aftercare. We’d all gather at 4:00 in our back courtyard on Cuyler. Autumnal color up and down our leafy street. Witches at their cauldrons in windows. Bones and skulls scattered

Concrete and cemement and ivy green and gone orange and red creeping up the wall and the chain link at the top and the the tracks and then the deep blue of the late afternoon sky and they roaring and rizing and the metra northshore obscures the sky and banshee races south towards downtown. Where is even the next Metra stop after Lawerence? I should look at a map.

We’d string the crepe paper and colorful bunting and set up a table with some snacks and later the chocolate cupcakes with woodland creature plastic decorative toppers and the aluminum foil wrapped owl pellet cake pops- a mouth watering combination of chocolate dipped mix of cake batter and frosting with secret ingredient dry, crunchy Ramen noodles to simulate the mouse femours and shrew skulls found in the actual owl pellets that the kids would be disceting after a few rounds of *Birds of Prey*-- a game involving dropping badminton birdies from the various levels of or three stories of porches into the back courtyard while a child in an animal mask attempts to swipe the falling birdies out of the air with a butterfly net, and before the *Woodland Creature Scavenger Hunt* where the children while wearing woodland creature masks will scurry around our yard collecting bits that have been stached around for them while the two big bad predetors-- a Kodiak Bear and a shifty eyed owl-- betsy and I with grocery bags over our heads that betsy has cleverly drawn an alarming bear and a convincingly predatorial owl on the other. The singing, the cupcakes and cake pops and then the pinata, of course, also a giant owl pellet. This one dissected less delicately. Instead of delicately probing this “owl pellet” with a tooth pick, we’d whack it with a big stick we found in the yard with a short nub on one end that some of the livelier kids used to impale the giant turd shaped pianta like they were gaffing a sea creature. When the pellet finally popped, it burst forth tuffs of faux fur and plastic bones from ripped apart dollar store decorative plastic skeletons as well as a bit of candy. The kids were delighted. Chipmunk, Weasel, Badger, Squirrel

Now, Sunday, waiting for the rain. The party a success. Two more parties attended on Saturday as Esme and her classmates tick one by one their seventh rotation round the sun. And we sit around the breakfast table chatting about predatory wasps (Mud Daubers) and attempt to tune out Helena’s whining which somehow doesn’t completely destroy

10/16/2021

October 16th-- the fall is upon us. Crisper weather now-- partial sun, mid-fifties, everything has changed since the deluge. The rain fell fervently and with abandon. The first truly wild rain we’ve had since the summer. It made me realize that we have largely missed the dragging wet days of autumn when saturated leaves in various hues of transformation mottle the sidewalks and shake down like confetti-- bon voyage to the season.

Our family bike has been a wonderful addition to our stable of transportation modes. Moving open air with the girls and eliminating the car-parking contingency of our outings provides some pretty free floating moments of commute that would otherwise be all shot through with inertia, waiting, congestion, jockeying with other tonnage as the whole city rushes all at the same hour-- conspiring each against the other, to choke the other’s way, complicate and prolong each pilgrims trajectory.

At home we continue to keep it cosy, musing about more space, wondering at the sequence of evens that will lead us to homeownership or a least a significant move-- somewhere away, somewhere farflung perhaps-- regrionally. Honestly, hopefully, not though. Despitre its limitations and constraints m eight by eight foor cell at least has a ten foot ceiling. THer is breathing room above, there is solidity below my feet.

I am one year on from the Ides of October when in parallel with my tech study I launched into an intuitively driven embrace and engagement with my mid-life crisis-- a knotty snarl of aging and frayed relationships and the fragmented social state of being a parent without a professional network or identity I have been failing at times this year to ground my identity. I have been flailing and inefficient and in order to buckle down and force movement in the creative and technical aspects of my life I have descended into this cloistered, minimal existence-- mostly eschewing social media, attempting to make my decafto answer to most new things “NO”. And the I get sentimental and Guns and Roses are playing sweet child of mind and Slashes hook is reverberating all over the northside and I hold my child and read to her in the white round back Mod chair that Marcel that shreaded the arms of and the busyness of the day is done and I suddenly have the wherewithal to text my rock-and-roll friend from collect. The beer dud and the I decide to call instead, because no one calls any more-- they certainly do not call me, but I call him and he is actually in Chicago, just a couple of miles away and he has just put in his two weeks with his boss-- a brewery owner-- over beers on his way back from picking up a stove in Indianapolis. He’s wondering if I want to meet up for a drink. I do not actually. I am fully in settled in for the night mode. I just put my daughter to sleep. I am thinking about sleep myself. I am tired. I have been coding . I have a book going *In Patagonia,* I would like to go there for a minute and then probably drift off and then wake up tomorrow and repeat the same slogging procedure of confronting my digital and analogue dislocation.

Is learning this heroic thing of this shameful thing.

His brother who was his best man is an ass… or at least has an inoperable interface. His “best friend” is a narcissistic maniac. His wife is depressed and put upon and distant. His mother is aggressive and judgemental and distant.

A racing mind…

I have been feeling

I have spent the majority of this year unmoored -- shoved away from the security of a harboring shore-- trying to get out of the land and ocreans repulsing eddy-- forlornly having away like poor soul in Ambrose Bierce’s “The Open Boat”-- can I get to the open sea without breaking up in the waves? Without succumbing to the pressure-- my tasks-- make bread for my babies are very reduced-- I have pthough all need me and want me and wish me the best on a collective, universal level. We want one another to be okay, we need one another to be okay, we don’t want other people’s non-flourishing to impede our passage. We are a swimmers. Some begin to flit and flail and grab out and lash out at the people around them. We also desire joy in this life and growth and grounding.

I have spent much of this year afraid and attempting to articulate my fears and confront them in the most, banal way possible-- sitting with them-- trying to flush them out and express them-- trying to attach their nervous, wild energy to some settled, actionable, concrete moves.

I am ambitions, but do my ambitions and values line up? How do you want to spend your time? I would never want to live a bohemian lifestyle. I would never ant to be stuck at a computer. I would never want to be a salesman. How do you want to spend your time?

One of my rationalizations for smoking a lot of weed has been to change my mind, to so thoroughly send my mentality to another dimension promoting an evolutionary change in life patterns.

Html, css/sass, http/https, ruby, javascript, jquery, ajax, rspec, .erb, irb, emmet, git, github, sql, mySql, Mongodb, postgresql, dsl, orm, etc.

09/17/2021

I recognize that I have to launch my tech career to get my writing off the ground. Write about stretching. Write about coding. Writing about parenting. Write about being in your 40s. Write about barefoot running and running in general. Write about why you like your neighborhood so much

* Biking to pick up along the leafy northside streets.
* Passing all the cars on Montrose at rush hour as we head to the pool.
* Being the only swimmers at the pool. The side doors open and the golden light of the late afternoon highlighting the still leafy green canopy of trees.
* Hoosier Momma’s Pie in Lincoln Square
* The Bubble Lady in the Square
* Walkability of Trader Joes, several liquor stores, Jewel, our yard

09/08/2021

Have you seen the words? (Animal Collective)

Your intestines dripping out…

Someone in my Dictionary is up to no good “Banshee Beat”

Summertime Clothes-- nice harmonies

09/04/2021

The animal joy of listening to music through head phones.

I simultaneously trying to learn app development, forge a literary career, be a good father, mitigate my addiction (somewhere in my dictionary is up to no good), and maintain my English and expand my Chinese and Spanish, a form a religion of one that wholistically meets my human and spiritual needs. I am trying to get a grip by letting go.

Cycle through, cycle through,

Sweep right round your seventeen years.

Keep in mind, its all small beer.

Swinging and missing.

Getting close, but no…

Did you know *cigar* comes from *cicada*.

And look, look—

here they come again.

Email:

**From:** Caleb Whitmer <cwhitmer92@gmail.com>   
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2020 7:11 PM  
**To:** adwhitmer@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: Gimme Shelter...

Brother,

Greetings from Rock Hill, SC! After some deliberation, we decided to make the drive to spend my Thurs-Mon Easter vacation with Morgan’s family. Thankfully, no military blockades stopped us. Fingers crossed no interstate travel bans go into effect between now and Easter Tues.

We are doing well, both of us healthy and on the whole spending our more or less quarantined existence pleasantly. I am still going into work as educational institutions, like liquor stores, are considered essential. My work has suddenly evolved into a television studio and we are broadcasting lectures three-four nights a week for a live audiences of about a thousand people. Morgan just completed her Master’s comprehensive exams on Tues. Assuming she passes, she has only a few more essays to go for the degree.

I am trying to spend the time productively. I’ve been playing piano and redabbling in French. I am reading the Brothers Karamazov (long on my reading list) and listening to a 50 hour (!) biography of Churchill on my runs around DC and walks to and from work. I’ve just finished running here in SC and WC, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, has just pissed off John Maynard Keynes by switching England back to the gold standard. Not sure how this ends yet, but there has been some foreshadowing that this doesn’t go very well for WC.

Good on the brewery for curbside pickup! And we’ve actually done the same thing with pancake batter. Morgan has started baking sourdough bread. My understanding is that sourdough starters require some training and a good deal of that training for us has been eating sourdough pancakes (which has necessitated further training in the long battle against the so-called “Covid-15”).

How else are you all fairing? Are you still subscribing to the New Yorker? I think their coverage of New York during the pandemic has been really good. Little vignettes of a city in crisis. Any vignettes from Chicago?

Best wishes,

Caleb

23APRIL2020:

弟弟,\*

So glad to hear you two are living well through this season of shelter! Clear headed, in good health, and having

the financial wherewithal to weather this storm really puts a body in the position to get a little taste of the retired life.

I am looking forward to being retired someday. If this preview is any indication, I think betsy and I will do well at it. Though hopefully by then we will not have any small children under our constant care.

Good to hear that you’re getting some good reading in! Both visually and aurally! *The Brothers Karamazov* has been on my reading list forever as well. Remember reading the “Grand Inquisitor” chapter way back. Hope you are enjoying it. Something of that ilk maybe a little more ambitious than I can take on at the moment; I may have to save the Russian novels for the next pandemic.

My guerilla reading style of the past decade has seemingly striped me of the ability for “silent sustained reading”. I like to think that the children deserve most of the blame for this. You see they have this notion that their welfare and companionship should trump my ability to hold a sustained thought or finish even a thin chapter of a mass market paperback. They are very self-centered and helpless which is not a great combination in a roommate or roommates. Despite their machinations though, I actually just finished “The Last Wish” by Andrzej Sapkowski from his *Witcher* series. Despite some pretty cringey writing, it was a fun read! Some of the joy was akin to watching a B-movie where the good parts are good because they are so good and the bad parts are also kind of fantastic because they are just so, so bad.

I’m also just about through a slim paperback of “The Castle of Crossed Destinies” by the Italian writer Italo Calvino. Back in college I read his “If on a winter’s night a traveler” which I really liked. Calvino has been called an Italian Fabulist and he gets pretty funky with form. “If on a winter’s night…” switches back and forth alternating chapters between second person narration and a chapter of a new, totally different book (different genres etc…) even as your “second person narration self” furtive searches for the original book that he started way back in chapter one. His “Castle of Crossed Destines” is about a bunch of people who find themselves inexplicably in a castle in the middle of a forest without the ability to speak. Luckily, there is wine and a deck of Tarot cards (or as the Italians say Tarocchi) and the visitors to the Castle are then able to sort of mystically depict their Chaucer-like tales using only the images on the cards and some unexplained mind-melding.

I wondered the other day if you dip back into French from time to time. I have a book of poems by Rimbaud that is in French and English. Whenever I read a poem out of it I always try to read the French as well, which is hilarious and hackneyed, but I try to just go for it. You know, feel it, let *Spiritus Mundi* conjure up something of what Rimbaud had in his mind. Language is so wonderful, but also such a slog …or not a slog, but just a potentially bottomless abyss of time spent. My continued mission towards educated adult-like Mandarin literacy continues to forge ahead… with peaks… with plateaus…with the occasional valley slog. I have a copy of one of the most famous Kung-fu series by the most famous Kung-fu novelist Jin Yong (“The Legend of the Condor Heroes” 射雕英雄传). I have had this book in my possession for over two years and have been wanting to read it for like ten. The reading level is still a bit of a reach for me, but just this week I had a really nice reading session where it felt like my comprehension took another lurch forward. I got some of the jokes! It’s such a strange spiraling process, but one that I am (mostly) grateful for.

On the Chinese topic, two films: “Ash is Purist White” and “The Farewell”. “Ash is Purist White” is a film by Jia Zhangke, who generally makes really interesting, well-shot, simmering, slowly unfolding films. His main actor is always his wife and his films are always very humane. His films typically end up being banned in mainland China because he’s into realism a little too deep (the CCCP doesn’t always like that). “The Farewell” stars Awkwafina and is a little more heartwarming than “Ash” and was another good perspective on the contemporary Chinese scene. It may or may not have been banned on the mainland…

6:30 a.m. I am up. I am awake. I am ready to read or do some writing. I’m settling in. I have coffee. And then…what…no… Helena is awake… (sigh) she never wakes up this early.

6:45 a.m. Helena is in her highchair next to me at the table. She offers me a Crispy Oat\* and then rescinds the offer and eats it herself and then claps for herself. I am not reading or writing, but instead sipping my coffee and basking in the gummy, slightly mischievous smile of my one-year-old. There are great clouds this morning: stretched out and minced up with a lower, mountainous base glowing violet in the rising sun. The brown brick across the alley is waking up. Its reddish hue brightening with each tick forward of the sun. Helena waves to the clouds and chirps her breathy “Hi.” She is a hummer and a singer and an engaged, communicative girl all without saying much more than “Hi”. She is a full-on walker now and just seeing her cowboy saunter into a room warms me up and makes me laugh. Her manic baby zeal is contagious.

Esme’s manic 5-year-old zeal has been a bit grating of late. She is wired to be as active and engaged as possible, which is setting her up to be a good learner and engager with life, but has become, not infrequently exhausting. Through our time together this last month we have definitely gotten closer and more annoyed with each other which may just be a symptom of how close we are. She is still (mostly) a really delightful kid though. Interested in being read to at any hour of the day. Loving the films we pop out of the archives for her- Disney’s “Robin Hood”, “Mary Poppins”, “Totoro”. She plays well in the back yard and rules the garden with her adventures and projects and games. She’s definitely missing other kids though!

Sorry about the slow reply! I had a bit of a rough week balancing out my various responsibilities and projects. I think I am at some kind of a tipping point now though as I try to prioritize and screw down on what I’d most like to - during my Covid Sabbatical. I am still technically still working, but just reporting the hours that I work as we work them at home. There are things to be done, but the story being closed and the uncertainty about when it will reopen makes things tricky. And all-in-all I have decided that I am not a big fan of the work from rhythm and/or just have not figured it out/negotiated it out just yet. betsy and I did just sketch up a weekly schedule this morning where we have identified blocks of “office time” for me which should be really helpful for getting some focused work done!

Much Love,

Aaron

\*“little brother” di4di4

\* Aldi Brand Cherrios

06/02/2020-

Wish I had the day off the top of my head, but definitely worth including here is that last month Caleb broke the news that Morgan is expecting! They are in DC weathering out the pandemic and the social unrest… Morgan just finished up her master’s in political theory and Caleb is working for the Dominican Brotherhood.

11/03/2020

Caleb’s letter:

Dear Aaron ,

The day before the election, Morgan is showering while listening to a lecture on the American founders and Natural Law. The doorknob of the bathroom is broken, so professor Charles Kastler's slightly reedy, flat voice fills the apartment, which is small, and I am writing you a letter on an LSAT prep book I began studying with about about two weeks ago. Washington was bright and blustery today and I felt grateful to live here and grateful that I walked to work each day. Morgan is 31 weeks as of Saturday. We drove across the Potomac River, down the George Washington Parkway, to a forest on the South Bank called Turkey run near the CIA headquarters the colors aren't so brilliant here but the trees were tall and the ground muddy and we slipped up and down a winding path, then down until we had to ford a Creek by way of a few well-placed stones and by virtue of my waterproof LL bean boots. Then the bushes closed in dense like the old forest in Buckland, and we occasionally stumbled on signs of ancient settlements and a tall concrete tower with height measurements (a municipal building of some kind?) and a hearth and chimney standing naked in the trees. For a while we sat on a log fallen across the path, then returned along the narrow trail we forded the creek, climbed and wound the muddy paths and got back in our car driving back through downtown. Plywood was once again on every street level window for the first time since July. Every window but those of the restaurants squeezing in a few more customers before locking down until- win? Whatever happens, I hope it comes quick. Your brother, Caleb

11/11/2020

I have become almost cabalistic about working. I am on some sort of self-styled vision quest which in its first 40 days took me to the mountain where I lingered from the new moon of the first of the month until the rising and setting of the Halloween Blue moon that happen to fall on this inauspicious year.

We tricked and treated and burned wood in the year. The wind cruelly smothering us each in turn with gusts of plummey white smoke and pop and flash of sparks, some want to hop up into your lap like an over eager pup. And then the night long and prowling and I stretched and breathed and birthed my middle-aged self out into the All Saint’s dawn as the full moon set in the west and the sun brightened and warmed and painted in its approaching palate of desiccated nectatrine. And now back out the gate.

To the desert for these is talk of a spring that never ends— the source some say— just over there. Across the Takalimakan-like plain— take with you provisions from the mountains. Take with you what you have learned about strength and weakness, take with you the balance and the self-understanding you have acquired, move easier and move adroitly now that you have shed your excess weight and once again opened to the abundance of life.

It is this joy— this unencumbering act— this whole hearted unencumbering act.

Empower people to make the changes that matter.

Creative healing.

Intuitive healing

* Balanced and open
* Disciplined, but discipline grounded in balance not severity. The discipline is part of the balance, not the dictator of it.

11/14/2020

Dear Caleb,

Loved your letter, every last letter! Have been meaning to write too, to you. Been dipping into a lot of different books of late. Has been great! Ordered you a book off Amazon, should arrive to you soon, by drone I believe. It’s a book that has been delighting me for many years – a dictionary of sorts, but where every entry feels sort of like a little poem, or at the very least seems to suggest one, one already written, or one still but yet to write: “Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.” Definitely a top three tome for me. And to think my copy has traveled full 25 odd years, ever since once upon a summer’s day –

a library sidewalk sale:

pack a brown paper grocery bag full of books—

each full bag five dollars!

I am excited for you to prepare for the LSAT. I really enjoyed preparing for the LSAT. A few months up in a cabin in the woods in North Minnesota. No election year angst. No job by to study and exercise. I was running and biking and swimming and doing yoga a couple of times a day. My body got in pretty good shape.

The goddamned mechanical pencils I used snapped and snapped under my exam intense hands. I remember totally falling apart in the logic puzzle section, and the snap of the pencil became the soundtrack of the snap of my logical train. In my prep for the test it is one of my strongest sections. On test day I had to scramble and fill in a good number of bubbles without even reading the questions. My 162 was a solid score. No crazy good, but certainly good enough to get my law career going. A friend of mom’s I can’t even remember who now gave here a book to give to me called Law School Confidential. I read the first chapter, the gist of which was—hey, seriously, if there is anything else you want to do right niw, travel, learn a language, go do that, if you have any doubt that law school is the right thing to be doing right now, then go do that other thing cause law school will be here. Do that other thing and then come back and rip the head of this thing. It was sound advice, basically, if you are going to do it, do it! Life many things, if you do it, I mean really do it and get into it, you will have a rewarding experience, if you just sort of tepidly get in there and half-ass the effort that whole thing is going to be fucked. You are going to be miserable and the thing just won’t work.

I suppose its like anything that involves commitment. You are either committed or you are not. If you are committed good things happen and the whole system can evolve fully and to maturity, if you are not committed then the system will never close its process loop and will be leaky a fuck, both letting in distracting factors that will nudge (sledge) you off track, or letting out aspects of the work/projects/ etc. slip away without have the proper track lain to bring that freight-train on home. My metaphor has totally gotten away from me here, but I think you get my point, commitment is key. Keeping your eye on the horizon line even after you work your ass off to keep one foot moving in front of the other.

Abundance is birthed by sacrifice.

Death leads to life and life leads to death.

George Floyd, Kyle Rittenhouse, Breana Taylor, Mike Pence, Rush Limbaugh, Nancy Pelois, AOC, AOC, RBG, NSA, FDIC, DOJ,

If you could fly like a bird and take it in from 20,000 feet what would you see. If you looked at your own situation what would you see.

Disentagleing yourself from the political mess, the cultural mess, the religious mess.

I have fled to the mountain. And I found healing there. Now I have descended and am trekking my way across the desert towards the river, towards the sea. It should take about 40 days. It is a time of scarcity. The weather has been amazing. My writing is beginning to build. Not in some sort of spontaneous outpouring of ideas and images, but something more deliberate, something more layered, subject to editing, deletion, completion is important, sure, but the bulk of the work is done in the middle miles- between the impetus and the conclusion. I have endeavored to crave those middle miles.

Having initially worked to focus myself in and allow my adrenal glands to lead the charge, I ended up with an out-of-whack spine and bad circulation in my legs. Plus, I was drinking too much. Not like black out drunk or something, but alcohol had become a mirror to my morning coffee. Which from some angles I am find with, though the rub comes when the coffee opens the door to getting things done, the alcohol begins to wind things down, draw sleep near. At the end of the day, after working and looking after the girls and working to stay on the same page with betsy, not to mention fighting off the ambient sense of uncertainty and tension. So many sirens everyday here, the constant chest rumble of jetplanes overhead. An almost unnerveringly warm November. 2014 after Esme was born, November was so cold. It felt like the 4th trimester as we bedded down in our third floor apartment and took the baby in shifts. I watched a lot of overnight movies at this time with headphones as I held the baby, or I sang to here from Youtube karaoke, overcoming the desperation of her cry with my enthusiastic crooning and rhythmic rocking and soothing sways. These were long days, but a month off of work helped me step away from that stress and focus fully on the new baby. In December I had record sales, basically making up for November and pulling within a few thousand dollars of being the top selling watch salesman, despite the “lost month”. It was one of those wonderful moments when things just sort of “work themselves out”. The previous November I was recovering from my double hernia surgery, thankfully, still my most invasive medical procedure ever and most intensive recover process. A process that was marked by a lot of sitting around and typing.

Adidas Ultraboost PB. Slurge or not, definitely well-deserved with the miles that you are getting in, I hve not been getting many miles as I have been extremely homebound writing letters and studying code and freewriting. And doing this interesting “Infiniti Notebooke™” loop where I free write on any topic that pops into my head in any form I feel inspired to jump into- poem, song, short story, essay, letter, study review, notes from what I am reading, marginalia of what I am reading, language bits, scraps, images, ideas, thoughts, intentions, needs, desires, recalibrating nudges, goal-setting, accountability, motivation, sense of accomplishment, vocation building, identity grounding, mind-centering, path to right silence.

My understanding of faith cannot be disentangled with writing. There are stops. There are starts. The wise definitively say- yes! Movement and visuals. You see it was never so bad. And pre-grieving all I have to lose. And it broke my heart when you told me you’ve been staying home to pre-greive all you have to lose. You got caught in a choice and wound up wasted, whiling away your years pre-grieving all you have to lose.

Will we know you are Christians by their love? Cause I don’t feel that love. I feel your judgement. I feel your political partisanship. I feel your angst. I feel your apocalyptic anxiety and I wholesale reject it. There must be another way. And there is. There are 7 billion different ways and counting. Get fucking used to it.

Why Rush Limbaugh is fine for America. How can we recognize these political realities and ride that line between not being totally cynical about it, but also not losing my shit over it in some sort of partisan hissy-fit.

Can we just stop being Republicans and Deomocrats and just be Americans.

11/19/2020

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.

Running to “In Rainbows” The Reckoner, I might be Wrong.

Going out and getting lost and then finding my way back to writing and Chinese and finding my way into coding and tech and overcoming my sense of digital dislocation and fragmentation. Finding a way to force all of these disparate, fragmentary interests and commitments (willing or unwilling) through a centering, focusing workflow, allowing for optimization and prioritization of execution and task handling/management.

11/20/2020

Back in January (1/31/2020) I had set a goal: 10,000 words a week and 25 miles. 10,000 and 25 seemed very reasonable to me. One long run a week would knock out a good chunk of the mileage and a string of solid, quite mornings would blow though my writing quota without too much strain. Plus, the discipline of it would give some ballast to my hyped up sales life. Sitting and thinking or maybe reading and sitting and writing in the morning before the second or third cup of coffee and the three flights down and two blocks to the train, two flights up, five stops to Belmont, fingers crossed that the transfer will be there to walk across the plateform to, then three stops to Clark, and three or four flights up from the underground and a three quarter’s mile hustle along Division or Elm to State and then Oak. And then my workaday sprint up and down the three stories of story front we occupied on the most exclusive shopping street in the city. I spent my day mostly standing or bounding up and down the stairs or striding the impossibly long distance to the back of the store, where my many responsibilities would draw me in an uncomfortable and imbalanced amount of time. More coffee throughout the day. Oh, someone brought donuts, how nice. And then off work and hustle home. Pound a tall boy and a bag of potato chips in the park outside the Newberry Library, like the chips and the beer on the train to Grand Rapids, wobbly on your feet bumming cigarettes in the Michigan summer night. And later trying to get cigarettes from that gas station that had just been rammed by a minivan. We went somewhere else and the clerk kind of put his arms up and shrugged at the mess all around him. We smoked cigarettes and talked about what, what… I have no idea what we talked about, but it was nice to hang out and drink beer and smoke cigarettes like a gang of beatniks after an earlier drunk on the train and taking pictures of the landscape and writing in my journal and journeying on and on without a destination.

11/28/2020

* What do you make of Fox news?
  + Dismayed at the campaigning against “The Squad”
  + Misleading headlines (sometimes incredibly so!)
  + Free and fair personalities
  + The Murdoch Family and the Hearst family would be an interesting comparison.
  + How to discuss this stuff without everyone just feeling shitty?
  + Team building political conversation- Where is the consensus?
  + What are we actually talking about right now? What exact statue? Who is messing with it? What is the background? Has there been a movement against this statue in the past? Who are these people that want it down?
  + Against idealism.

What does it say about where we are at that we are all kind of relieved at the level of violence that played out over the election season. There were deaths… at least 4 maybe more…

12/13/2020

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Code IN (3) | Code OUT (5) | Write IN (6) | Write OUT (7)

6

12/14/2020: IN 08:54

The LSAT. What sort of Law. Seems like a very DC move. Definitive move.

Path of least resistance. Relatively low threshold of time and effort to get into industry. It worked, but I knew what I was signing up for. I didn’t cae. I couldn’t either be conflicted about the less than ideal working conditions, rhythm, or I could suck it up and just figure out how to make the job work.

It worked. I tripled my income, put us in a position for betsy to not have to work and I learned how to sell. I had long thought that something about selling really cut crossways through my nature. On the one hand, I am certainly apt to point out the positive, or I try at least to put a positive spin on something that somebody gives me.

When I was teaching I was always pretty good at integrating students feedback into the class discussion etc.

I don’t care what you buy, but if you buy something my hourly rate shoots way up. That variable hourly rate was the kicker. Especially since, compared to my English teaching the hourly was high and the hours we double and then on top of that if I sent something out the door I was likely to net somewhere between 25% and 200%+ of what I would make in a week teaching English I would knock out in that single hour, or however long the transaction took.

I signed my deal with America. With capitalism. We had babies. We lived in a city, but went traditional, single income, female homemaker. The deal was simple— we’ll give you an opportunity to work and make money on our capricious terms and you just need to suck it up. There has been a lot of sucking it up going on, which is probably why getting the message from Hans to suck up my political beliefs cut so deep.

Running up against power all the time. Policies and procedures were meant to hem everyone in so they had to grovel to management to get product. They used access to product as a management too. We had to run the gauntlet for clients, we had to run the gauntlet of clients to find a client that we trusted enough to push for, because if we pushed for a client, finally got approval and then had the client flake out on us that would be a lose of time, effort, and credibility.

You are only as good as your next sale. Caught in a very tenuous position between a demanding clientele and a disorganized, vengeful, punitive, harried self-centered management team. The owner, had just turned 60 and was in the prime of his career. He had grown his business to four stories, but had hardly expanded the management structure of his business. Plugging gaps by handing out more hats for people to wear, or at least just handing out hats to those people related or loyal to him, whether or not these roles were actually fulfilled.

Should come up with a list of all the “initiatives” that were thrown out, but never followed up on.

At a moments notice you need to be ready to give a stellar presentation on a $200,000 timepiece, but we also need you to make sure that bathroom gets cleaned and the sidewalk stays clear and that the shipping department keeps trucking, meticulous taking in and sending out high-value merchandise.

If one had been so inclined, you could walk straight through our store and into the vault without a locked door between the audacious individual and our vault of gold, diamond encrusted watches.

One of the stores had been even been robbed.

Emphasized and crowed about every “amazing” thing “the Boss” did for us. “Free Lunch” on the weekends, so we didn’t have to take time away from the floor to figure out lunch, so we would eat their shitty fastfood. The owner’s children would order their own food separately. They would arrive late, leave early, maybe show up for their days on the schedule, despite being “the key” on the schedule meaning the person with the responsibility and power to open and close the store.

Waiting outside the store in the winter for someone to come and let us in because nobody has a key to get into the store. Keys drifting in and out of the store without being tracked. Merchandise moving in and out of the store with hazy procedures around them. Watches in pockets and what not. Oopened doors for mistakes. Accidents. Extra-procedural situations. All the while we have the message of doing “anything” for a sale. And not ever saying “no”….

Knives are very dangerous and they kill a lot of people. They almost kill as many people as guns do. I’m looking at the stats.

People saying something that may or may not be true, but said in such a way that I am right, I am expressing a larger sentiment that guns are really not so dangerous, especially when compared to knives. What you want to go out and round up all the knives now?

Rhetoric is not dead. Rhetoric is alive and well. A lot of rhetorical is about definition of TERMS and concepts. Framing the conversation in such a way. It is all about the framing. Words can PROVOKE, FRAME, REFRAME, SHUTOUT, IMPLY, FLIP, CONTRADICT, and so on and on….

The Supreme Court decision put me at ease. That Texas lawsuit was actually the moment I was going to worry. It was a benchmark that I chose as a good litmus test on the reality of our political system. It passed the test. That lawsuit was an embarrassment and in principle it was attempting to perpetuate the same inconceivable attack on our democratic process. Our process won! Trump took it on, but the process won, the system won.

Does this move the needle on my life… not, but at least our system is intact, we are not devolving into some kind of constitutional crisis or a civil war… which it feels like exactly like what Trump wants. He wants to be able to say that it was the most contested election in the history of the U.S., leaving out the fact that the contesting was completely without merit.

This is the Trump MO. Create a crisis and then frame it so you come out the other side looking good against the crisis that you framed, regardless of the actual merits.

This is a bit like the whole abortion thing. I feel like you are trying to gaslight me into believing that this is the only important issue and that support of the right side of this issue is the only proof required of being a good person, a good American, a good moral, Christian person. I chafe at the rank simplification of this. This intensely dishonest framing of the situation.

Somehow these things are all connected. What is the line through them?

02/10/2021

Received the book and your letter and postcard in the mail yesterday. It arrived on our snow strewn street. Our backalley as impassable as I have ever seen it. Great dripping icicles from our third story roof. Landlord out in the morning wielding a shovel to knocnk them down without skulling someone. I purchased a bottle of whisky for myself for my birthday it has horses on it and is from BLAH, BLAH Kentucky, none of this has any meaning. If none of this has any meaning then we have no meaning withoun us because this are the discrete components of usness. But the rub comes in the balance. How do we balance this lottery balls all fluffed up and roiling in our heads and bes and bellies.

The vocation al selection is a big one, a cahllanging one. I have certainly attempted to take the ORGANIC route. The UNFOLDING route. The exploratorial route. The follow your interests route. The follow your dreams route. Sort of . I have always had guardrails on my dedicationto writing. I have endeaveored to draw it near to my sense of being and have it inform my sense of being. I have attempteto be open. I have attempted to be thoughtful. But if all of this is simply about creativng a persecitive recipe for living then count me out. Beuase ultimately that just gets realy fucking meta. I do this so that I can do this. Does this give that meaning. Does this wish that into existence. And what about the inverse. Time spent upon this project strangles the other projects in their beds and slithers out self-satisfied and hungry for the day. We are cyphers and our perspective will be feed. There is only power in interpretation. Interpretation allows us to imbibe at our own speed without being faus grais force fed. We can’t digest so many ideas and beyond that ideas are not discrete elements they are intreicately woven matrixes of meaning, nearly always dependent on cultural and historical context. Which doesn’t lessen their significance, but perhaps, perchance, if we step back for a minute, we can acknowledge the subjectiveliy and the incompleteness of all knowledge. Especially if the discrete knowledge is something that can really only be experientially understood. For example, the health benefits of a low meat diet can easily be grasped intellectually, but the experiential realization of this wisdom at a digested, lived level has a great plain of cultural and personal messages that will seek to throw you off this trail, this path, this experiment. We make much of habit. We make much of patterns.

I do get caugt and come out and wrangle Helena a bit because bets has entered her “hands-thrown-up” mde which is worrying because its only 10:30 a.m. and she is on the couch half-reading to Esme while Helena fails around and whicnes arbout either not having her socks and sandals on or being upset about betsy trying to oput her socks on. Helena seems to be insisting on wearing her slipperings without socks, but then freaks out when I put her slippers on without socks and seems to want her socks on too. She tearfully climbs down from my lap and shuffles over to the couch for her socks. Meanwhile Esme is on the couch, the Benadryl we gave her for an inexplicably puffy left eyelid, like extremely pufy— cartoonishly puffy, seemingly painfully puffy and itchy, but not…

She is staying off online class today.

02/11/2021

“Washington Monument By Night”

* Carl Sandburg

1.

The stone goes straight.

A lean swimmer into night sky

Into half-moon mist

2.

Two trees are coal black.

This is a great white ghost between

It is cool to look at.

String men, strong women come here.

3.

Eight years is a long time

to be fighting all the time.

4.

The republic is a dream.

Nothing happens unless first a dream.

5.

The wind bit hard at Valley Forge one Christmas

Soldiers tied rags on their feet

Red footprints wrote on the snow…

… and stone shoots into stars here

… into half-moon mist tonight.

6.

Tongues wrangled dark at a man.

He buttoned his overcoat and stood alone.

In a snowstorm, red hollyberries, thoughts,

he stood alone.

Spirt of my silence I can hear you,

But I’m afraid to be near you.

And I don’t know where to begin.

And I don’t know where to begin.

Somewhere in the desert there’s a foreest,

And an acre before us

But I don’t know where to begin

But I don’t know where to begin.

Again I lost my strength completely,

Oh, be near me tired old mare

With the wind in her hair.

Amethyst and flowers on the table,

Is it real or a fable?

Well I suppose a friend is a friend

And we all know how this will end

Chimney swift that find me be my keeper,

Silhouette of the cedar

What is that song you sing for the dead?

What is that song you sing for the dead?

I see the signal searchlight strike me,

In the window of my room.

Well, I got nothing to prove.

Well. I got nothing to prove.

I forgive you mother, I can hear you

And I long to be near you

But every road leads to an end,

Yes, every road leads to an end

Your apparition passes through me,

In the willows and five red hens.

You’ll never see us again.

You’ll never see us again.

In some ways, many ways I am very grateful for my time in the retail world. I had to make my own way. I went from one of the shittiest positions in the luxury goods industry to one of the “best” and I had done it by myself while bringing a couple of kids into the world and establishing a baseline economic hold and security for my family. I had used my Mandarin to make money. I had improved my Mandarin. I had discovered my aptitude and interest for computer. An aptitude and interest that weren’t like a lightening realization, but have been cultivated through a gradual and intentional “opening up” to technology and the use of technology to create lightweight, adaptable, responsive, easily maintainable systems for growth, reference, learning, and grounding to resolve my digital dislocation and vastly increase my comfort level and competency of exploring and employing with digital technologies.

Totoro: girls love of it. Our love of it. Totoro cake. Totoro living in our Christmas try. She sings the song and wants to play it. It’s nice to tap into that kiddy fandom, without having to contest with the McDonald’s tie in. Culture is manufactured. Culture is created. It is truly a beautiful thing, but beauty can also hide ugliness and malignancy. McDonald’s could be framed around a pleasant story of a retired man minority man connecting with his ambitious, enterprising son or grandson for coffee and breakfast at one of the many community restaurants. Or you could indict the whole bullshit institution for doing much to create a culture that produces a disproportionately obese and unhealthy populous. Many people thrive in this system and have the wherewithal over time to find their niche, to settle into their value system, both on a writ large ideological level, but also on a street level pragmatic “how am I going to manage my day and find some sort of flow of consumption and production that doesn’t lead me to losing my mind as I am surrounded by all of these swirling and contradictory messages which I must either react to and oppose, agree with and acquiesce to, or disagree with and absorb. So often these poltically spun asides- “implying that the windmills were a big part of the blame for the suffering in Texas”, that the Biden administration was somehow responsible for Katie not getting her maternity leave approved. You rancor makes you saw things that really don’t make any sense and also pollute a perfectly non-partisan conversation with your dogbreath partisan grievance. I find it offense and annoying and I have for a long time. And if you want to take this as me “cancelling you”, my message for you is grow up. Your politics make you unkind. Your politics are an earthly consolation. You are attempting to turn your eternal truth into earthy power. You are framing an eternal struggle as an earthly one. Now I am not saying that you are wrong to care about politics and care deeply or even to engage, but when this this comes to dominate you conversation patterns and your thinking and the way that you see the world- the good people, the bad people, the people who care about American, the people who don’t care about America, this is an earthy consolation. This is an attachment that is inevitable as all attachments are inevitable, but it is one that I see shading your, in my opinion, deep, more powerful, more radiant, more inviting messages.

Crank: an eccentric person, especially one who is obsessed by a particular subject or theory, a bad-tempered person

02/18/2021

Alan Watts:

The limitations of words and thinking

Intellectual net to catch the fish of reality… reality is like water… there is nothing to catch. All the universe is like water, it is fluid, always changing.

The only way to survive in the water, when we are all just falling apart, is to learn how to swim. Relax. Breath correctly. The water holds you up. You become the water.

Alan Watts quote- what is real… something profound that maybe relates to the *Time of Gifts* a little more directly… but anyway, something about the saliency of having just this week reading Alan Watts and listening to a few short lectures by him. And I had been planning on heading off on my merry way, but then reading in *Time* and wondering about the genre- was it an autobiography, literary fiction or so strange melding of the two ala W.G. Sebald. And just when you are thinking that you don’t know up from down with what to expect, the author makes a level and direct reference , almost sort of off the cuff to Alan Watts who apparently wrote about the author in one of his books. Which is interesting to make that connection, especially as I was drawn to Alan Watts following these intuitive pathns that had already lead me through a strong symbolic journey to a mountain and then to a river which is the source. And the mouatin is the center or everything and its everywhere. And OPcaing all of this esoteric discovery, the IDES, a tradition that I thought up as a mock celebration half way through any month and then honed in as a good mid-month goal setting date for things and then still occasionally with some sort of celebratory bent. Why not, it’s the IDES after all!!. Drink up good brother!. Our discipline in the waters makes the possible. And then I lost my job and the cash flow life blood of our family began coming from The Illinois Department of Services (IDES).

Alan Watts living up in Druid Heights which can’t be so very far from where we all gathered for your rehearsal dinner. What hospitality! What warmth! What a wedding! What a gathering! Displacement. Change. Peace with change. Longing for change. Longing ofr the orad. For learning and engaging. Having followed a somewhat intuitive path, following my interests in a fitful, desultory, lets see where this leads sort of way. Allowing things to develop. It has worked with the greatest relationship in my life. Betsy and I were blessed with ample time time settle into ourselves and our lives together and our values and our vision for the trajectory of our lives and we are still seetling togetherAn dn I realized that it is not a journey at all, there is no destination, or rather, we are al all quite aware of the destination and we can celebrate it or rue it or anything in between, but on the way to that end that is reached at the terminus of all journeys, we can choose our modes and shape our modes. And seek expression and understanding and balance. We can seek all of these things, but must accept that there will always be challenges and things that grate and things that are unideal and loose ends, off-putting comments, unkindness, misunderstandings, low-blood sugar, weariness, confusion, hurry, chaos, anxiety, defeat, surrender, release, light, wind, breath… oh to work and work unconflicted. To have before me nicely lined up taks and ample time to complete them. Oh to feel undefeated at the tender just begin. Oh, to believe that we can win. Oh, to hide that fact from all, but my pulsing breast. Nourishment in my time of rest. Westward sun. East rise, heaven climb, my mind the sun, my mind the moon, my mind the city, my mind the snow covered tombs along Hwy 19 on our way to the lake.

“I can’t” - it is okay to tell you’re child you can’t we you are trying to pack a full work day in at home in an effort to reinvent yourself as a software engineer and writer.

“What else”- sometimes your super loquacious child will ramble at you until your mind is sort of numb and uncomprehending. At this point it is permissible to respond with a friend “What else” if the child’s voice suddenly silences and it seems like they might be expecting some sort of reply or proof of interest.

Throbbing stomach! Racing pulse or busted system, burst aorta,

Was going to stretch and write, but girls needed attention.

Changed plans six times in the midst of my indecision and iterative planning.

The brilliant sun’s sundowing

The many lasting shades of its departure

I have seen 10,000 of her savage visages out my western window

Lincoln’s visage ever approaching and the flags

Of the community and Christmas and Thanksgiving.

The battle against repression.

The ceaseless search for just release.

You going west, me going east.

Can’t there finally be some abiding wisdom in the middle

For Jesus, Joseph, and Mary’s old sake.

Can’t we just simmer down and live a little?

Harvest’s hope invites the seed—

These old legs still finding new figures out

on the digital range, half-crazed, but loosely learning

and applying every little binary tidbit

I scrap into.

Running barefoot in the night, a quick snapping stride that I have been building up since summer. A strange little side project to help balance out my crumpling form.

02/19/2021

The fun part and the hard part or the easy part of the hard part because it’s the letting go it’s the intentional lack of specific intention. General intention clear. Communication. Connection. Panoramic snapshot of now. Crafted message? Not necessarily. Thematic, for sure. Yield, for example was a very post modern project. I was reveling in the panorama of meanings and connotations contained in this pedestrian symbol, which had a very specific, though judgement deferring directive. Yield (right of way). It was yellow. Not red. It was cautionary. Not alarmist. And then Yield itself. The word taken out of context of the sign had so many rich meanings. Production of energy. Including nuclear energy. A close association with the harvesting of crops and the measuring of that harvest. Obviously, the issue of will, battle of wills, acquiescing, yielding to others, to god, to the government. And then RIGHT. And the Way, which has great philosophical and existential import. Crossing busy street in China while checking smart phone. Not to mention its grounding in the current PARGAMATIC path that I am attempting to lope along(i.e. yield to block). 让 and common confusion of Chinese students between Let and …. A path where I find work that supports my life with my family and affords me the wherewithal to pursue creative writing pursuits from beyond any self-defeating loops of conflicted failed efforts being blamed from my vocational immaturity. I have found many things that I enjoy doing, but I haven’t figured out how to employ them in a way that affords my family and I work-life balance that more closely represents our value systems (how we value time and money and experience and the general configuration of all of those concerns).

02/20/2021

Embroidery symbol via Alan Watts. Travel Books. David and Alexandra Brown’s wedding and Druid Heights. And the music at their wedding and talking about that musician with Beaux in Nashville during a pandemic. Also, recently picked up a copy of *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (which sounds better than “had delivered to my house for free. I’m a club member…). 42 is the answer to everything. During the fall I took two trips. One was to a mountain. And the other was across a desert. The first journey became known as *The IDES and 8* and the second one, which as yet is still on going, *The Journey of Elijah*. Perhaps being so fixed. Stiller in many ways than perhaps ever, I am longing out and out more. I’ve put myself in such a fit of writing. Ideas have ideas and I don’t always know if I should just hack away at a project, or notate the bejesus out of everything do that I can someday maybe find my way back in.6.

92+

I wish I felt more comfortable. There must have been something good about that guy. I couldn’t figure it out though. Not at first at least.

The IDES and the IDES

The U-Haul truck and moving on.

My Achillies Heel and drinking. Family is a trigger. Socializing is a huge trigger.

Can I socialize without alcohol. Odsibian Sotne Block, magic eight ball, his friends bna’s album. Getting new ideas as he shakes it. I just realized that I have to sober up all the way to get to the source. Shit. That is the desert. That doesn’t mean quits, just means reigning in your substances and sweating out the jitterbugs. Think of the reward on the oter side of a really deep, deep up. Keep stretching. Focus on the new. Focus on the real. Heal. Love. Be kind. Stop this blindness. You dictate the thrythms. Np”? The ides and eight. The gifts of the ides. The journey of Elijah. The on going journey. The evolving process. The 100s of pages littering the way. The projgress swith coding. The progress with finig a ay to take care of my boby and do this type of standing or sitting typing work. Finding my rhythm, finding my stride.

2/25/2021

You are a father now. A husband. Pictures of Alice sleeping near, calm, angelic, contented, warm, changed, feed, heathy, your sense of purpose complete. Keep the baby safe, keep the baby loved, keep the baby close.

Meeting our immediately physical needs takes on a much deeper, more emotional, textured, unmitigated directness. Clothing yourself- tears at the wrong boots. But you said they were too small. Oh, you were lying about that so we would take the train and you wouldn’t have to walk now. Now you want to walk and wear the same boots that are suddenly not too small at all. But you lied, so we introduce the replacement boots. Hand-me-downs from your cousin, but you don’t want to wear those, you want to wear YOUR boots, and what is she saying that one lie and your FOREVER boots are just tossed into the donate bag. And snow pants and layers and kids running away to corners to hide and fighting with thumbs in mittens for hands that can’t quite separate on finger from the others on command and so heads outside with a limp flipper of an appendage, her thumb floating somewhere beneath the pink polar fleece material with her other undulating digits. Into the cold, to stand, or sit, or fall in the snow and cry, or beg to be tossed into a snowbank you almost disappear into. Kids love to be scooped up and tossed and hugged. Betsy and I hug in the morning after Esme logs on to Kindergarten and Helena is sitting at the table in her blue unicorn pajamas munching on a “breakfast cookie” (oats, quinoa… banana…peanut butter… chocolate… brown sugar. I look over betsy’s shoulder and Helena has put her cookie down and has her hands upraised. She wants in on the morning lovefest. What a delight to have a toddler call to you from the other side of the room because she wants in on a hug with you and your wife. What a cozy, wholesome, transcendent, mundane morning scene. I am so blessed, I am so blessed.

Justin Bjork has been on my mind the last few days. I have cried twice. My weird circulation issue in my legs, my tense and acid worn tongue, the white bacteria bloom on my tongue probably from too much acidic coffee, beer, Marie Sharpe’s Smokin’ hot sauce. A bruise appeared on my throat yesterday, right above my trachea. It doesn’t hurt at all but it is pretty disconcerting. I believe that it is from Esme holding and swinging around my neck, but regardless, I will be happy to see it resolve itself. Over the fall I have dealt with self-diagnosed costochontritis which may not have ben a 100% accurate diagnosis, but following through on my Musculo-skeletal self-therapy, my rid cage feels much improved and the determination I felt last May as I tried to realign my deeply broken body— something to do with going from a very active working rhythm to an extremely sedentary one and then over extending my left knew when Esme hopped up on my lap while I was studying. May was an intensive stretching period. Getting up early, stretching for hours, sitting in these passive, leg propped up configurations to allow my body to settle back into its normal shape. Then I spent June doing push ups and making sure that my neck and shoulders were as tight and tension laden as possible. Then I blew my achilles heal and had to really take a break from running. That was six months ago. My attitude towards running has shifted, and I don’t even want to plant a flag down and say— fuck it, I am done with running, but I think my perspective has changed. In some ways I was seeking to find ways for the writing to searve my running. Or for my writing, my working, my living to be fueled by running. Where did I get that from? It is not a bdb approach honestly. Something to structure your day around. A guiding habit/ principle grounded in health and performance and goal setting.

The commitment of running, the hours on the road, the preparation, the cool down, the showering, at least the way I do it can easily begin to creep in and overtake my whole day. The worst is the run that dove tails into like 5 unshowered hours afterward because one things leads to another. Your boundaries of your workout world get hazy and loose and ragged and begin to tread on time for other things. I suppose in the end it is a simple act of PRIORITIZING and dealing with the fallout FOMO when certain priorities TRUMP other priorities. I think the more and more difficult and painful and conflicted these decisions are, the closer you are to making a good one. The rose bush metaphor comes to mind. Prune the budding buds back to send more resources to the top contenders… top contenders of what? Beauty? Financial security?

I dove into the luxury retail industry because I saw an opportunity to get into a job that would allow betsy not to work while at the same time having a venue to use and improve my Chinese skills. I knew I had to commit to something. So I did and I got rejected. And I tried again and I got rejected and then I tried again and I got hired at $12 an hour as maybe a cashier or maybe not a cashier depending on who you talked to in the elaborate managerial cadre of the 6 storey (including the basement) behemoth of a Burberry store where I was hired on.

After a few months I had a few additional requirements. I wanted all the merchandise locked up, I didn’t want anything else to fold, and I wanted to be making the commission. My quarter at Burberry was enough of a resume builder to start applying for sales jobs again. Just enough of a resume boost “BURBERRY” to get me past any wary regional manager worried of sticking his or her neck out for an ESL teacher. A “BURBERRY” man, well that is another story! Sidenote— according to my former Korean ESL students a “BURBERRY” man in Korea is a dirty old pervert of stalks around Seoul in a trench coat flashing people.

Getting this job and forging this career and moving millions of dollars of merchandise was good for me. I think it gave me an objective, non-intellectual, challenging, taxing, grinding job that I could WORK and learn the value of work and the long game brutality of work. The VIOLENCE of work. The separation. The alienation. The obsession. The inescapable politics and bickering. The passive-aggressiveness. The micro-aggressions from co-workers and clients. The human sponge aspect of the job where it is your role to absort the angst and frustration and displeasure of you client. Guiding them patiently, soothingly, inspiringly, intimately towards to culmination of way-overpaying for a timekeeping device. But they can afford it. How do you celebrate this abundance? You mirror. You get a sense of their values and interests and enthusiasms and you mirror the shit out of it. And if you are really good at it your don’t come off as a money-grubbing sychophant, whiling away the golden mid-career years of his fleeting youth by caressing the egos, a fluffer for celebrations and accomplishments. For what is a way-over priced timepiece than an intricately constructed symbol. I still really don’t give a shit about watches. Though I will say I can appreciate what intricately constructed symbols they are and the brands that they represent.

I will definitely say that I enjoyed representing OMEGA and ROLEX. Brand representation for products that you believe in in their respective market is a pleasure. It was the backbone of all of my client interactions and that solid tent post to keep the interaction clear and positive and SYMBOL focused. The brand and the product that the brand exemplified was the interface for these interactions. I love a clear interface. I love knowing what my role is and what my tasks are and objectively being able to go down a list to check that I am proceeding correctly and having a mental mapl of what went wrong or what was missed on the other side of the interaction. I got very comfortable with the whole arch of the job I began to get a good sense of what was a waste of time and what was an important investment of time.

I found my bliss 4 years ago in February 2016. It was the culmination of almost 4 years of selling. The slow development had more to do with limited access to technology and a fragmented base of time to develop something, but after 5 years I came up with an AGILE, USEFUL, SIMPIFYING, ABSTRACTING, BUSINESS DEVELOPING, and DRIVING tool. The idea of which was not the innovation, but rather the workflow and deployment of it. It allowed me to completely move away from the unwieldy stack of client cards that my colleagues lugged around, making the sales process feel like some 10,000 piece puzzle that was never ending and also missing pieces. Instead, I embraced OUTLOOK and “hacked” it to use sit in a very specific way that met my sales needs and goals. I was seeing the technology, not as some laboriously distracting learning curve, but instead as a digital solution to eradicate many of the gnawing inefficiencies of the sales process. This process led to steady sales increases, more moment to moment wherewithal, more fluid transitions project to project, better note taking and CRM accuracy and completeness. I had a good low-latency TECH solution that I firmly believed would make my job and life better and I was completely COMMITTED to the process. In fact the process really became my job. What I was doing at literally every moment of the day related to the process and my “STACK” of tasks. With my workflow simplied, my sales process refined I went on to have what was up unto that point my best year of sales. Breaking my previous best year by 250% (which part of this was selling a more popular, higher average price point of a timepiece), but in an industry (like all industries) obsessed with growth, this felt like growth and I was growing.

This dovetailed into beging headhunted off LinkedIn by the boutique manger at GRAFF diamonds, one of the premier diamond houses in the world. This move led me even deeper into the world of luxury retail and while, obviously, it was not the ultimate line of work for me, as my first taste of TECH tinkering had planted a seed which started sprouting shoots during my time at GRAFF, specifically in the form of a $9.99 MOOC that I purchased from Udemy— the course put together by a wonderfully staid, but enthusiastic young New Yorker named Boris. My time with Boris became my coding womb of sorts. Him cheery step by step taking the ineffable logic of computing and turning it into a kitchen recipe in which you use something akin to philiosophical thought to create calculators. I had always enjoyed philosophical thought, but had over the years begun to feel that despite its emphasis on clarity and sound thinking, philosophy had a way of somehow making the world more complex and less comprehensible as opposed to some illuminating, enlightening, life-affriming, life opening, heaven parting, soul-grounding. Programming on the other hand, seemed to take similar logic and symbolic language and conceptual complexity, but turn it instead to the solving of super practical, objective issues which either resolve, reach their solution, or throw you a big fat red ERROR message with some jargony explication of where you fucked up, setting you up for a potentially maddening, or potentially transcendent round of debugging, witch-hunting, fact-finder, puzzle solving. An iterative approach to problem solving that I find sits with me rather nicely. I have always really, really tried to learn from my mistakes. And the mistakes of others. The more mistakes. The more data points. Mistakes are super important. There is a reason that Lebron James is one of greatest of all time when it comes to turnovers, missed shots, missed free throws. He is Casey Goodman as a 5th grader flinging the ball repeatedly every time he touches it. Shooting and shooting and shooting in some little shit kid inspired act of skill building arrogance. I am short and chubby, but fuck all you all I am taking the shot, just try and stop me. He continued his rambunctious was and continued to battle in city leagues and regionally elite adult basketball tournaments well into his 30s until his body— knnes, elbow, back made it damn near impossible to keep working his job as a frozen frood truck packer. Managing the unheated depot of giant freezes and truck bay (sometimes freezing completely in a precipitous dive down to the gtravel driveway. He slipped and fell and fucked up his back and didn’t have sick leave and he needed his body now to work, work, body, don’t stop working now, I need you, move those fucking pizzas. Move those fucking quarts of ice cream and corn dogs and all that other frozen shit. Get it in thr truck. Get it out of here around the UP to the good grocers in Nowary and Iron Mountain, Skandia, Marquette, Ishpeming, Negaunee, L’Anse, take the truck across the channel into the Keeweenaw peninsula, right up to the end of US 41 at Ft. Wikins state park among the Estivant pines (Edward Estivant of Paris), which are one of the last old growth white pine stands in Michigan. Weymouth pines in England as Captain George Weymouth brought seeds of the species back to England in 1605. I have never had that kind of confidence. But it is something you kind of need in life about somethings at some point.

But the scenery is back cloth, merely, for lily bearing Angels who fluttered to earth or play violins in lutes at negativities; martyrdoms are inactive in front of it, miracles take place, in Mystic marriages, scenes of torture, crucifixions, funerals and resurrections; Processions when rival armies close in a deadlock of striped lances, in ascetic Gray beard strikes his breast with a stone or writes an electron while a lion slumbers at his feet; a sainted stripling is riddled with crossbow bolts and loved prelate's collapse with upcast eyes and swords embedded across their tonsures now all these transactions strike the eyes with the monopolize ING impact; For five centuries and more, in many thousands of frames, they have been stealing the scene; And when the strange deeds are absent recognition is much slower than it is in the low countries, where the precedence is reversed. (ATofG—Patrick Leigh Fermor- 28)

*Soul Mountain*

*A Time of Gifts*

*A Year Away*

*Hitchhiker’s guide to the Galaxy*

*Journey to the East*

*The Blood Meridan*

*The Future of Nostalgia*

*The Arcade Project*

*Journey to the West*

*Eloquent Javascript*

*The Well-rounded Rubyist*

*Practical Object Oriented Design*

04/26/2021

And what is this exactly? Therapy? Expression? Truth? Searching? Yearning. An extension of and an engagement with the word. An optimistic act. A turn of phrase. The repetiion of practice. The surrender. The Settling. The abuse. The deceit. The hding. The hide away. The shame. The transgression. The patrimony. The multiple perspectives. The weight of narrative. Its falseness. The rambling incantations. And all of this in a good faith act at collection.

It was so good to talk to you! We missed more about Alice and Morgan and D.C. existence and your job and what you guys are eating these day and what you are putting in your ears and how you walk with God is which I say in earnestness at the risk of opening myself up for attacks from my mother for being disingenuous.

Frankly though I did not want to grill you on future plans. That what next question will resolve itself in time I am sure. I don’t know about you, but I prefer head down doing to pining away after some hypothetically more ordered future. You need both certainly. But What I want is a plan, or a ttrajectory and then I would rather not have to talk and talk about it while I am putting the work in to get there. I suppose this is a sort of keeping the middle miles to myself. Working through the work to get from A to B. Figuring out how to work through the work. Learning my Emotinoal BM protocols well and executing them.

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.

04/26/2021

So much not explored the conversation goes on and on. I tend to get on a roll after not talking much, feel free to tell me to put a sock in it or abruptly change the topic if there is something more pressing than the randomn line I may have wandered down

* + A playlist of music, I have several accruing playlists: Code 2020, Happy Afternoon, Mellooooo, a dance list… cause you know when you suddenly want to dance and you can’t think of a song.

Coding journey has been somewhat Quitotic. Trying to understand and apply Agile mindset. Now I am creating an Agile Task Management/task tracker.

Finally getting my Address book action/intention and or touch point tracker and or action/intention tracker/recorder. And having this grow organically out of the time clock, out of all the sprawling spawning journal projects. Breaking down the issue. Identifying needs. Knowledge gaps. Learning opportunities. Assessing costs (learning, time, drag on other processes)

Am I making a mistake? Tell me I’m making a mistake.

**Alsatian Darn**

Only feel a chill whenever I come out of my shell  
Only feel a chill whenever I come out of my shell  
I'd surely lie if I said that I was sure that it might  
Work out  
  
[Chorus]  
Now, I won't let it slide  
No, I won't let it slip up  
No, I won't let it slide  
No, I won't let it slip up  
No I won't  
  
[Bridge 1]  
Found a way and I feel like I shouldn't let go  
Drop a bomb on the spots where my doubt streams grow  
What to do when the things that I want don't allow  
For the handful of mouths that I'm trying to feed  
  
[Bridge 2]  
Got to do what you've got to do  
What you've got to do (x2)  
  
What weighs on my mind  
So I can't get sleep at night  
  
[Bridge 3]  
Say, can I make a bad mistake?  
Say what it is I want to say to you  
Say what?  
  
Can I make a bad mistake  
Say what it is I want to say to you  
Say what?  
(x5)

Sabotage by the Beastie Boys on a Tuesday afternoon… Your Crystal Ball ain’t so crystal clear…

Shut me down with the push of you button.

06/01/2021

My responsibility has found a place.

06/15/2021

Still thinking about that idea to do a “Writer’s Workshop” with Caleb, to promote writing as a way to connect as a family, deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world, and ensure that our literacy—both passive and active continue to develop as we age and grow and find ourselves learning increasingly complex subjects.

07/06/2021

**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.

08/21/2021

Appreciating the job that he and Morgan are doing with Alice. She is obviously a very loved little girl. Golfing was a good time and set a nice precedent for the future. Ben and Adam would likely fit well into the fold. Dad and Hans would give us two foursomes.

Kayaking, hanging out on the porch, didn’t get a jog in, but so it goes.

Marquette was great. Sugarloaf. Definitely could have gone for an overnight there.

I am sorry I brought up Mom’s ridiculous comment about Genevieve being simple and the insensitivity of it and the sort of inappropriateness of it.

Her way of speaking “honestly” but unnecessarily. Losing herself in her thinking about loud revelry. Thinking out loud about Nick. Basically trying to get at how can we as uncles help him to be a bit more likeable. Same thing with Hans really. How can we help Hans be more likeable.

Did mom remember Dr. Beaver? He had the big beard I mentioned. Dad picking up sticks. He has to do it because Dolores isn’t around any more. Dolores park. That feeling of freedom and acceptance and transcendence. Trying to find that dream in the world. Trying to maintain that balance of creation and future openness and engagement while at the same time being able to manage everything that has gone on before.

The land of Taquamenon is something to be seen.

Imagine yourself a warrior

Or a Jesuit voyageur

Trying to buy what can’t be sold

Trying to buy what can’t be sold.

The locusts buzz was the most incessant sound. The most all encompassing were the blue angels, shredding the blue sky and billowy cloud peacefulness of the day like crock pot chicken just before presentation in the oversided aluminum foil

04/07/2021

Thank you, Caleb, I have very much enjoyed reading *A Time of Gifts* this year has been a challenging one and very static. The kinesis of Fermor’s prose and peregrinations was wonderful to lope through winter into spring with. My reading-- so sparse and unsubstantial these last few years has found new life and acquisitional fervor. “Gifts” was read unevenly through Susan Sontag Essays, Josephy Brodsky poems and essays, A book I keep coming back to by Svetlana Boym called *The Future of Nosalgia*, W.G. Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn*, Herman Hesse’s *Journey to the East* and *Siddhartha*, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* along with some “palm of the hand” style super short stories by Lydia Davis. This literacy plung has been something of a ballast against the deluge of web development language I have inundated myself with over the course of this year.

Breathing well and aware, well-hydrated and rested/refreshed, stretched and grounded, active and engaged

Dear Marcus,

**Pressure + resistance = flow**

Yo, bro!

01/30/2020

Dear Marcus,

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

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

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

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

We have faced the void. We have faced the plague

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

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

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

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

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

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

Okay, enough prying x2.

Much love,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rollerskates

篮球

文学

中文

手表

电脑

低估

黑石

笑佛

山峰

黄江

大沙

圣诞节

冬天

春天

回家

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now what has changed?

Be. Learn. Create.

2020年07月22日

Chicago, Ill.

Dear Marcus,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

that abuts the mighty flow interstates 90 and 94.

We watched the dear from the lowlight of the forest

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sent 11/17/2020**

Dear Marcus,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sometimes in surprising ways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Love ya, brother,

Aaron

02/08/2021

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

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

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

04/30/2020

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

Learning to be that being beyond attachment,

beyond responsibility, beyond interaction.

You are a being branching infinitely away

A mercury stream forthcoming

Infinite intricately cut channels to fill.

My radio confidently cranks out contradictions,

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

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

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

4/30/2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4/6/2020

Worldwide audiovisual entertainment vs. Cinema

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

Confronting the unexpected…

What are my themes?

Sobriety can be beautiful.

A sort of built in piety,

If you go lightly.

Mature vs. manure decisions

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

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

11/01/2020

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

07/15/2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

08/23/2021

Circle of Violence Gruff Rhys

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

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

08/27/2021

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

9/4/2021

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

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

10/28/2021

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

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

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

Much love,

Aaron.

Dear Marcus,

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

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

11/14/2021

Dear Marcus,

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

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

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

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

A FAILED ATTEMPT

[**current**](#current)

the letter

***Alone, astride highway 41***

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.

Again, again, why a letter. Like an invitation for a vampire. Cross the threshold. Rationalize the process. The way. This my anti-tweet. This my anti-tweet machine. My settling chamber anachronistic. The Anachronistic is fun and can be refreshing and kind of jarring and enlivening sometimes. Novel even.

But just the attempt to take a snap shot of any given moment or cross section of your life and trying to do it honesyly. If Hemingway made writing accessible to everyone, then DFW made it inadvisable to everyone. He hung himself. Dave Berman hung himself. Elliot Smith stabbed himself. Hemingway blew his head off. Robin Williams hung himself. Anthony Bourdain. INXS lead singer. David Carradine aka “Grasshopper”.

So much more fluent and organized and possessing the wherewithal and collected energy to ontextualize what the fuck I’m talking about.

I have found some modern efficiencies. Typing and saving text to file. Deconstructing the process of constrcftion. Doing it all out of order. Not worrying about order. Dating things for reference, but letting themese and topics and whateve else sneaks in to Shanghai my line of thought. Embracing my fragmentation. Leveraging my fragmentation. Finding abundance in expression and pressure release. Writing become about subtraction, editing, styling, settling, organizing, the more emotional stuff has been dashed out, discovered. The hard part is over. You got to that place where you were present enough to string a couple of sentences together. This is not something to take lightly or to underestimate. Because if you can find that state consistently and have in place a relatively inertialess editorial processing then you are suddenly transformed from being a frustrated, unproductive, sullen, down on himself writer into a productive, creating, creative, discipline, hopeful, ambitious, momentum building journeyman of words.

11/12/2021

Alcohol floated me along as inspiration dissipated.

05/24/2021

You are annoyed with me because Helena on my watch while I was trying to work on the porch. You are not that annoyed with me. But I am annoyed with it as another sign of the fall out of our destabilized roles. I am so tired of fighting these battles, but they have to be fought. I have to write and I have to code and I have to work and I do not need to feel guilty about the fact that my parenting suffers because of these things. My parenting suffers because of these things because I do not have the wherewithal for them because I am trying to muster the wherewithal to write better and finally turn the corner on my relationship with writing and code better so I can get a job in the tech industry based on my technical ability, which also trying to plug in my free time with reading (to support my writing and tech and just general solid, creative mental health), continue to completely evolve the way I take care of my body, and keep pursuing my life long goal of being truly bilingual in English and Mandarin.

05/22/2021

Don’t feel good. Slogging. Purple-blue bruise on left shoulder from Moderna shot. Lethargic. Feeling badly that she has not gotten Helena dressed. She is low energy and speaks slower than normal and is slightly more curved forward in the shoulders like she is bracing from a loud noise. She feels like she has not done anything and is not motivated to do anything. I am not trying to make a value judgement here, I am just trying to juxtapose our different headspaces, as her coming in to inform me of all of this, her black cloud that is trying to work up the motivation to take a shower and me in the morning popping up early to smoke and stretch and shower to keep the plausibility possible. And maybe my duplicity which is partially fueling my productively by providing an emotional block from your mental health struggles and turmultuous sense of being unsettled.

Can you at least get her dressed she says as I wait mid-sentence to continue trying to barrel through my ridiculously inefficient writing project, 1200 pages behind in my editing process. Feeling unsure when any of the 60 odd pieces and hundreds of poem fragments that my process that spawned will round the corner to completion, or if any of them even really have to. Perhaps it is just the process that is necessary. I shoot that down because the starts to get a little dark. Like I am only living to write things that no one will ever read. I could be content with that if my other foundamentals could be worked out— meaning I really do think I could make a life with creative writing being a central concern and life organizing practice without having to have the practice financially support me. I think my dad’s running has been a powerful and practical example of how that can work out in his life. His engagement with writing comes out of a sense of necessity, discipline, community, health, tradition, life-organizing, time-management, self-defining, cultivation, unusual level of commitment, esoteric knowledge/specialized knowledge, life-organizing interface and self-defining reference activity.

05/20/2021

Your awkward use of language baffles me— weirdly causal and jokey about really important things and really sanctimonious and serious about others.

Beard oil.

That’s the kind of story you only tell your wife, buddy.

Ave Maria University.

Connected with the bartender.

Later— man, that guys parents must be really disappointed with him. He’s got a law degree and his running a bar. Give me a break.

My brother was always saying these cruel things about people behind their back. I remember being at his wedding and having his groomsmen bitch about him and what an ass he was. This was after one of the groomsmen have gotten divorced and just a few years before the other one did. They were both kind of assholes, which I had always kind of gotten the sense of, but had tolerated because I was younger than them and perhaps deserved some stern patronizing for all the important things I still had yet to learn which they had learned years ago and were now so bored with the information that they could hardly be bothered to go into it… but it they must… eye roll, head eye, minor seizure trying to access the deeply recessed esoteric fucking knowledge which has incrementally built up in their grey matter like feces impacted into the block colon.

05/17/2021

May have just found a new way to work with all the different files. Open with cmd, add, save, close. Keep things clean. Keep things simple. Keep things Booker T. Washington.

05/06/2021

The nice thing about being an extremely locked in introvert is that it is very easy to get all of the attention you need without having to pay a cent.

Time. Expenditures of time. What is your social media habit costing you? No really. An of your habits. What are you losing out on by continuing X behavior which consumes X quantity of resources(time, money, attention). The importance of budgeting time, money, attention.

Messages and behavior— Culture- we value these messages, we value these behaviors.

How we talk => input and output.

* The quintessential role of information consumption
* Advertising (paying for a piece of the public attention pie).

How is culture even possible with all of these underlying contradictions and tensions and ultimately soul crushing realities and potentialities for despair and of course our ultimate death which is a guaranteed phenomenon. Our worst fears are definitely going to be realized someday. What is fear? What do we fear? We fear missing out on things. I fear missing out on my life with my daughters and my wife and our extended family and friends because I don’t have the wherewithal to be physically present or fully emotionally and mentally present because of my inability to each an abiding peace about my vocational trajectory, sustainability, appeal. Confronting this achingly unresolved question and not just theoretically, but pragmatically has been the most abiding question that I have wrestled with over the last 20 years.

And how can a single text (story, film, poem, etc.) be shared between such wildly different cultural contexts and still create meaning? Hold truth? Emotion? How do cultural texts transmit between cultures? Is it the texts themselves or our attitude towards the texts?

The state of college sports, as it edges towards a more equitably just professionalized stage— why shouldn’t it change and evolve. Our economy has changed and evolved and continues to change and evolve. To survive in this country and culture you have to be focused on something, but you also have to avoid the trap of feeling like you have to focus on everything.

I have been feeling really critical of other people lately and I have been feeling really critical of myself. I am trying to evolve my thinking on social interactions and find ways in to being friendlier and my life affirming.

I also want be improve my ability to let things go. I said something lame because I was trying to be social when I didn’t feel like it… who cares. Let it go. Be kind, but don’t tolerate bullying. Let things go. Recognize that for systems to work there have to be checks and balances, check-ins and sit-downs and go-overs and do-overs. This is why these relationships are so intense. The love and connection is deep, but the potential for abuse on the neglect to smoothing spectrum is real and the necessity to great a family culture of consciously or unconsciously codified messages and behaviors. Invisible design. Designing by negation. Designing with time. Designing with intention. Designing with preparation.

At 42 I now have at long last, reached a theoretically tenable career path for literally the first time. In the past I had always been open to exploring different options, but very rarely making life decisions based on the job. More like I would like to focus on this in my life right now, but I need to support myself so I will do this job. And for the first part of my wrokig career by stitching together a string of serving and then teaching gigs and then luxury sales jobs I was able to support myself and then my girlfriend and later wife living in several international hubs for a time- briefy in Europe (Berlin), the Asia (Beijing), and then back to Chicago. Through the moves and the living and working I developed and change as a human being in both subtle and obvious ways.

Could write more about the culture that I came from and the culture that I entered. The symbols of the previous culture and symbols of the new culture. A miasma of ideas. Not some revolutionary minds. But smart, curious, funny, caustic, generous dudes.

Varied possibilities; manifold limitations.

Had he changed? Or was he still that stilted, sort of pueriole, half-formed mancub he lumbered through his twentieis as, his Hemingway paunch hanging proudly down. If he didn’t have the habit he’d be open to shooting it.

The Yoga Fanatic

* Exhaused mom, strung out Yoga dad chasing god and writing and language both human and computer. (11/19/2020)
* He was a thin, but thickening literary playboy (11/19/2020; 04/26/2021).

Layers: Lied about computer programing to write novel, novel reveals that he had been lying about drug use. I had it clearer in my mind before where each subsequent reveal shifted the perspective and deepened the narrative.

1. He: frantically studying to reboot career; she: put upon and exhausted and suspicious
2. He: actually working on a novel that has real potential; she: contrite and apologetic and confronting her own failed artistic ambitions, sacrificed for her family, supportive and also resentful.
3. He: talented writer, but disturbed, sociopathic liar; she: impressed with his artistic achievement and kind of the ultimate realization of their mutual younger goals, but in his commitment to them he has broken the trust and bond and openness with his wife, she feels distant and alienated and obfuscated, the enemy, anobstacle, something to be avoided or to at least keep in the dark. He has lost himself to the family and to her in his quest to ultimately take care of and provide for and have the wherewithal to connect and be present. Hemingway;’s simple trope of he had to work every day so that he could enjoy the rest of the day. This idea that work is a good necessary thing, but then the incredible importance of being bale to choose your own work. Work on your own things. Your father has been a good example of that seemingly. Both of our fathers. Teaching gave them a chance to engage and share, but also the smoke scree to pursue their own interests. My father with his endless home improvement and car projects and however you would characterize your own father’s decades of crasftsmenship and dedication and curating of his space and place. Its impressive and admireable, but I feel world’s away from either exact mindset, which is good and fine though I do take to heart what I have interrupted, misintterperted about their attitudes to work or how I perceived that they worked or heard about them working.

I have been so fucking scattered! This is something that I have struggled to contextualize. What is your responsibility to contextualize something like that. A psychological

**CURRENT**

**02/14/2022**

Wrote a reaction to Dan’s latest collection of drawings. Trying to overcome my digital dislocation. Stile.

**12/22/2021**

Quit for a month a Christmas, got lcear and rwot e a few steady handed letters. Turned the corner on program testing, then feel back into the old habit. Following the mercury trail. Seeking inspiration from your ragged lines. Trying to follow an intuitive line and ending up around depressed and depressive people.. people striving for the new and the original. People attempting to invest their identity on their creative prowess their ability to conjure meaning and delight and form from the swirling mess of masses all around them.

My manic run ray is streaming down on all that has meaning.

**11/26/2021**

You understand the kind of life you want and understand that you need to keep working to build the professional skills you need to do the kind of work you want to do to make your imagined life possible.

You need to pick a direction and just hammer. You need to pick your shit and start shoveling. Pick your problems.

I may have lost my mind attempting to forge a new identity… but I think that might have been the point.

**11/25/2021**

Not a good person-- need more time.

Not a good linguist-- need more time.

Not a good listener-- need more time.

Not a good novelist-- need more time.

Not a good musician-- need more time.

Not a good computer scientist-- need more time

**11/23/2021**

Old, persistent, unwanted thoughts that lead to repetitive behaviors or compulsions.

**11/01/2021**

How do you escape these false narratives. How do you get a new perspective? How do you travel to a new city. I feel kind of manic and what is the problem? The problem is quitting? Weed? Right? Is that the only problem? Just get to work. My typing feels good. Where am I? What is the reality ofe this paranoia? I have come a long way with programming and aI still have a long way to go, but I am nervous as to whether my weed intact is going to mess that up, just like I was worried about my back messing up the process. None of this is existential. All of this is fundamental. Get to work. Keep things Categorized. You have changed. You hae become a difference person. A better person. You can come through this.

### Mania and hypomania

Both a manic and a hypomanic episode include three or more of these symptoms:

* Abnormally upbeat, jumpy or wired
* Increased activity, energy or agitation
* Exaggerated sense of well-being and self-confidence (euphoria)
* Decreased need for sleep
* Unusual talkativeness
* Racing thoughts
* Distractibility
* Poor decision-making — for example, going on buying sprees, taking sexual risks or making foolish investments

**Major depressive episode**

* Depressed mood, such as feeling sad, empty, hopeless or tearful (in children and teens, depressed mood can appear as irritability)
* Marked loss of interest or feeling no pleasure in all — or almost all — activities
* Significant weight loss when not dieting, weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite (in children, failure to gain weight as expected can be a sign of depression)
* Either insomnia or sleeping too much
* Either restlessness or slowed behavior
* Fatigue or loss of energy
* Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
* Decreased ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness
* Thinking about, planning or attempting suicide

11/01/2021

I am depressed and I have been for a long time because I am stressed about this transition, but I am not stressed about this transition. I am stressed about not being able to settle into myself.

And the he was quiet and he realized he was just sitting there waiting until he went out and smoked again and a sucking sound, very hollow, some layer of traffic in the city at night.

His white board said 9/9/2021. It was 11/03/2021. He sighed and thought about all the ways he had fucked up trying to learn to code.

**10/31/2021**

My wherewithal for human kindness and connection is very much dampened. Muffled up by stress and THC and alcohol as I mitigate my poorly ordered stresses. As I try and switch my dresses. Seek as my soul confesses

**10/28/2021**

And perhaps the proof was in the pudding

Got tired of seeing 10% and feeling like I was seeing 110%

**10/24/2021**

He pours the next whisky all over the side of the child’s water glass. He’d just been able to slip outside and get stoned while his wife dried their elder daughter’s hair with a blow drier, giving him aural cover to slip out the back door. While he hits the chillum, he watches the younger daughter, the toddler enter the kitchen, crumble up a pre-packed cookie from on fo the three birthday parties over the weekend and then pick up his wife’s phone and then with surprisingly intuitive randomness access and starts swiping through her phone.

He is officially dad drunk, screwballing, and his left side is throbbing. His legs suddenly feel rubbery and he wonders if he’ll be hung over in the morning. And all was free and fun until he sudden felt very drunk and very sloppy and the walls kept creeping up on him, getting in his way. And the down pour coming on and day is completely saturated.

Sitting. Chilled by an open window in the half-light of the morning and the city, breathing its morn with its morning incessance.

I’ve gained some good ground. I have established distance with my family.

I think I have learned something about the authorial voice and am slowing warming up to authentically playing around with it.

Would I be well served lowering my THC, caffeine and alcohol intake and, you know, just seeing how it goes.

Depressed, distant. Everything compounding everything else.

Someday I won’t be in an existential crisis and that will be nice.

What are these trailing off thoughts, the addicts regrets.

Transition is difficult.

Stretching and bodily groundedness is a major part of the foundation of my coding.

Stretching is my foundation. Not writing.

9/8/2021

Simultaneously trying to learn a new skill set (uphack myself to a better work/life/creation/life balance), a technical skill et to change careers, write in a more nourishingly way, ground myself in my identify with my family, overcome my lazy dependency on alcohol and caffeine and THC.

Struggling with this desire/longing/need to connect/settle/be cool.

Direty, word white tennis shoes, the puffy, padded, geeric kind that elderly people wear pristinely but some poor alcoholic middle aged people will where worn down and dirty white, with spits and cracks in the rubber. The kind of shoes you where when you are poor and waiting in lines and feeling tired and sick and hungover or in withdrawl. Soned and quiet. Stoned and fragmented. Why am I such a poor listener. Acquirring style requires trying things and winnowing.

**02/24/2021**

Busted. Perhaps now with my wife’s condemnation fresh in my ears I can leverage this to a hard quit. Seems like the perfect time to showcase my solid self-control and habitual panche.

The drugs don’t work they only make it worse. Deeper into Faerie. Fair enough.

Arriving at a blessed place, I put don’t roots. In this blessed place beside the river.

Feel compelled to hid my writing under my coding notes. Both so I can jot down ideas as and if they come up, but also because I feel guilty to be tacking time away from coding my stated mission, my reason for cloistering myself away from my family—my wife, my children. If it was some other boss demanding my time, stripping my time, it iswas okay, it was necessary, I out-sourced that decision making. If the worked sucked and was inconvenient we could leer at old man Razny for being such a mean and unreasonable cuss. Now all I could do was hate myself and seek ways to blunt to loathing as I sunk deeper into my self-isolation and study induced self-encapsulation.

But it was an unhealthy dichotomy, because coding was find, soulless, arbitrary coding was a completely defensible a salutary occupation, but pursuing my soul work, my engaged writing, my soul strip mining attempt to take control and come into my own in my craft my actual vocation seemed like something too shameful, too indulgent, too unearned, too on credit, too unrealistic, if I have not transformed into a fully formed writer by now then when, if ever?

But the proof was in the pudding, no? The writing was healing me. I was getting stronger and more settled. I was making progress with coding despite myself, despite my breaks and breakdowns, distractions and meanderings. I was habituating the things that I was learning and I was feeling more and more confident that a career in the tech sector was both viable, but also desirable. That it fit with my way or working, or my potential way of working. I just had to give it time. I just had to keep making the effort. Following the intuition. Writing. Editing. Layering. Compiling. Composing.

Or am I simply just a burnt-out never quite fully formed creative with a smattering of skills that fail to add up to the sum of their parts. This is a pretty sad summary compared with being a rejuvenated professional jumping into the tech world with the pep and vigor of an over eager adult learner. A mind prepped for this adventure by years of language study and a solid liberal arts back ground that set me up well to be a life-long learner.

And it is hard to talk about the now—because the now keeps changing, but my now, now, at least feels like it has some good track lain. There’s some blasting that needs to be done just ahead. Some tunneling too, before we can bring the locomotive through.

Ever new, protean, weather-like, amorphous, hardened, then suddenly soft, sunlight in cold, cool breeze in heat.

I can either despair at all of these expanding projects or I can celebrate the continued ambition and expansion of my soul.

Weed and solfeggio frequencies put me a world away.

And then to do this without drugs—to do this without drink—to do this with my body laid out on an alter—weakened with a dagger through my spleen—myth of man—mother myth of love, of the purity of old women’s worry. Are these strategic worries or just static.

02/24/2021

Betsy is trying to martial the girls out the door. Esme is protesting – she doesn’t want to wear new boots from cousin, but her old boots which are too small for her and hurt her feet. Though they don’t actually hurt her feet, but she said that they did the other day so that she could convince betsy to take the ‘el’ train home instead of having her walk. Her toe had hurt so badly she had said that that they just absolutely had to take the train back home from preschool. Esme, you sobbed on the sidewalk and said you couldn’t take another step forward.

Can you help facilitate a little—I am facing the wall playing guitar, happily deconstructing a B chord—feeling music freer and more immediate than at any other time in the previous 4 decades. Something has opened in me, some faculty has quickened or developed or something else something else in me stepped aside, retired.

Don’t confuse the ritual for the reward.

And I was sick and I finally went straight on the 24th of February, 2021. At last, at last returning to the source.

Vidar finally stepped up, as Floyd finally stepped aside.

Mistakes are one’s proof of agency.

Focus, plan, timeliness, networking, projects, lectures, talks, forums, open houses, get groomed, come out, get real sober, radically sober, extremely sober,

Don’t lay back, don’t bask, don’t wallow.

A healthy stream never basks, a healthy stream never wallows.

And so now, I decided, then and there at 1356 on 2/24/2021, the fine Wednesday that it was, to proceed ahead full sober and settled. Good things were certainly in store. Sober sailing would lead me to new shores. My habits would always be there for me if I really needed them. We’ll call it a 4 day holiday—feel free to write or mediate or whatever you need.

***I’m feeling needy and obsessive when it comes to music. I am feeling needy and obsessive when it comes to writing. I am feeling needy and obsessive when it comes to programming. I think I must be doing something right.***

The post office had been lost. They were both now on their own independent and mutually exclusive and esoteric head trip—but at least they were both being honest about it.

**02/23/2021**

Such adorable children and a goodly amount of legal drugs to make sure they get the appreciation that they deserve.

A day began smoking is a commitment to keep it up the whole day or risk losing a lot of productivity.

Tech wants to serve the writing; writing wants to serve the tech.

**02/08/2021**

My wife is not happy with me about writing. I continue to write when she goes out and I have Helena watch a video. When she comes back Helena is still watching a video and I am still writing and my wife is annoyed with me and I can’t blame her. I am annoyed with me, I should be spending time with my daughter—I should be digging through programming notes and building out various web development projects. I should be reading Chinese and reading books in English and listening to podcast or watching shows or films or all that cool stuff on youtube or catching up with EVERYONE on social media and various frequently checked news sources or reading my magazines or reading to my girls, or doing the dishes or cleaning or

**02/01/2021**

Selfish sex in the morning. Getting off easy.

Cum on the sheets.

Then feel sad in the morning

Upset in your gut

Killing time till you go to faerie.

The finished works, rounded curves

Duplicated missions, loping sorties

Strangled lines, lies

Pulling your shit together each dawn

Transcending self—dip so deeply down

That you implode in an act of infinite recursion.

I’ve been here before, I’ve been here before, I’ve been

Its either my homecoming or my ultimate undoing.

Spooning with the devil to keep the chill out all night

Spooning with the devil to keep the woodman in line.

Spooning with the devil to move on down the line.

Pining for my mother’s love from another time.

Father in his middle miles

Moving further down the line.

**01/29/2021**

Inattentive—

Scraped a layer of middle finger off.

Poor timing exiting the kitchen on to the porch and trailing my hand behind to close the door.

Lost in thought? I don’t know. Floppy. Floating. Careless.

**01/28/2021**

In the telling our enthusiasm for the story all but ceased.

Modern life is a sort of Madness. Very much a virtual reality. Once augmented to it—all our needs are met, our needs are met in their time, many days not even leaving the apartment. January harder than February because of February still being after January.

**01/22/2021**

Mood Swings, depression, feelings of anxiety, frustration, agitation.

Triggers of poor mental health:

* Self-esteem
* Not disciplined enough
* Not smart enough
* Not organized enough
* Perceived judgement
* Projected national tumult on relationship
* Lies of Trump
* Lies of Lance Armstrong

01/07/2021

**Vicious loop or not writing and not connecting**

Want to connect with people

Want to connect through writing

Conflicted about writing

Don’t write

Don’t connect

Will connect and write!!

Alcohol in veins, suddenly shit to say.

Now I am bloated and chemically crashed,

Drowsy and eye-stained, back strung, pre-emptively hungover

1/05/2021

I’ll spend your 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.

Writing away through the afternoon,

nothing to gain from staying the same,

suppose it was time for a change.

12/26/2020

I have to learn to write like this without cannabis—there is such a freedom in this—a pouring forth into the river or ideas and experience—no longer squeezing overlapping, compressing for spontaneous expression, simply relaxing, letting settle, and seeing what just might bubble up.

Giving yourself over to the desperate thoughts.

The multitudes of Wittman.

Man, myth, legend, grandiose writer god extraordinaire,

The stone Monkey who would take on heaven.

Daring fully monkey wild to snatch a peach in his passing.

Waiting for the deluge of Covid literature.

01/04/2020

Feeling fragmented by my THC consumption. Need to stop now. Everything just a little off.

12/23/2020

I’ve been thinking in such ramshackle structures and systems for so long that I can not longer hope to differentiate the wisdom from the bullshit.

Wounded, alcoholic, career anxiety, physical challenges, economic worries, battling cycles of crippling self-doubt and self-recrimination.

Do you feel threatened or uncomfortable when confronted by people you do not understand?

Don’t believe I am in your target audience.

05MAY 2016

I can’t speak for you, but I am not a big fan of myself.

I am neither as compassionate or arrogant as I would like to be.

And if not talented, at least deadly effective?

And if not deadly effective then at least productive.

And if not productive then at least blindingly busy.

02APRIL2020

* reading iii:
* **q: Where to?**
* m: Queen of Pentacles
* f: Seven of Cups (reversed)
* =: Two of Swords (reversed)
* m: Queen of Pentacles
* Security, liberty is all on the table. The offer has been made. You can either choose to accept it or reject it. 丰富盛意都等你。已经提供了。接受拒绝就看你。
* 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.
* 精卫鸟和女娃- 决心，重新支持
* 坚持就能胜利。
* =: Two of Swords (reversed)
* If I can persevere and bring my heart and mouth in line I can step into harmony with my life. With my wife. She kneels blindfolded and trusting to follow where I lead. But instead she is suspended as the hanging man. Caught in limbo, trusting, but running into my imposture, falsehood, duplicity, and disloyalty. The moon weighs me down and the night defeats me with each rise. I take flight, but am ultimately ground down. Binding my mind to false habits inhibits me from full embracing my body and the body of my writing, I am too cerebral and my senses overcome my sense. My appetites overcome my emotional acuity. If I can unite my heart into just one will, I can succeed, step forward and accept the bounty of her love and intimacy.
* The hoodwinked figure has already committed to trust and be faithful. Will you do the same?

“Into her arms.”

**02APRIL2020**

There is something in this family that is off. That is blown. That is sidestepped. That is thrown out-of-whack. The memory heartdrive had me fitted and flat. Sitting in the carpack, smoking out back. Quack goes the duck, with any luck we’ll have the whole flock bagged by sunup. Things are looking up. Unless you’re not are a duck I suppose. It all hinges on perspective.

Battling back… battling back against the black. She won’t let me become that thing that I don’t want to become. She won’t let me fall apart. Falling into the abyss of my bad habits. She helped me right the ship. I can step forward with the understanding that I can do this. I can transform in this month. I will transform this month and I will feel good about it.

**06APRIL2020**

And this is the horror…that it won’t get better. That I will wake up everyday for the rest of my life and feel this incomplete task looming over me. And just by being, I will be failing. Just be existing I will be fucking up because I still haven’t found my task. I still haven’t figured out my personal economy.

I am on the right track though. Who can say I am not on the right track? I have a vision. I have a vision to be a writer and a translator and regardless if that comes to full fruition, the vision itself still has some gas. The vision itself can center me and expel my anxious energy, channel it into something that I can mold over time. Something that I can throw ahead of me and regard as a mirror, allowing me to see back through the season.

Why would you judge the shit out of that pastor? I suppose because he is from the south and protestant and likely pretty conservative in his politics.

We can question the politics at hand. The fact that countries are doing it all over the world tells me something. Is the story they are not telling us with Sweden is that they have way fewer citizens with preexisting conditions and they have a well-funded Socialized healthcare system that should be able to handle the surge?

Why haven’t I read any more Joseph Stiglitz since I did my degree at Valparaiso (10 years ago…That’s right I graduated from Valparaiso almost exactly 10 years ago and in the last decade I have built a resume around selling luxury watches. My wife and I have had two girls. I continue to struggle to find a long arching working rhythm and instead find myself in this cycle of initiatives that flare up and fade away. I am fragmented and inconsistent. I could blame my pot smoking. I could blame my drinking. I think we have moved passed that now as a big blocking factor. I hope. I am hopeful. I feel so closed in on today. But not smothered. Just sort of held in. Contained.

I woke up yesterday, early, with a little fire in my mind. I was hungover from my antics the previous two days of getting stoned and pissing betsy off the previous night and day drinking and getting slurry the next night. Not running has definitely played a part in that. I allowed myself to slink into this inaccessible place. This place where I had a layer of pain and a layer of chemical buffer to keep me from engaging with the world around me. And I don’t see the point of that, unless the point is to close out the world so I can concentrate on this task at hand. Chinese, writing, coding. I don’t have to be great. I don’t. I just have to be engaged and good.

If everything is ultimately ones and zeros, then today I am a zero. I have to work to get back to being a one.

An ecstatic vision of our country. A rambling act of discovery. What I ultimately found was kicks. And alcoholism. There are other ways to be you know? There are more than ones more than zeros.

Mark this day. A day that I didn’t get up quite as early as I had wanted to. A day that I am still feeling a little concussed. Like something has been removed from my brain.

I feel low today, but it is a sort of a consolidated low. Feels settled. Set. Unlikely to go lower. Unlikely to sink deeper. The self-loathing comes at me in a resigned manner. I feel very resigned this morning. I didn’t get up as early as I wanted to and I don’t feel a zing of production and I don’t feel a zing of inspiration. This is a good place to be though. I need to write into this. If this is where my writing leaves me then fantastic! Let’s walk away from this quasi writing as life-style situation if this is where is lands us. Let us take up gaming and pulp fiction. I feel so fragmented that I can’t even get through a pulp fiction novel in a timely fashion. In the interim I start studying Tarot and reading a dozen other fragments of books. Trying to find some kind of perch that I can express from.

The process of adding, dropping, cultivating ideas strikes me as a good one. I like the idea of being able to build something over time, but I am terrified that I will never find the consistency of being to keep the production going over that period of time to allow the material to evolve and mature and for my writing to evolve and mature. I have to love the process or it is just not worth it.

My latest stab, plead is for writing to be the vessel to guide me out of this closed canyon of excess substance use. I have been using alcohol and marijuana to the extent that it has been damaging my relationship with my wife. She has responded with hurt and frustration, but ultimately loves and accepts me and has not rejected me for it, despite the fact that I have been sneaky and less-than-forthcoming and at the expense of my sleep and health.

Some sort of sad facsimile of culture.

The sad thing about a lot of people’s soul writing is that it is really terrible. It is really stilted. It is really broken and shattered and all of their problems have not conspired to make them great writers. I don’t want my writing to be driven by my problems.

I could be in this same exact situation, easily, but with two hours ahead of me. I could be in this space with a coffee in hand and relaxing music playing. What an elevated existence that would be. Music, coffee, writing in English. What a European I am. Hacking away at my wound.

I could be in this same exact situation, but with two hours ahead of me… but… I felt like I needed to slip in a few sneaky beers and some whisky shots and got myself slurry and pissed my wife off and slept poorly and woke early and got high to try to balance it all out and spent the rest of the day feeling hung over and separate from myself. It was all I cold do to just get through a few pages of my Fantasy novel before I passed out on the couch… oh, did that feel good. And then I slept well and slept in and though I missed my chance to get some writing in, I now have a chance to begin again. Again, again, the phoenix again.

We have tasted the waters and the waters of the world are pure.

We have tasted the waters and the waters of the world are poison.

I need to read more Wittman. Emerson liked Wittman, of course he did. What was this wild cresting of energy and expression in the Victorian age? What was this wild expression of positivity and optimism in the Victorian Age? Where is that now? Where has the baseline gone? You cannot escape your time. You can try and escape your time, but you cannot escape your time. And a lot of the time I feel like I would be better served just reading more and writing not at all. Why can’t I just get up and read? Why can’t I just get up and sip coffee and read. That is a good feeling. That is a feeling that I want to preserve over time. I don’t want to be a ghost in my own household. I do want to have these things hard fought for. I do want these things to be pursued and pulled down. And if, when we are finally, the two of us, on the Savanna floor, predator and object of desire, will I regret the dusty miles I tread to embrace you here in the mud and blood or the day. Or will I hold your delicate neck trembling, my weathered fangs jagged from my many missed marks. Will I bath in the fount of your blood and be renewed?

My brother’s Catholicism is not very inspiring. Skeptical, but not in an actionable way. Skeptical in a something is not quite right here sort of way or I don’t like it or I don’t get it or I don’t have all the information. I am more apt to fall back on the non-expert argument, which does seem sort of passive, but are we not in the same boat, actionably? You have decided to be pissed off about it and I have decided to refrain judgement until it plays out a bit more. Typical agnostic I suppose. Hedging my bets.

I was hungover when I spoke to my Catholic brother and I should just not be hungover any more. It just fucks up your whole day. When Marcus and I had our late night. I felt pretty off most of the day, but was still able to get up and out and run a very solid 8K. I hadn’t smoked pot in over a month at that point… I’m just saying.

That said, everything is pointing to getting my drinking and my smoking in order. Really limiting it. Social distancing from it. The less access I have the more I will be able to

I think the problem with my taskbar is that I am always writing right at the bottom of the screen. I suppose I just need to keep my writing closer to the top of the screen and that will solve that issue.

I can’t take away the number of yellow pages I knocked out yesterday. If I can get through this month with 80 miles ran, all of those yellow pages brought out into the light of day and a few writing projects coming together, then I will not have too much to complain about. Also finishing diamond essentials. Also finishing my Ruby course.

I have an ability to strip everything away and return to some sort of primordial state. How can I articulate what this state is. I am not saying that it is an advantage, but it has its advantages. What is this mindframe… this framing of the mind that says we have advantages and disadvantages. For what? To figure what out? How could my collapse to zero be anything but negative. How can the withering away of my systems and projects be anything but proof of an undisciplined mind. We know these things. We hear these things and we think we understand them, but we do not until we actually live them.

Who is the Chinese philosopher that raised action above all else? He said something like there is only action. There is only action and nothing else.

Chinese language jobs at FTC… other governmental organizations…

[R.B. Bate- “Treastie on the Kaleidoscope (1819)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaleidoscope)

[Form Constant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Form_constant)- repeated patterns that show up in hallucinations be it medically or chemically catalyzed.

The sun today imbues this day with a brilliance and hope I had not expected! I don’t even want to get high or drunk today. I plan on getting a couple miles in, perhaps in combination with a bike trek. I started this morning feeling low and writing with a flaccid pen. I started this morning feeling feeling overwhelmed by my dissipated mind. I began this morning feeling disappointed that I did not begin this morning early enough. I did not begin this morning with coffee made. I did not begin this morning with a vision for what the day would be. I felt reactive and stuck in the mud of my mind. Not creative. Not a well of fire. Where is the well of fire? Where is the overriding faith that this momentum is moving you in the right direction.

How can you be interested in things- all things almost- and not become overwhelmed by your mediocrity at all things. Our economy rewards specialization. I ain’t that special. Do I despair or do I keep on pushing? You push. Of course, you push… you’re a Victorian.

**07APRIL2020**

Midnight stretching- yes! That is how I should use pot. Morning. Night. Not during the day. I don’t need pot to make me a good conversationalist. In fact, I know it makes me a fragmented conversationalist and makes my memory poor. I want to get the cake and eat it too. So yes stretch. Move your body in all of the ways that it can be moved. Be a good example for your daughter of physical self-care and health.

Use mirrors. Use mirrors and cameras to get over yourself. To improve the way that you present yourself. It could be good listening practice to be able to see someone speak Chinese with more frequency. Sit by open windows whe the breeze comes in from across the sea, warm Caribbean wind cooled as it approaches from across the lake.

And the bodys passed under the water in clear caskets. Everything was tinted read. I called to you and you responded with tinself words and the stars twinkled in approval. You did not have you final say. You did not say anything final. You were too caught up in typing. Putting words into the computer that you would perhaps never see again. I will not be long. I will not be here long.

Muttering of talisman and symbols. All of the people are poets with their symbols emblazoned before them. Sports teams. Colleges. Learning, status, meaning, tradition, history, time. Time passed. Time moved on from. I have moved on from time and we make a special dispensation for that which you have spoken of. And this shit just feels blocked. I have this piece that I am trying to edit through and even as I consider doing that I have this other ting that I am typing. I should really just edit through these for a fixed amount of time and then jump into doing some kind of creative writing where I first meditate and try to bubble up, bubble up all of the things that I have been reading about and thinking about and see if I can’t find some new ground. I am not falling apart here. I am pulling everything together.

I try not to have top fives… but why. Is that because of my depression, or just the way my brain is wired that the things I like loss their luster the more I hang on to them?

Can’t I just write letters and ramble at people, or am I worried that writing about our comings and goingsm our small trials and tribulations, just living, will somehow expose my narcissistic existence?

It’s all right to be tired.

It’s all right to want to sleep.

To feel disappointed that your good college friend came to town and couldn’t fit you in.

How do I deal with still feeling like the hurt kid that doesn’t fit in.

*A desire burns to transcend myself.*

*My cheap drug habits*

*Find a rhythm in this writing.*

*Really write. Write until right.*

*Until these wrongs become correct.*

My father goes running and leaves me with a babysitter that he doesn’t have to pay for, who is available, but perhaps not trustworthy, opening me up to being sexually molested.

Rain channeled through the grooves between the weathered marble paving stone.

Thought I was strong, but fell apart at the first sign of a fight.

I sneezed on my sleeve.

I sneezed into my sleeve.

Staying sober is a theme. Not writing stoned and drunk all the time is the theme. Appraising all of this with a sober mind. Looking for continuity. Looking for consistency. Looking for a rhythm that I can maintain. Crossing the ocean aided by the currents.

I am not naturally very emotive nor do I feel like I draw people out of themselves. A big part of that has to be the pot smoking. I am digging myself into a hole with the THC addiction. I am getting to the point where if I am going to be me and not engaged in some kind of work or objective task type activity, then I have to be stoned.

I want to believe that if I can just use this spreadsheet every day, I will have a better handle on my life. I don’t want to be out of control. I feel out-of-control or at least set on a certain trajectory. That anxiety one feels when you can’t seem to shake your anxiety. I can write myself out of this if I work hard to write myself out of this.

Let’s recall that at the end of month 2 of {run, code, run} I was getting 50ish miles in a month in. I had changed jobs. I ewas completing an on-line course… and then the Patek Training threw me off track and right around there I also got some weed from Sky. I don’t think I had been smoking at all. That was spring 2018… had the wherewithal to switch jobs.

I am a carbon copy of your worst enemy.

Lester Montgomery memory me.

I want flow.

I want to flow.

I’m a rubix cube forever.

I’m a late reply.

Deranged by sadness, madness, super stone serendipity.

Remember that play is the most unconscious form of expression. Let’s hear it for unconscious play. A year ago I wrote a letter to Erik. This ghost friend echoing in my head. I need to write. I keep coming back to it, but I do need to write. I remember it feeling comfortable to write in my daughter’s play area. More calls from the past to put a fast on smoking, put a fast on drinking. You are half relationships. You and expression. Others and ears.

08/01/2020

Momentary lapse into the sewers of my past.

Looking back and hating the fuck out of my writing, out of myself. Not being able to approach the wound (I met a man wounded in hatred). Approach the throne. Worship with an open heart.

How have politics poisoned this space— every story so compelling. Dumb and sullen in the eve of your imagination.

Becoming nothing, yet striving for something. Becoming nothing (where none is the number). But am becoming. Have you seen the improvement since you chose one path instead of many?

Sweet August burst forth with a hoppy thirst

Great vines, funeral procession, hearse, ambulance driven, popular culture vulture, making your money, seeing what is on the table, learning to learn, flattening the curve, getting back your verve, taking some nerve, looking before you swerve, murdering most fondly. Drooly expound on any half profound point that strikes you. Seeing 10% and feeling like you were seeing 100%

What’s my point? What is my mission? My 1st volition? A fever dream? A premonition. A vision of life beyond the smallness of my suburban bobble store existence.

Without a clear framework she is simply raw expression, emotion without form, freedom without vision… almost wrote desire… but what if is desire without vision, but lust? Vision combines desire with responsibility and community and family. I have a vision of developing highly in demand skills and building a career in tech and software and content management and web development.

Why can’t I finish letters I wonder?

I want to sneak away to smoke and then I do.

8/2/2020

Am I more likely to write sad things with cursive or printing? So here I am breaking my promise and not even deeply stoned, just set apart and selfish, but writing. I need to recalibrate. I know I am not being healthy. It’s like not that the other aspects of my life are in good shape. I have to run my health down. That is possibly true, but you have also just completely stopped exercising outside of taking walks with your daughters. I have addressed this as being part of my effort to really pair down my activities to focus on coding, but that is also kind of weird, because before my shoulder issue, integrating calisthenics into my daily study routine was really important and seemed to be driving some good effort and good health practices.

I can write on Sunday and on Sunday we write. And what I write by hand in this book is my first draft— always my 1st draft— but something that I will return to and rescue from the fate of most of my first draft efforts— collecting dust in unread notebooks. My thoughts discarded. Barfed up and spirited away to the top shelf in the study, old efforts in spiral notebooks of various colors all in an impenetrable row. Or invisible away somewhere on my hard drive categorized by all the years gone by, squirrelled away in digital crannies and digital nooks.

I like to begin an idea on paper. The tactile experience of fingers on the pen.

On an island now— a pen, a notebook, a laptop; tools to create any number of things.

But I don’t want to write about myself exclusively. I want to use writing to heal, but don’t quite believe in purging emotions as an ultimate solution for mitigating the deleterious affects on one’s life. I’m not sure if that is entirely true though. I think I do believe in the purging of emtions as being a big part of the cure. I think I do believe that purging is part of the cure. Downtown drunks being downtown drunks.

I am drinking too fast and too much. Knocking back those two beers on the walk with Helena seems sad. Betsy catching me smoking week weed in the morning and she thinks that’s sad. I am embarrassed and I am not embarrassed.

Figuring out your principles seems important. You know how you will act. You can have vision at that point because while you do not know the particulars of the path, but you do know the messages that you will need to send. I feel like my hybrid style isn’t so deranged. The other style is too young. Too caught in formation. I have not been developing in a bubble and I wouldn’t say some baroque style has captured my imagination

9/17/2020

Stopped smoking during the day today… making that investment.

Expressing your deepest depths, and yet always a performer. In the bed and out of the bed, our metaphors and intentions folding over one another, as we release, as we forget, as we forgive, and make no mistake, I am so grateful, so humbled by your commitment.

I have been suffering in a way that I can’t quite express— and I have been blocked from expressing it because of spiritual exhaustion. I think my retail life was literally sucking the life out of me. Without a clear path to a more fulfilling, but at least equally secure, stable, rewarding job I began to despair that I did not have the wherewithal to pursue and develop other aspects of my life (including the vocational skills that could transport me to a new lane of possibilities) that were not this unfulfilling job and not my parental or spousal responsibilities.

My mother’s vocation was a struggle. She often resented it and did not hide that resentment from us. Vocally expressing regret that she had not had time to develop as a person before jumping into her career and child rearing. To some extent she took this out on us. She took this out on herself with her manic overcommitment and perpetually stressed out responses to things. My mother was often not super fun to be around because she was so stressed. And being around mom was often about hearing about her stress or listening to her process through something that was stressing her out.

He unhinged and unmitigated analyzing of things is a skill and a curse. All of these realities have two sides. From the opulence and its imagine absence we have access to poverty and deprivation.

My daughter comes in to show me something and my blood boils— I am out of the silence— was I even in it? And there is the dragon, slithering into the mist— black, evils, forest of the nights. And somewhere deep in the thickets beneath the behemoth blackwoods a caravan at the foot of a craggy rise—

10/07/2020

Lowkey debauchery, rampant and incessant mediocrity. An average Joe in every way. So average he is some sort of mythological figure of averageness. There are more of me than there are of you so just show me when to vote and we’ll see how it goes at the poles.

an object or undertaking regarded by the speaker as unpleasant or badly made or carried out.

And perhaps I am in an inescapable cycle of mental imbalance. What if I forever have a compulsive thrist for alcohol and THC? Sure that is one reality. One dimension. In another I dies today. Heart attack at 41 all messed up cause I never could quite get free.

Bedlam

From their grey sheeted sick beds my furies howl.

Their words reach me with the warm vomit curled tang of rotten dogbreath. My achilles has been healing though. I’ve been finding my stride again. I have been chasing the right silence. Cool Alpine winds. A glass walled writing cabin on the highest peak. A desk. A breeze. Silence gathered, stroked, pregnate and bursting forth. The perfume of the new redolent in his words. And possibility- the burnt cache of my frustrated info grab flushed out and a fresh go round of renewal can be realized. We must forever be renewing. The moon. The seasons. Nature. Do not fear this flux, engage, it honesty and openly, full sensed. Unfurling, unfurling, collapsing here with you.

11/02/2020

He protests a bit too much about not being a consumer. She’s quite and gardens and crochets intricate hats for the babies that bloom into being is some proximity.

* Am I on the spectrum?
* Do I have BPD?
* Am I a drug addict?
* An alcoholic?
* Overly-dramatic?
* Overly self-analytic?
* Mommy issues?
* Daddy issues?
* My parents once alluded to me possibly being molested as a child. Or at the very least have left me in the care of a convicted child molester.
* I was kind of molested by Austin. It was just pretty innocent kids stuff, though I wonder if he has struggled with sexual identity issues.
* Is it my crippling depression?
* Do I have childhood lore too dark to explore.
* Right mindfulness… right mindedness is moment to moment presence, developed through awareness of the body, feeling and the workings and content of the mind
* Right concetraion is one-pointed attention leading to ever higher stages of neditation absortption, illuminating in bliss.
* Not a Catholic
* Unsaved soul
* Lacking a clear vocation
* Lacking salient talent
* All energy or paralyzed stasis- manic
* Too independent == selfish
* Daddy issues
* Mommy issues
* An empath
* Writer’s block
* Not humble enough
* Not enough confidence
* Hadn’t acquired enough good habits to be an artist— positive (or negative harnessing) energy habits.
  + Rooting out bad stress
  + Beginning from a healthy place of love
  + Feeling limber in body and mind.
  + Locking in may allow to speed through the completion of one soul shattering, reality altering embarrassing, romancing work, but then you end up like a jerk, sad and old and creatively spent— you had the Qi but you never learned to harness it well— never made a life-enhancing practice out of it— found solace in the work— not as a task, but as an existence— being the moon in it, waxing and waning life energy from your body. Truly writing from your belly. Tapping into the power in your organs to do the good work you need to sustain life and joy in the practice of your life.

I knew how to think and dream, though just day to day living was a lot less intuitive.

11/03/2020

Getting my reward, sweat reward and special feling in the afternoon with my legs too long— chuckling, deranged, nervous and shaking. I am all that I am and nothing more. Cynical, drunk, and depressed, nostalgia is a helluva drug.

A plant unable to live according to its nature dies.

11/08/2020

Did a vlog this weekend about ways to deal with the petite anxieties of life or even worse the sharp ungrounded or out of proportion self-recriminating thoughts that can beat you down and bleed the connection and concentrated engagement and open joy of the task as hand. Its all about moving beyond the messages of fear. Fear of ideas. Other Cultures. Religions. Where should I begin? My Garden of Eden fever dream? My mother preached fear. Put me to bed with *This Present Darkness* and sent me off to a weird one roomed Christian school in a soon to be condemned annex of a local Catholic diocese. Little did our little utopia know, but it was lousy with asbestos. Fear and Conservatism. Rush Limbaugh. The Gays. The Lesbians. The Fema-nazis, the Sex-ed propaganda, the easy access to condums, lets just ignore that as these programs have evolved the numbers of teen pregnancies and the number of abortions have gone down significantly.

I am often overrun my thoughts— inchoate, layered, often unordered

11/09/2020

I went around and notated where the 2 #insert candidate’s name signs were in my Neighbrohood!! Now I know where my enemy lives and eats.

Dems don’t create, all they understand is Burn-Loot-Murder

I am grieving my mother— the distance, the separation, her eventually, inevitable earthly departure, and mine as well.

How do you balance tender love that makes you vulnerable with sufficient independence and stability? Vulnerable, but solid.

The Seven-Teen-Year locust. I was very young and could write reasonably okay, but I had zero discipline or focus and no runaway inspiration to buckle down and do the long work and middle miles necessary for solid, consistent, maintainable, agile writing.

11/14/2020

Stagnate, a bad actor, a dabbler in magic and corn-fed jokes, a stutter boy, a suck boy, tragic really, flailing around so pensively, a standard issue hypocrite.

Somewhat convinced that this is a new sort of madness— a down the rabbit hole escape from my deadend existence. And yet, and again— something else, something committed to, something unfurling. My crystalline exhilaration. An addict’s logic, a strangled confession just before you fall our of love. Angry reunions with phantasms from your forest floor. The bottom of your well. The creases of your mind where some hot pepper thought got folded up and forgotten— been slowly burning its way back to your attention ever since.

Brain completely scattered, but somehow victorious.

Halloween night smoking weed and eating it. Full moon Ides and 8. Up all night doing. Yoga. Baby wakes early in the morning and we watch the full moon set and the sun rise on All Saint’s morning. Older daughter sneaking down the basement stairs to eat candy. Narrator sneaking weed bursts, showers, clothes changing, teeth brushing, visine contingencies of where to smoke and what depending on where narrator’s wife is. She’s carrying all the weight. He is off to neverland with Joseph Campbell and Yeats and Dylan and James Joyce and Walter Benjamin and Liu Ci Xin and Jin yong and the Buddha and Confuscions and Christ and the Mormons selling us real real estate in the way out wild beyond.

And I write and rewrite the note to my brother deeply disliking my handwriting.

11/16/2020

I have slept in dorms, on a ship, in cabins, in tents, abroad, abreast, slept some places my memory has suppressed behind the looking glass.

Begins to doubt memory, starts speaking to the dead.

Feeling better, but becoming alienated from family. Is he crazy to feel so rejected?

Picking up toys in the living room, I put the trains where I know they don’t go because I don’t know where the train set box is and I am creating a random pile after dismantling the rats nest in the cushion fort I have just taken apart.

“The trains probably should go with the train set,” she says in a tired way— I am adding to her burdens. The one lone adult who should be lightening her load, but instead is heaping weight upon her. I am an ass. I am unhelpful. I am hindering her from realizing happiness.

Domestic squabbles, sacrifice sucking it up for each other, seeing from one another’s perspective.

Tired, stoned, tried to write. Losing the fight. Goodnight.

He was an idiot. He endeavored to be a disciplined idiot, but he was still an idiot and their was no escaping that at all…

11/19/2020

The Yoga Addict.

Yoga Addict.

Yoga/Addict

The Yoga Fanatic

* Exhaused mom, strung out Yoga dad chasing god and writing and language both human and computer. (11/19/2020)

The desert and the blooming flower

You got drunk and stone last night and now you’re stone before 7:00 a.m. on a Thursday and it’s the grandest thing. Let your weakness be your strength. Doing the disgusting thing. The stupid thing. The irrational thing. The uncool thing. The lonely thing. The retreating thing. The egoless thing. The egotistical thing.

Don’t be afraid of the insanity it stirs in you sometime, for too there is an equal and even more robust portion of good sense and effort and steadiness. This bifurcated existence. Riding on multiple levels at once.

I am fine with a limited life. I want to be fine with a limited life. I have just wanted to be in a position where I can work and I am engaged with work and I have a vision for my work and study. I am fine with attempting to wallow hard and lyrical at some far off investment.

Inspired by a self-organizing life aim that stimulates goals.

11/20/2020

Depressed, off track, fatty, slouched and unfulfilled.

Retching over my American Standard

Compelled by the stench of rotting tomatoes

In late summer forgotten book bag

Discovered just in time for school

Stink juice into the garage sale rug

The dark wool one with the already dank

Musky oder, worn and roughed up at the edge.

The Chinese are just like the Americans only moreso.

02/08/2021

Front row seats to my wife’s unraveling psyche as the one year old and 5 year old slowly, but surely wear her down to threads of her former robust sinews.

I pause to shout at the girls to stop rattling the door and trying to get into the bedroom. Just because you feel scattered and run down doesn’t mean that I have to. Or do I? I though you were signing off. She hadn’t sad anything, but had simply perched on the edge of the couch in a chilling cessation of activity. She wasn’t engaged in anything or doing a project. She must be upset. And so I should be upset? She is stressed. So I should be stressed? She is distracted and fragmented. So I should be distracted and fragmented. She is mad and depressed. Should I be made and depressed, because it is hard to concentrate when you are made and depressed. I talk to my family and they are made and depressed as well and seem to want to make sure I am made and depressed to, pushing me when I say that I am voting for a new president after the incumbent had done an unsatisfactory job and that was it my mother had wanted to know. An unsatisfactory job? There must be a deeper reason. She seemed disoriented like the red-herring unraveling of Lost’s not with a bang but a whimper series ending. Never actually saw it, but so I had heard. Heard my mom speak in hushed tones about all the hidden meaning in the show. Family had liked show because one of the actors was originally from Newberry, the family seat. My aunt worked at the longterm care facitility where the actors mother stayed as the head administrator. The actor and his family were very kind and gracious and deeply appreciated the care provided to the elderly woman in the comfort of her hometown of Newberry, Michigan.

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/MY HOMECOMING. Firmly and finally leaving the home of my father. The home of my mother. The ideological home. The physical homeland. Firmly and finally rejecting (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 rhetoric come catch phrase, phrase of thinking, contextualized transfiction. Believe fiction. Clung to facts. Blaming the windmills in Texas for power outages with a “Shame on you for doubting big oil sort of snarl” (Isreal concurrently has oil slicks affecting 90% of its beaches … 90% after a massive tanker spill… with is apropos to nothing in many ways … just another fact that does not support my railing against the empty-headed 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 have been leaving America to return to America. America a maze of 300 million paths. Opportunity and hell all at your doorstep. Mother contextualizing heal for me. I pushed her on her political views when she pushed me. There must be a deeper reason. What about abortion. It is always what about abortion. Implications that the left are immoral. Why can they just put a brick through a window when they are upset. A lot of talk about they. I have intentionally attempted to avoid the ambiguous or dog-whistle they. I realize my people love this they and deploy it with aplumb and seemingly zero compunction. It is an effective rhetorical flourish because it somehow is the current net of broadsides, scooping up all enemies of the cause of America First or Making America Great Again of the leader who is opposed to all of this. All of them. Mythologically taking the helm of the cause the great Manichean machination of America, finally with Christ at the levers once more. A force to balance against the evils of the time. Infanticide. A liberal, Latin pope. Each generation becoming less godless and immoral. The beauty and goodness of capitalism and the importance of the market of ideas. The importance of freedom and self-determination. But freedom without Christ is bondage and folly which is why we are a Christian nation and always will be. This great tradition of ours brought over from Germany and England and the great old European nations of our medieval soul. Back before the world was round. Back before the longer tides of history began to answer their incessant moon calls. The galloping, striding decades of discovery and production and expansion. Destiny Manifesting itself in each perfect life, breathed into our sphere of forms. Each eyed child and perfumed princeling held within the hands of Christ. Every soldier run through with bayonet, left to bleed out among his platoon of lazy pacifist, the poetry of their lives overrun by the advancing ambitions of the age. Insanity worn lightly. Insanity worn heavily. Illness breaking the dreams of one’s youth, or career simply drawing the moisture from their once fertile beds, left with husks to hold before your fading eyes, before the approaching dark of the end of day. Blood meridian calling, memory receeding, meory to be returned to some day, transformed, undulating, divided, fragmented, carved into a faceted stone. Hall of mirrors casting light about, back and forth, not in an act of deception, but in an act of illumiation and reflection. Finding the non-linear, vibrations contained within the holy paths of thought.

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 (from letter to Erik)

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 he 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.

02/10/2021

What was I afraid of losing. There was something I was afraid of losing. This identity that I have yet to be able to fully form. These letters and postcards. These words from the chaos, finding some semblance or order. Finding meaning in the messages. Loving with an open heart. Opening my body. Staying open. Not simply drugging myself to sleep. Last night I went to bed early and got up at 6:30 and it was very good. Good to sleep early and good to wake early. Esme woke with a swollen left eye. Just bulging and fluid filled, but not causing her any pain. Allergic reaction? Cellulitius. These are the little things that crop up and are unexpected, but demand your attention. My tonge is sore. My tongue is tight. Am I sick? Am I uptight? I want to make that list of body terms that talks about holding tension in.

02/11/2021

The girls head out into the snow. I’m on the porch. Change shirt. Eye drops. Body and face wash with aromatic soap. Toothbrush. Stretching. Thinking. Addiction? Body does feel awfully good. Stretching. Writing. Ideas flow. Giving over to the multitude, being a receptacle. Cultivating projects over time. Clockwinder is ripening, it is getting very interesting. Can see why writers are hesitant to talk about their work in progress. Finding my process very free form and hopefully cumulative. Bringing together material that I can bring together, soil to till, memories, voices, medium, methods, habits, attitudes, energy, discipline, dedication,commitment, tenacity, reverence, quiet, peace, snow, the girls voices out in the yard or crossing the alley, calling to Anna as the snow falls on the last lunar day of the year. Let the new big cycle begin.

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?

02/14/2021

No Alcohol or weed today until 6:00. Have I felt depressed today? Yes, but in a productive way—straightened up. I am very focused. I only want to be working or drunk or a little or lot stoned. Took a whisky nip and crack a beer right at 6:00. I know what I am feeling right now is a reaction to not having any THC in my system.

02/15/2021

You know what you need to do, but you don’t have the wherewithal to do it.

Frustrated because you feel unable to do the things that you need to do to get stronger, improve situation.

**02/23/2021**

These is no reason to write. I write at 6:05 in the morning while the forced air blower blows over the while noice maker (to keep the baby asleep with all the sirens and all) and Marcel the cat grooming himself in the silver first light, music of the spheres almost audible curiously as to why I’m sitting cross-legged on a yoga mat hunched over a yellow legal pad smelling distinctly of cannabis. There’s no reason to write it occurs to me, but many emotions.

He felt cold and stoned and tired and so he went to bed and she was on her period and feeling bad about her back and it was such a weirdly consistent loop. And she was venting which was fine. But what could he do? He could go to bed. He did not ever regret going to bed. He has never regretted going to bed. Ever.

The morning had been goo so far and could continue to be good. He need to be strong and kind and engaged—his heart was open now and could be open without fear of hurt—he was stronger now and better at healing. His body felt stretched and thirsty for cool water.

**02/26/2021**

Childhood is great, except for the little fact that you are a complete emotional cripple.

All the gaslighting. Don’t believe what you see and what you know. Believe what I tell you.

Attempting to make people doubt what they believe to be true.

Being pulled into the matrix of doubt and judgement.

Let’s lever from here. If I am sick then that obviously becomes a big focus. And we should order things up. If I just happen to have a weird neck bruise along with my annoying tongue lesions then here we are in another episode of let’s take this minor issue and lever some substantial changes—beer drinking, weed smoking, the usual suspects. Now we have to admit that wee has affected our relationship with betsy and our health—so stop being such a joker about it and get your head straight and your tongue straight.

Wanted to text Pete P. when I was stoned and excited about connecting with him about tech. This impulse completely dissipated when I wasn’t stoned.

Getting some distance from habitual marijuana use is a personal goal of mine.

**02/25/2021**

Renamed this A\_Failed\_Attempt

* Sketching out why he thinks he will die
* Why writing is an absolute waste of time but so is golf
* Religion is exactly what you do— its your trap, you can’t comphrend that, but something can.
* Neck bruise
* Candida
* Weight angry red node in the back
* Chest tightness. Is it my chest? My spine?
* Heart failure?
* Too much marijuana smoke.
* Too much drinking.
* Or are you finally getting healthy? Finding your stride?

Slowly closer. Hand over hand. Mummified night over mummified night. Dragging March dead weigh and resistant through the amoral fortitude of this uncertain season.

You know who you are in winter—your personal charms, your extroverted personality, your thrist for bright sun and soft clouds are snuffed out.

**03/09/2021**

He didn’t need much to fire him up. Especially with her. She could get under his skin in a second. It was the understood prejudgement. Assumed on both sides. Both sides equally convinced that the other is not engaged in a good faith negotiaton.

I was undone by my desecated, neglected out of necessity dreams,

And they in turn, over time, in acted their revenge

By deconstructing my map of meaning, in response to my negligence, leaving any since of forward momentum on learning or writing or anything just went flying out the window.

Elijah Katz was a werewolf you hear? A werewolf. As absurd as that sounds it was true. We’ll have to work through it together.

One last listen through of Carrie Lowell on this day 40. We left the mountains at noon and went forward with nothing by the gifts of the Ides and the great Buddha looking down with his belly bouncing benevolently and Jesus Christ taking me from birth to death to rebirth. His lifecycle sets the tempo of the arc of the year. He clearly deserves his due. Was the chosen one once. You would’ve have chosen to choose him too at various points in history, you virtual or literally had to in certain places at certain times. And I the wagging tongue, the crabby agnostic fag who just sulks in the corner and drags on her red box Marlboros he buys by the carton on the reservation for a bargain. He no longer goes to play the machines at the casino, but instead tries to nightly write about it, the best he’d been able to muster was:

“s-l-o-t”

l-o-s-t l-o-t-s

Writing in the cold, in the wood panel of the little house with the keg in the fridge and the Nintendo hooked up and then later he was off and depressed and he killed himself didn’t he. Shit. He committed suicide and Mark married, but never had children, which is fine, but they ended up being a tragic family. What the fuck is that supposed to mean? Aren’t all families ultimately tragic families?

I’d been all through the vale of great surprises. I liked writing. I was fine at it. I cover some of the local sports of the local newspaper, but sense my retirement from the Coast Guard I’d been hold up in my parents house trying to write my great American novel. Honestly, I do not carry if I can get it published. I just trying to flush it out. I feel it in there just kind of lodged and upset about it. It needs to come out soon or later, so why not just get it out. Get it done with, allow myself to think about something else while I’m ice finishing, or later finishing, or later still sitting in my blind, or on the back deck watching the mist on the lake obscure he ducks as the pas in a hurried, nervous seeming flotilla.

I was thinking about writing some kind of a novel about this Coast Guard Engineer who served in Key West and got really obsessed with the Hemingway legend, he’s kind of my Elvis. And so naturally, I had to write a novel that he would approve of or some 21st century projection of what an eternally wise literary saint like Hemingway would want to have in the world. So I began my quick study by diving into rereading or in a lot more places than I expected, reading for the first time such wonderful stories and novels. The is a great comfort to his stylized prose. On first read it can come off a very sunny and cheery, but on close inspected

Acceptance of the great mystery of being is a practice,

A practice to live well, a practice to die well.

And what was the world before the age of the Christian mystery.

**03/18/2021**

X of Cups : repose, perfection, country house, two girls, town, country, village

The High Piestess II (reversed): attractive, luxurious, disorienting

X of Swords reversed

* Obsidian stone
* Labyrinth of wounds
* Advantage, profit, success, favor

I am 1500 pages behind. Buried in life beyond of being fully dug up ever again.

Feeling like you are buried and will be fully uncovered. You have let parts of your narrative die. You have had to. It has been painful and cushing. It has been cold-stone chilling how easy it has been.

**03/22/2021**

You make everything a spiritual issue. My neck was sore as fuck when I was up in July. I was tense. I had been pushing my body in an intense study and calisthenic regime. I was uptight. I needed to be. I needed to be a little desperate and have a candle under my ass. I needed to be a little anxious and afraid and frankly terrified that I was not going to be able to perform my role as the stable provider of my family and yes this was resulting in me carrying some pretty intense stress in my neck and the rest of my body. And you offered some arrogant, well you should bring it god, have you been praying? That is an arrogant and ungodly response that does not even try and connect with the pain that I am feeling and instead somehow turns the blame on me— you are feeling so bad because you are not right with god. Because you are not trusting in his plan it what he has provided for you. When I would argue that I am currently in my most explicit act of faith I have ever been and I have been trying my best to be open to God and open to life and open to my abilities and insights and other people’s abilities and insights. I have been engaged in a process of learning and growing and fostering of tools that will help my family shift towards a more healthful and balanced and auspicious work-life balance. And I have been in the process of letting go. Of giving myself over to this process. In trusting that the inspiration of this idea, which does not feel like it came entirely from me and in many ways doesn’t really make sense. I have never been a big computer guy. Until three years ago I hadn’t even looked at a computer language without any degree of analysis, despite my self-professed deep interest in and fascination with languages of all stripes. My promiscuous curiosity has always been a challenge to my mastery of things, but I think another challenge has been my openness to certain topics or my confidence in my ability to engage and grow in certain ways. Let us call this a lack of self-knowledge. Which is often mistook as a lack of self-confience. I think there is a lot of anxiety we carry around about things we don’t know about. It can worry us to be bad at something. Once we understand that we are not naturally good at something, or do not have a sufficient exposure to something, we just sort of wall it off and add it to the incomprehensible heap. Case in point. Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. When I first came to Chicago I had absolutely no idea how to differentiate between the scripts of these three languages. This ignorance was worn lightly, but it also existed as an iron curtain of influence and awareness. 20 years later this imperceptible divider is much removed, which is not to say that I am an expert on anything Korean, Japanese, and Chinese but I have acquired enough impressions and knowledge to at least differentiate between the script and cultures of the three Asian monoliths. Which powerfully sets me up to acquire more understanding and context for the three cultures. And with my more sophistication because I can now speak to the text as being Korean or Japanese or Chinese rather than just Asian, a term whose generic generalizations has the same quixotic intention of bundling up the Scots and Swiss and Sicilians as being European. But then I fel like knowledge arrives doubly cut. For as your knowledge specializes and more categories are created making the world more understand or at least categorizable and open to structured analysis, the forking paths of knowledge and sophistication (awareness versus depths of knowledge) you at some point, if you are a reasonably curious person realize that the sea of context and depth is infinite, a river in contant flux and renewal. An illusion of uniformity and stasis, despite the infinite cycling, regeneration, seasonal transitoriness, rebirth, death, harvesting— beauty, berries, rock bass.

This is what happens when I let go. This is what happens when I truly commit to the process and raise my sights a bit. And venture off enthusiastically into another direction with the focus and the determination to see it all the way through. As I have taken on this marriage, this family, this vocation (writing/yoga/language/technology)

This idea of vocation being more than just how you make money, but also about how you structure your life and maintain your livelihood. Your livelihood was as a househusband extraordinaire- cook, cleaner, child-raiser, plumber, electrician, carpenter, mechanic, woodcutter, arborist, gardener, landscaper, marathoner, coach, race organizer, educator, political partisan, devote Evangelical Protestant, vocal member of the silent majority, backer of the Christian Coalition, Focused on the Family, anti-Feminist (such an angry, destructive, bloodthirsty, selfish movement), devote Catholic, regular Rush Limbaugh listener, ditto head, taxes were bullshit, public schools corrupt and insalubrious. The real Americans, the Christian ones with easily recognizable American cultural interests and allegiances. Distrustful of foreign colleagues. So and so over proscribes. Another white colleague enabled

**03/25/2021**

Doting, diligent, ideal husband; sociopathic stoner, pothead; reclusive writer/web developer

Layers… tech study, furtive writing life, story of gardener’s daughter (DUPREE), straight and then unravelling. Yoga practitioner, little is said.

The story of the Gardener’s daughter came out of the onion idea about the husband and wife split perspective/narrative. A la Gone Girl.

The Gardener has a really amazing garden.

High Fantasy

High and fantasizing

Fragmented and addicted.

Stressed and strung out.

Ritualistically spiralling deeper into creative process—production/vocation??? Madness???

Spousal exhaustion

Artistic shell seeker—necessary aloneness.

We make the most or we do not…

The gaslighting.

The aging.

The Self-delusion

**03/26/2021**

And it seems there is something wrong with me. I can’t stop. Either I can’t actually make myself or it is beyond my will or something. I seem to be hopelessly addicted, habituated; good sense just won’t seem to let me get my ticket punched to the middle class. Lambs with rummy eyes waiting for me to make my move.

Writing for your life. Full of stock. Discipline and guild cunning are all that you lack—maky your way through the field—let’s run our way through to the other side—the other side of this would be fine—we’ll be fine someday and Heminway was kind of a cunt and Frost too and J.F.K a cad—all of these impious examples of what it means to be talented and powerful—the indescresions—the lapses of judgement. We are weak creatures and imperfect—judged by our actions, judged by our words. , judged by our good-faith efforts to be a family man or a servant to society or whatever, or if I could just do exactly as I want to do and as my intuition moves me to and then spin the while thing in some sort of positive light—perhaps diversify my investments with some tax deductible charitable donations.

We spared with the press- all those beatneck deadbeat squares writing the new American story one corny uncredited by-line at a time.

Precious. Simple. Untested. Simply set up to be—but still unclear what work is—what is work? How and why do I do it? Do we do it? I write nearly two pages before I hear Esme up quietly and sweetly calling for Marcel in a soft sing-songy voice. *Marcel*. Helena has begun to call Marcel *“Sal”,*  just like Esme did at 2—Niao (as in the cat sound bu with an N instead of an M) has been fading in usage, but “hee-haw” (donkey), “woof-woof” or “woo-woo” (dog), “bum-bum” (elephant), “wae-wae” (duck) are all still going strong.

Helena’s sentencing are quickly getting more complex:

“Daddy, book read me please!!!”

Or

“Me bit daddy aGAIN”

She loves to say aGAIN… really stressing GAIN (as in increase)

Each time she extorts us for another round of whatever.

03/28/2021

This restlessness--

* Narcissism
* borderline personality disorder,
* healthy anxiety in response to global pandemic, job loss, career change, mid-life crisis, sudden creative urgency, stress of learning a complicated new trade without consistent guard rails on my time.
* Tired parent
* Put upon significant other
* Otherness
* Other
* Self-obsessed
* Self-possessed
* Arrogant
* Dearth of self-esteem
* Result of parental neglect
* Result of parental smothering

Favorite slim mason jar cracked in the pot as I boiled it.

A way to live, to seek a way of living, a way to engage and converse, a way to ground and express, to check and edit, a way to record and remember, a way to expand and transcend, to commit and surrender. How do live with that thin veil healthfully curtaining off the space between my family and my faery maze.

I’d really jumped the Rails-- I’d needed some new rails. Some 21st century skills. Some 21st century skills. I would have been an IT guy in any era. Now I need to consolidate my foundation so I could keep on building.

Had I lost my damned mind?

Was I just ambitions as fuck and a little unhinged.

Humbly following the flow… humbly following the flow…

**03/30/2021**

Self-inflicted tongue cancer. Not giving a fuck about your future self. Callous and unwell. Bitter at his brother and not knowing how to get over it. Feeling the coldness settle into his heart. Can’t change people at all.

Settle your earthly affairs and keep your knots tied.

Focus on the future one day at a time.

Love your future self.

Love the future selves of the ones you love

In a balanced life affirming way.

Effecting coping with life and maintaining satisfying relationships.

Your family’s future, the future of your neighbors, your community, the country, the continent, the hemisphere, the world, the galaxy the universe and so on and on.

Am I the healthiest I have ever been, or the sickest? I wrote naked in my kitchen with a squishy mouthful of coconut oil listening to Devochtka girls in Indiana— daddy’s gotta get some work down— so I am working in the kitchen naked with a squishy mouthful of coconut oil to leach the toxins from your tongue.

Drain the toxins from my tongue. Drain the toxins from my brain. Remove the poison from my brain, the poison from my mind.

So I have locked into this incredibly ambitious cycle of study and writing— all the same old goals, same old loops of self-doubt and drug abuse— off running as my main ballast now though—yoga seems to be the way to go for my *40-year-old-form*.

Have recently stopped caffeine, but am still smoking weed like a bit of a maniac.

Feeling the need for a breeze to free me from this lockstep with THC.

Clear my mind. Find a way to flush through a good chunk of these accumulated notes. The process has one. The process has overcome me. I am overcome. I have been overcome. I am lost to the process and I can either hate it or fear it or feel extremely unsettled about it or I can dig in and learn to accept it and live in it and realize it. Realise the chase, the deep woods and dark clouds it gathers. The work it has cut out for me. I can make the effort. I am making the effort. I can move past this process focused protean state. I can build my chrysalis and I can emerge out the other side. A butterfly never refers you to its chrysalis. Never draws attention to its chrysalis. A butterfly never needs to own up to being a worm. All the worm callers can easily be flown away from.

**03/31/2021**

Tarot, yoga, weed, meditation, massage, breathing, writing

We need a database for all these symbols he says at exactly 1212

You know you have to feed it, but you also know that you can’t force it.

I’d become this very tense, uptight, distracted, addicted, uncreative individual who was just holding things together until he could figure out a way to commit more time to pursue web development and database administration.

Run through with appetities—sickness, weird symptoms, white tongue, weakness…

Stretching out in the sun and doing pushups like some self-contained prisoner trying to make the most of his 20 minutes of yard time—it is all a bit unhinged, but I have a process rolling, so I attempt to just relax and follow the feeds itself out before me.

Incessant monologue in my head.

Succeed at these two things and then what?

Live, engage, don’t be afraid, have fun, laugh, play, don’t drink so much, don’t smoke so much, delight in children.

**04/09/2021**

**Things work out or they do not**

**Some find success**

**Success sometimes destroys or it does not.**

**As does failure or it does not.**

**And he breaks off from writing on this overcast but bright eyed day to smoke and stretch and take a shower and then mediate in the front room on the blue rug near the white rug in the good light, seeking grounding while I stretch and write and process my many threads, attempting to make sense of my fragmentation-- feeling excited that a new country is just outside my front door. Chicago Sober. Hard-boiled detective of healthy culture. Riding the progressive wave. Finding my way-- loving and supporting my girls**

**At least you are at home with your family-- with your girls-- having lost my mind, I now spent my days swimming for it, as it always seemed to be just ahead of me-- upstream**

**04/04/2021**

Trajectory—what are we talking about? Better job, better walk with Jesus. Better poems. Better sex.

While disorientation is not necessarily cause for despair it is also a slippery foundation upon which to leverage the trajectory of one’s life.

**2021/04/01**

The furnace, *the el*, a plane flying over, Marcel scratching and making off-hand comments.

My wife is depressed and has been depressed for a while and I have tried to ignore it and paper over the drag I feel from her most days emotionally and socially, even physically sometimes. When she is cold and distant or I am or she is suddenly eager for my attention with no prelude and I chaff a little at the double standard of desire and strange cat and mouse game it can still remain even for married couples as they try to balance out the household responsibilities and achieve harmony in their home. It has been a tough year— one with some wonderful blessings giving us something rosier to focus on than the unrelenting challenges of the day being blow-horned out of the braindead megaphone in many disparate ways.

In many ways this was the year that I went underground— and this was the year that I found the ground and this was the year that I stopped running, literally. And started standing – and stretching and expanding and soon that body of work that orientation took another metaphor from running— writing— running had always been about success— just do it— fast and slow, sprint and longmileage, doesn’t really matter, it’s the frequency that matters—the conditioning—building up that stride—that automatic, almost mechanical loping that can set you in a pace tacking just right to find the comfortable pressure to resistance ratio, finding that spark, finding that point where it feels like more work to cease the movement than to continue it. I have experienced all of these things with running.

Effort could yield that good current, that good flow.

Hopeless addict, depressed wife, spirally unemployment turmoil attempting to jump industries, but bogged down in the infinite mire of web development and creative maturity— attempting to build a strong partition in my mind for writing to keep the infinite sea of congruity from completely flooding my system— I have this fear that for me to make progress with it it has to be this all or nothing thing. It is a tool like any other— if you continue to approach it soberly and consistently systematically you will get somewhere with it— you have cut out smoking cigarettes, alcohol now, caffience and you have even set yourself up to take a few days away from herb (this written almost 4 months ago and I have not been able to stop smoking herb. I know this is an issue. I know that this is a drag and a distancing point in my relationship with my wife and a financial drag and a memory drag and a productivity drag, but I am worried that if I move away from it I will lose momentum. I will lost my momentum into the process that I have made it so far in. But then I come back and ask— where the hell are we with this process? Does this process even make any sense? It is truly obsessive and elaborate and secretive and expansive and ambitious and iterative and messy and confusing and impressive and inefficient and the unevenness of my productgs make me doubt the whole thing, even though it has blossomed forth into my proudest accomplishment. I have come farther with my writing that I eve expected and I can continue to push even farther.

**2021/04/02**

Tech—perfect cover for doing nothing. Theology, literature, some science—progress made by doing next to nothing… not nothing… but next to nothing…

How about this— I am cured when there is no more sneaky stuff… be there for your wife. Be there for your girls. Show up. Be present.

The secret to smoking pot is not smoking pot.

Not drinking alcohol is so good for me. As is not drinking coffee. Not smoking everyday will truly be an accomplishment. Controlling my habits. Committed to my vocation. Accepting the pressure from my family, dovetailing it into flow. Nourishing the people around me. Air—breathing; Water—consuming; Earth—nourishing; fire—activity. Balance.

Get into a shower, purify, renew. You’ve got a whole lot better in your simmering.

And I can do both— I can code and I can do language. They can complement each other and they do complement each other very well. The dance and weaving intersections of these interests is part of the magic for me, the alchemy, the sweet vocational discovery.

BREATHING(AIR), STAYING HYDRATED(WATER), STAYING ACTIVE(FIRE), STAYING GROUNDED(EARTH)

Living and loving, not jut falling back on same old excuses and running the tape on the old rationalizations. Just accepting the facts as they are and moving forward.

Stretching has changed my life. It has connected my body to my intellect—my body to my mind.

And then I went and pissed my time away consuming tea-butter-brownie-joints, whiling my time away in a state of unearthly relaxation or flashflood anxiousness and self-reproach

The anonymity I have had has been astounding—settling, hopefully healing.

Repeated, repeated theme of being disappointed that I have not done more coding because I have been too stoned or I have spent too much time writing or playing music or stretching or reading.

And but yet still positive steps forward with my body and my mind.

**2021/04/28**

Just wanting a woman to take care of me and support me and believe in what I am doing. Dedicated to giving me the time to work and see and explore. “*Tell my wife I love her very much*.” Launching far out into the process. Yes the drugs help to give it an epic dimension, but I believe in the transport. I believe in losing myself in the speed of my fingers on the keys and breathing one with the machine and tinking deeply about something or at least broadly or at least long expanding beyond my narrow limitations, developing something beyond, growing like a tree, rooting down and stretching up, ever stretching, optimistically branching and ascending, hungry for the sky, blindly manically, so slow and deliberate in my motions you’d never guess at my underlying mania.

* Photography
* Chinese: character writing, currently reading *A Moveable Feast* in Mandarin and English, character writing, New York Times bilingual articles. Using bilingual texts to cut out need for dictionaries, focusing on “whole meaning” and building confidence to skim and cruise character articles. Teaching Esme. Speaking only Chinese to her during play time when I am not in the mood to play her persribed game for the umpteeth time, do all kids savor repetition as much as this child does. It’s a little insufferable sometimes…though it is also probably the same drive that underpiners her wonderful learners mind (tested into regional gifted program- accepted 18 out of 400 + applicants, which is just fun to share and also emphasize how grateful we were to despite all the weirdness and challenge of this year, she found herself in a small group of kids that all had supportive parents and solid capabilities. Between work in this cohort, reading at home and her many Literary Godmothers: Grandma Birkey- who has gift us a treasure trove of children’s literature a collection compiled from decades of elementary school teaching by both her and her sister, Bari Zaki- a friend of ours who is a bookmaker and runs a studio/paper shop just down the street from us, she has sold betsy’s folded books out of her shop and has taken a great liking to Esme who loves to “Go see Bari” at her shop where Esme has often been the recipient of lovely Japanese paper wrapped pencils or other stationary type gifts, she always makes sure to write Bari a thank you note and they have felt a sporadic correspondence over the past few years, then there is Ellen who is Esme’s great friend and former pre-school teacher. Ellen is a poet and has both inspired Esme to write her poems and stories and word focused activity books. Throughout the pandemic Esme and Ellen met up virtually for meet ups to catch up on books and outtings and cookings and thinkings and plantings and such, then just downstairs is our neighbor Anna who is a thoughtful theater director with a talent for garden cultivating. She and Esme had garden reading meetups throughout the pandemic— often rereading books that betsy and I or betsy’s mom had already read to her. That repetition that she seems to crave and all kids seems to crave at some point. I have tried to program repeition into my studying. Leaning into certain rout techniques— abstracting the learning process into something that is beyond my own understanding, my own ability even, because that is the whol point, no? Transcending? Going beyond your current ability. Stretching beyond your current ability. Pushing beyond your current understanding. There is certainly a lot of cleverness that we can employ to ignite this process, to enact this process.
* Writing: journaling, adding to themes that have some sort of center of gravity: location, era, topic, theme, setting, form, **Expand(Develop(Contract(Consolidate(Build(Expand)))))**
* Coding and reinventing my career trajectory by locking my self in an 8 by 10 by 10 cell for a year and fueling it with a new age-y prison working out machine. I am in a cycle of canceling. I am blocking things out and pushing them off to deal with on another day. I am opting out of contemporary politics in an effort to right my existential ship and achieve a certain level of material safety and security for my family while simultaneously putting myself on a professional trajectory that won’t suck out my soul and trap me in an unsustainable loop of unhealthy coping matrixes and deferred dreams.
* Spanish- basically nothing these days. An openness, some counting, but nothing of substance. Have to cut something, no?
* Guitar- after an initial burst through the first quarter of the year, have really tried to pull back from it to focus more on reading and coding. I have tried to make guitar more of a rhythmic and technical activity. Something for my body and my fingers and less my mind. Trying to feel the guitar more. This has led me to a new finger picking style of playing that I am really fond of and look forward to developing over the years.
* Fitness and health: having found a solid combination of lower carb, lower impact exercise that my body has responded to really well I am entered moving through my forties leaner and healthier than I have been in years. Finding a better sleep rhythm and finding more contentment in healthier pursuits. I think the fallout is that I have become an even more private, self-involved individual, though for the time being as I plow my vocational efforts into building my 21st century tech skills, I can live with that, especially in as much as this “isolation” has facilitating writing—giving me time and pent up thoughts, observations, experiences to experience in a genuine overflowing of explanation. That overflowing of explanation. It just came out. With limited pre- thought it just spilled out, riding that fine vein where intellect and emotion have melded artfully and unguardedly together. Casting our our years of careful study in being careful.
* Reading- having reach the nadir of hating my books, resenting their weight on my shlves and line of sight, forever stacking and collecting my daughters scattered collections of bpoks, undersiege by books, unread, or eread and heavy before my eyes and my eyes heavy at the end of day, drowsy in the half light of our apartment heavy with the presence of children at last asleep. And the offer to send me two volumes of Ginsburg’s journals, presumably relatively unedited, god bless you for publishing that and I am very glad that you are, and I am so grateful for the bounteous publishing world that we move through. For any book on the planet almost available just on the other side of a touch screen. I have ridden the bouty of books flowing in from living room sales, arriving unbidden in packages from siblings, happened upon in free boxes that look like bird houses close to the ground, ordered off linje new or used, shuffled at home, opened, closed, indexes read, first chapters read, quotes written out, ideas thought about. I am gotten so much mileage thinking about the coupkle of chapters that I read by John McPhee back in the late summer early September. 4th Draft has been a bit on a mantra to me this year. Catalyzing my writing and my reading. Freeing me to collect and explore and EXPAND, CONSOLIDATE, BALANCE, BUILD finding my way forward by managing my fragmentation by embracing it. Leveraging it. Finding ways in which to collect and channel and funnel the fragmentation. Finding AGILE systems and projects to receive the input and expression and analysis. In the process developing the very skills that I have always wished to have, but felt somehow separated from. Overcoming my perspective of seeing everything as a ZERO SUM game. Getting comfortable with my unknowing. My limitation. My eventual spectacular failure. The only thing that will save you from spectacular failure is good faith ORGANIZATION and other people’s kindness. Good faith organization is my phrasing of having your shit together without being neurotic about it. Having your things in order. Having your affairs in order. Mitigated your risks. Attempted to limit the fallout of your failures on other people. Finding inspiration and grounding in this process. Finding confidence and strength and flexibility in this process. Finding a source of WIND and WATER and EARTH and FIRE- full of life and nourishment and balance and activity; inspiration, optimism, perspective, effort; energy, uplift, support, passion;
* ***WIND*: life, inspiration, energy**
* ***WATER*: nourishment, optimism, uplift**
* ***EARTH*: balance, perspective, support**
* ***FIRE*: effort, passion, activity**
* Spending time with my wife
* Spending time with family
* Correspondence
* Socializing

I hate to make the questions and uncertainly to be a big part of the narrative, but it doesn’t have to dominate it. You can kind of construct it. Give it a form and a place in the narrative. A tone or a symbol. A force a presence. Something looming. This sense that *“Everything is not in its right place*” ,“*I really don’t know where here is*”, relishing the desperation rationalization that no one ever really knows where here is and you should be grateful of your hard fought insight and relish it. The razor’s edge existence— the tipping point intensity as you swing and sway between heading toward a bright new future, or what, what else? What is in the other direction? Something unclear, something inchoate, failure? Generic writ large failure? Can we be more specific? Financial failure, well probably not completely, probably having to push off buying a house for a few more years, which honestly until I really get a career going with reasonable working/living work life/balance conditions I don’t really relish owning a home. Is it death that I fear then? I suppose it is stress. Human death. Being forced into situations where you must repress your interests and talents and subjugate them in the interest of making money for someone else to the end of supporting your life(your family, personal responsibilities etc). Oh, boy, he finally understands how life works. Well, isn’t that something. I have been somewhat naievely and self-defeatedly been pursuing the end of supporting my family while also trying to develop the skills that do interest me (Chinese and writing and now coding) to the end that they would some day assist me in bridging the gap between my personal pursuits and my professional pursuits.

My writing has stalled because I have not given it enough time, now in my two decades of lowkey trying to crack the code on it, been unable to pull together an effective systematic development of my writing projects or even the process of writing. This has changed this year to great affect and it feels truly like a turning point in my existence. This pronouncement is perhaps a little THC fuled at the moment, but the proof is in the pudding as within the last 7-8 months I have written more coherent prose and poetry than ever before. Of course I have to thank my current status of being unemployed for having time and wherewithal to get my thoughts scribbled down or hacked onto a computer screen, but it is also largely due to the inspiration I have been able to find in computer programming as both a symbiotic skill set and disciplining challenge engagement with which has radically changed the way I wholistically think about writing and the process of writing. The projects/pieces/topics that I am tracking has exploded from a handful to well over 50. The process has been abstracted and to some extent the pieces and the letters are writing themselves. They are the overflow of thought or emotion directed through a voice or a tone or in a certain spirit of peppered with a specific set of shared history and mutually understood or misunderstood semiotic mise-en-scene and the wonder of all of this can really break down under scrutiny, under the scapel of intent and comparison. But the intent is always so much more than any given line, and sentiment, any point. One of my evolving intents. Intentions that I have named and followed forward as one would a hypothesis, like, huh, I wonder what this is for, perhaps it is for, blank, and off we go, applying, cutting, pasting, the joy of collaging is that the process seems effortless. It is all judgement and combination. It is all editorial. What is that difference between the editorial and the creative mind. One intent I have attempted in carrying forward is just this idea that you can write free and energetically and engaged and creatively and life-affirmingly and curiously without being didactic or cynical. Or you can be somewhat didactic but knowing of it, conscious of your human limitation in an appealing way. An invitation to consider that brings us closer together rather than pushes us apart. There are a lot of questions and not a lot of answers. So yes, let us celebrate the questions, not weaponize them. Is this an editorial decision? Celebrate the questions. Nurture the questions. Reframe them. Approach them in different ways. Look at them historically. Internationally. Within a certain context, through a certain lens, from a certain perspective, conservatively, progressively, obsessively, distractedly, up close, from afar. The heretical many mouthed god who blesses all conclusions and whose cistern of sacrificial blood has been pumping robustly for ages now.

4/19/2013

Mista Grand,

I'm really impressed.  You've put together a really compelling, mysterious, interesting story. And I feel really honored and inspired that you passed it along to me for a read. I can’t stress enough that this whole process has been fantastic! Stepping into your book has been a lot like walking into a house that a friend has built completely on his own. "You built this! This is incredible.”  Flashes of really impressive workmanship jump out. The amount of work put in is absolutely apparent.  And yet walking through the house I start noticing things.  Small things first.  And then bigger ones.  This room needs another coat of paint, this hallway still lacks crown molding, holy shit this part of the house is missing a weight-bearing wall!

Thus, that's going to be one thing I will respond too- what, at least in my reading of the story, it is missing or hasn't had fully developed. The other two cents I want to add come out of another metaphor.  I read somewhere that good writing sends readers into a sort of dream. And as long as the writing is good and smooth and doesn't shake the reader's confidence too much they will happily stay in the dream from page one through the end.  With that in mind writers have to be wary of aspects of their writing that might break the dream.  These aspects could be a break of tone, uneven style, or even jumps of logic that don't quite bring the reader along. When these occur the dream is broken, the flow ceases, and we, the reader, wake up cranky, thinking once again about the this and that of the life we live that has continued on while we were in the dream the author had been weaving for us.

As I’ve mentioned already I have really enjoyed jumping into your story.  I love reading.  I love stories. Digging into your story and carrying it around and flipping it and talking to it has been really fantastic.  Thus, I want to say straight away, thank you for lending me your story.  I have had a great conversation thus far with it, and by extension with you as well.  Here's hoping I will be able to articulate my thoughts in a helpful, constructive way.  Also with that, all the thoughts that I am going to throw at you are exactly that- they are thoughts and impressions and ideas.  My hope is that they can add to the conversation and the process of your story as it continues to live on and grow and sharpen on the page, in your mind, and in the minds of anyone that has the luck to come in contact with it. Beyond that I just want to underscore that I have only read your manuscript exactly one time, and therefore have spent probably a fraction of time that you have with this tale. And with that in mind I am shooting from the hip. I am speaking off the cuff. Slinging impression, thoughts- I’m blogging here. Take it for what it is worth.  Okay, with all that said, I'll going to stop with the qualifications and the contextualizations and just start throwing shit at you.  Here we go.

**First: a brief outline of how I see the story developing:**

*Tom in jail / Tom out of jail / Back with friends / Hello, Jenny / Ass kicked / Recovery and Jenny. / A new job; a new relationship / Principles explained / Relationship falls apart, break up / Frat house crisis / Rescue / Hospital again / Megan “running girl” backstory / Resolution*

**Some constructive criticism of the story:**

\* Story arc- While you have a pretty complete story arc, I feel like you need (frankly, in the interest of making it more commercial) to tighten up the overall progression of the story and ratchet up the conflict.  I think this is really key, both to strengthen the overall story, increase the pacing, and provide more opportunities for external action and conflict to develop the themes of the story.

\* In general a classic writing truism (especially with narrative writing) is "show don't tell".  At times I felt like some of your background exposition could be replaced with descriptive flashbacks, or scenes that arise from the action of the story.

\* Completing the arc-  after experiencing the complete arc of the story from beginning to the end I feel like the story needs to emphasis a more concrete central conflict to make it more accessible, more compelling, and to set up a bigger payoff at the end of the story.  The central conflict that I feel like could pull everything together would be "finding the girl."  Now you already have elements of this throughout the story, especially since Tom Siver's story of finding himself is very much linked to finding “the girl” that he can fully connect with and that will allow him to connect (reconnect) with himself.  So what I mean about "finding the girl" is that when Tom gets out of prison he should be determined, obsessed even with finding the girl that he saved, but then who didn't come forward to testify at his trial.  I think this is really key because this is the central betrayal that has shaken his confidence and trust in other people.  It's the betrayal that turned his heroic act into something criminal.  I feel like he would want to find this girl.  And I think his motivations for doing so are really interestingly complicated.  Obviously he wants to be vindicated.  Also, there is probably some thought to her safety since he has no idea if she was able to run to safety on the day of the attack.  He is also extremely angry with her since he feels like she betrayed him.  But even beyond that he also saw her running that day and she is stunningly beautiful, so perhaps he is sort of in love with her as well.  The dreams that keep haunting him about her speak to all of these different levels of interest in this "running girl"   he wants to find the girl- he is obsessed, does he hate her, does he love her, does he want to embrace her, does he want to punish her? This could be a really compelling central conflict that provides the chapter by chapter gas to drive the story at a compelling pace from start to finish. I’ve heard that Alfred Hitchcock summarized the formula of every successful suspense story as being that of establishing a character and then giving him/her a “McGuffin” that he/she needs to find. What that McGuffin actually is doesn’t matter at all, the important thing is that the central character has something tangible that he/she is pursuing.

If this theme were developed I feel like it could be the engine that moves the story forward.  It would represent something external that could reflect and incapsulate Tom's internal struggle.  It would be a conflict that would cause tension between him and his friends, and especially between him and Jenny, since one of the things standing in the way between their closeness would be his obsession with finding this girl who he hates/loves/needs to meet in order to be redeemed.

\* Another conflict that needs to be ratcheted up is Tom's conflict with the Lecey brothers.  I think you have a great opportunity to develop them into more substantial villains.  Villains that can both challenge Tom more and represent something that he could have become and could still become.  You've already established that Tom has a lot of things in common with these guys- privileged background, sexual appetite, etc.  One of the themes that has already emerged from the story is this theme of self and sex.  Who we fuck and how we fuck defines who the fuck we are.  Tom is hot, girls want to fuck Tom because he is hot.  The Lecey brothers are not, people don't want to fuck the Lecey brothers... or do they? What do the Lecey brothers have? Well, they are rich and educated and well connected... that’s pretty sexy when you think about it.  But no matter what all these fucking and violence makes me think about why we fuck. You’ve definitely established that we fuck out of attraction and out of love (or what we perceive as love), but then you also bring in this idea of possession- which is great by the way.  In this way sex becomes an act of extending yourself, bringing the other into your being. Beautiful, yes. Potential messy, oh yes. In that you have the idea of establishing yourself as a strong self because you are able to fuck another person. This entails some sort of strength.  And why are you strong? You are strong because you are hot or rich or have social power or charisma or violent power. This is a theme or a whole knot of themes that I think you could explore a bit more deeply with the characters that you already have spinning in this cool, twisted tale of yours.

\* The Fountainhead reference: it struck me as a bit under developed. I didn’t have a clear image in my mind of why the living room was perfect for Tom. It didn’t bring me into any sort of deeper understanding of Tom or the living room. Worth noting though is how the Fountainhead reference and the focus on sex and rape that the story develops made me think of the rape scene in the Fountainhead of Dominque by Hoard Roark... what to make of this.

\* Tom's quick recovery from his severe beating.  It seemed way too quick that he was suddenly having athletic sex, lifting garbage cans, and operating a cumbersome floor buffing machine.  I think you missed an opportunity to explore his inner woundedness through his physical woundedness more.

\* Tom's reaction to the attack and the fact that the attack seemingly came out of the blue for him.  First of all didn't he have a sense that those guys were going to be out to get him.  And then after they got him why wasn't he either more worried about being attacked again, or more set on getting revenge or bringing those bastards to justice.

\* On that note, why wasn't Corey more upset.  If someday kicked the shit out of my good friend or brother, I would be on the warpath (and I am a pretty mild-mannered chap).  I never really saw much anger or fear in Corey's reaction to the attack.  I think bringing in more anger and fear would underscore the tension and rivalry and central conflict between the Lecey brothers and Tom and his people.  There was that one scene where Jon Lecey sees Jenny and Tom at the liquor store.  That was a great scene, and went a long way to building tension.  It was a pretty isolated episode though so the tension wasn’t really sustained.  I think you could do a lot more with developing that conflict.  For example, adding in more scenes in which the Lecey brothers either follow and terrorize Tom and just in general try to sabotage his return to his life outside of prison.  Especially since self and possession is a big theme. The Lecey brothers could try to posses Tom's life, meaning trying to get inside his head and life and sort of control him through fear, as a sort of absolute head fuck and revenge on the guy that kicked their asses. I mean, these guys are smart right. They are educated and they have money, so couldn’t they find more subtle and penetrating ways to exact their revenge. For example, coming to his work, finding out where he lives. Trying to steal his friends and girl friend, or at least trying to turn them against him.  Leaving a dead dog in his yard.  Or just terrorizing him and his friends in subtle and then increasingly horrible ways. Or another angle could be, that the terror they inflict could be so subtle that only Tom has a sense of it and that sense isolates him from his friends, because they don't get it.  And they might just think that he is having a hard time coming back to life on the outside.  This dynamic could be combined with his obsession to find the "running girl"  which would provide two external conflicts representing his desire to reclaim his life, but also externally representing how difficult it is.

In general, anything you could do to make the villain's more formidable would strengthen the story.  As you have it now the villains are dumb and ugly and selfish and pretty incompetent.  How much more terrifying would they be if they were smarter and more charismatic.  One sort of terror they could inflict on Tom would be trying to, on the surface, make peace with him once he gets out of prison.  Remembering that the accepted story of the incident that landed Tom in prison was that he attacked them.  That isn't the truth and it isn't the version that Tom believes, but how fucking evil would it be if the Lecey brothers tried to make sure that everybody close to Tom believed that story. They could do things to try and convince Jenny and Corey and Kayla that their story was true, but they have big hearts and they just want to let bygones be bygones and in general are trying to make nice with Tom, all the while plotting to destroy him.  This could again contribute to Tom's isolation and mental breakdown as he would be the only person that suspected anything, suspecting the truth, while everyone else is being seduced by the charm and money and status of the clean cut American aristocrats.

\* As I mentioned before, I feel like Corey's reactions to things are frustratingly unnatural.  Not only does he not really react to his friend getting the shit kicked out of him, but then later in the story he blissfully attends the frat party hosted by Jon Lecey. If Tom knows that that is Jon Lacey’s frat how does socially connected Corey not know that?  Also, Corey needs a conflict.  I like that he is this energetic, optimistic, life of the party kind of guy, but, come on, that is never the whole story.  You need to round him out and give him something to fight for.  Whatever it is, to be a truly memorable character (as he deserves to be) he needs something to fight for or against. It could be the distance he feels from post-prison Tom.  It could be alcoholism.  It could be infidelity.  It could be trying to get over Tom and Kayla making out. It could be bringing the Lecey brothers to justice. It could be whatever. But I feel like it has to be something, or else Corey comes off like a shrill sort of one note melody.

\* The theme of victim and victimizer/ victim and attacker isn't fuller developed.  The dynamic that you set up for this theme is fantastic!  Tom is victimized by a situation in which he was the attacker/aggressor (at least in the eyes of the law).  This sets us off on an intriguing journey into the heart of this victim/aggressor theme which becomes even more complicated when you add in sex both as an act of violence and self-assertion (controlling another, possessing her/him, violating her/him as an act proving one’s superiority by forcing submission... oh, “sexual conquest” you are a rich theme, you devil you.), but then this dynamic also shows up in the politics of relationships.  Especially with Jenny and Tom, where the sex acts between them come out of this push and pull of submission and possession. The bar bathroom scene between Tom and Jenny is particularly complicated.  Tom uses violence (against himself) to coerce Jenny into a violent sex act, which is consensual, but brought on by Tom's anger and violence.  It's a sort of emotional violence against Jenny, who is later established as being a really needy person who has always been in the position of loving others without necessary receiving love back.  She's a victim, who willingly gives love, but doesn't receive love.  On this note I think you missed an opportunity when you blew over Jenny's meeting with her father, in that her father and Tom have a ton in common.  They are both drinkers, extremely self-involved, and unable to return the love to Jenny that she is pouring out on them.  In this way Jenny's father is sort of an older foil/mirror for Tom.  I think this could be developed more.

\* Another theme that you could develop more would be self-control.  You've already developed the theme of the importance of being a strong and independent "self".  From there I think you could do more with what a struggle it is to truly be a strong, disciplined, in control self.  The theme of self-control and self-discipline could be something to mine. Disciplined = strong self; undisciplined = non-self. To that end I think you could focus more on Tom's weight lifting and working out and on his drinking.  Drinking is interesting because it is used to lose one's self and yet it is always a point of pride among drinkers that they are "good drinkers" and can still control themselves even when they are wasted.  For me Tom's drinking and pill popping really make all of his self-righteous philosophy sound like embarrassing bullshit.  Which may have been your intention.

\* Another place this idea of self-control could be developed is in the story of Ray.  I found myself wishing that you would have taken us into Ray’s story a little deeper, possibly “showing it rather than telling it”, especially the scene where he kills his girl and her lover.  His message to Tom could be something about control, self-control, and the horrors that can follow if you lose self-control (since he loses all control of his life when he is imprisoned).  Or that revenge ain't worth it.  In life we've got to preserve self-control above all else: control of self = control of life. Also, Ray could do more writing in the story via letters to Tom. Since you have already established him as a great reader, he could also be a great writer (possibly through letters to Tom), which would be pretty progressive in that you would be presenting a black convict as the most authoritative literary voice in the story,

\* This idea of control and self-control could further be developed through all the other relationships in the story.  Tom and his friends/girlfriend, Tom and his parents, Tom and his enemies.

People use their looks, personalities, money, positions, etc, to exert control/influence over other people, which really brings up the difficult question of how we can live in society without having our selves compromised by being overly subjected to the control of others, or compromising other selves by overly controlling them.  To this end I feel like you papered over Tom's relationship with his parents too much.  First of all, I don't buy that a son would be hospitalized twice and neither of his parents would show up at the hospital.  Secondly, I see a lot of Tom's parents in Tom in that he is selfish vindictive, and sexually driven.  How really different is he than his father who uses his good looks, position, money, to screw secretaries?  At any rate I think you really need a confrontation or at least more contact between Tom and his parents.  It's hard to accept that they are just snakes.  The apple never falls far from the tree.  If they are snakes then Tom is at least a bit of a snake himself. This needs to be addressed.

\* Another issue I have is with the dreams. The chapter lead-ins contain some of the most beautiful, interesting, mysterious writing in the whole book.  They are really daring, but I think they need to be tightened up or else what is at its core starkm, emotional expression could deteriorate into mind-numbingly unfathomable psychobabble.  I think you should keep some of it.  Tighten it up into shorter tone poems, or almost like Haikus.  Beyond that I think you should dig into Tom's dreams more and give us more narration of them.  Dreams are a great way to give more concrete hints of the narration, subjective flashbacks, direct characterizations, and articulations of emotional states via action.  For example, you could describe Tom reliving the INCIDENT in his dreams over and over, each time it is slightly different, representing different emotional states.  For example in his dreams he is watching the "running girl", or he is chasing her, or he is raping her, or he is fighting off the assailants who also happen to be him, or Corey, or his father, or Jenny's father.  Or he is being attacked and raped and the "running girl" saves him.... etc.  etc.    You allude to Tom fantasizing about or rather being afflicted by images of violence and sexual violence, but it would be way more affective if you described these images through action in the narration either in the reality of the story or the dreamed reality of the story, to really make us feel what he is feeling; again, showing rather than telling.

\* In the end I think tying in the "running girl" into the whole arc of the story would make the ending more satisfying, since Tom’s reconciling with her, and even falling in love with her, would represent Tom's successful overcoming of his anger, victimization, lust for sex/violence, and his defeat of his enemies.

All right, so yeah, these are my thoughts on the story. Again, I tried to be opinionated and concrete, but to that end my hope is that my concrete opinions will be nothing more and nothing less than a sounding board for all of the ideas and effort you have put into this book. I’ve tried to share some ideas which in my opinion would make the story stronger and more commercial. Here’s hoping we can find some time to discuss some of my ramblings and your ramblings over a pint (or two... or three).

Best,

Aaron

05/03/2021

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.

12/23/2020

My hands smell like poop and cat food and the connecting skin between my fingers is white with criss-crossed dry lines. Fuck this shit—the poop and cat food smells suddenly conjure up memories of selling watches.

Last September (2019) the Explorer sale. Contacting and cajoling and extending and ending up exposed, possibly open to retribution, harassment—firing, condescension, withholding funds.

We have attempted to live with integrity. Pressure to capture every sale. Pressure not to sell to flippers, not to sell the wrong watch to the wrong person. To make the Big Boss happy. To make the client happy. My happiness was at best a third consideration—most times this meant suck it up, bite my tongue.

I am not blaming, I am looking for symptoms to trace back—I am looking for rivulets to follow towards the sea. Lines through the labyrinth, slightly sloping floors, steadily descending towards the source.

I am fearful that unaided I do not possess the wherewithal to work well.

12/19/2020

Mixing weed and alcohol like I sued to and to the point of intoxication that I would get to was never a good idea. I was ultimately a depressive— kind of became an addiction. I had no idea what I was doing then. I still don’t really know, but my sense of purpose is much stronger.

12/18/2020

Where is the line between crank and productive writer? Getting lost in one’s own maze… is it a must?

Me? No, I’m not crazy… I’m just a dude with his material and his plausibly balanced take on things.

I began a novel when I had settled back into Chicago on the top floor of an old stone three flat in Wicker Park. My writing was precious and scattered and not edited at all. I did not have the discipline to get into the work consistently, nor get back and edit it consistently. Develop it. I wanted a garden to grow a nourishing salad, but I didn’t want to weed. I didn’t want to plan or shop or consult. I didn’t know how to do these things or how to approach them without coming across as naïve or pretentious or soft-brained. I didn’t know what I was doing and I was afraid of both sounding like I knew what I was doing and sounding like I did not know what I was doing. I did not as yet fully appreciate what a commitment and sacrifice it was to pursue any kind of practice seriously— be it writing or running or sales or child-rearing. Fomo was real. Opportunity costs get expensive. Greatness spends a lot of time being average and good and very good, long before the full value of its greatness has been revealed. Thus, investments. Investing Talents. Burying them. Giving them away. Burning them. And our talents are effort and our talents are time.

It would have been interesting if I had gotten into programming at this time. I really should have. That whole crew of older North Park guys that I identified with had all gotten into Tech related fields including Ruby, though that meant nothing to me then and David Eads who always seemed like the smartest and most consciously woke and engaged friend was already deep in computers and Python and was setting up volunteer organizations to spread the love and opportunity and hardware and no how to handle the hardware and software, big advocate of open-source etc.

Things may have been very different. Perhaps betsy and I wouldn’t have made it. She might have been less enthusiastic about a Tech husband at that time. When I first met her in college she was already VERY annoyed about having to have a university email account. Perhaps I would have gotten a job in the Wicker Park area and began my Tech career right then and there. There would have been no summers in Florida teaching reading enrichment courses.

12/17/2020

In middle age the hens come home to roost. Your habits begin to wear on you. Defining you in ways you had not planned to allow them to.

Drinking had shifted for me somewhere in my 30s— the routine of it, volume, ubiquity, rhythm. Sporadic jogging campaigns helped to keep the Baker weight off and my 6 foot frame was a tall rack to hang my extra fat on, so my beer weight never really seemed too unseemly. The path to utter schlubbiness is slow and progressive it seems.

One beer a day is different than 3-4 +. My energy is different. My weight is different. I believe my sleep and concentration are improves and I know my diet is better when I am not drinking as much and then just eating whatever because I am drunk and everything that is salty and greasy tastes divine and real grade-A primo.

Shedding the stress of my ill-suited luxury retail career, finding purpose in coding, and time to write and compose more constructively and creatively and intuitively and unexpectedly than I have ever been able to compose. Hopefully, by the time you are read this I will have some fruit to share. At this point I am feeling enthusiastic about getting my orchard set up, planting trees, figuring out some repeatable processes for growing a bunch of them up and seeing what they produce. This process as a whole has always been elusive for me, a source of frustration and turmoil and self-recrimination— it doesn’t make sense that you don’t know how to go about doing something you supposedly love so much to do.

Before March of 2018 all things coding and computer were more the lore of occult knowledge than any sort of clear path out of my retail career cul-de-sac. Have never been super technical, but that spring after burning my year’s worth of vacation on a return trip to China with betsy and Esme and Susan and Micah (first time in 8 years!!) and faced up to the realization that we were not really open to moving back to China anymore, at least not while we were raising kids. Something about the way this realization hit me really helped me to I was finally buckle down and start looking coding square on as a potential career path. I began to learn Ruby.

The long, tough, but satisfying path that I have traveled with Chinese, definitely informed my thking about diving into a computer language like Ruby, that I had the impression was something that could be gotten into with a relatively low threshold of entry, but that would, if I stuck with it, take literally years to master or even get very good at.

12/15/2020

The over eager editor

* Gotta get it right right now.
* That is too much work, forget about it.

12/14/2020

I did not like my job and it made me feel shitty about myself and made me cut myself off from many things that I loved and that had previously sustained me. Despite my unhappiness I propped myself up on genuine bounty of my lively family life—my growing girls, my loving wife. We were holding things together, together. My wife cooked wonderfully and we would eat well and festively. I would often have a beer or two in transit from downtown to shake the drain of the day off—the battle, the physical sprint of it, the manic tick of it.

No matter how damn sweat you fucking fuselage is, you still have to hook that sucker to some sort of engine or you’re going to sick faster than you can say 1st class. Some engines are extremely powerful, but not very reliable, some are smooth and easy and relatively maintenance free and even some what effective, still others are dynamite and dependable, but demanding and involved to set up and maintain.

12/13/2020

Trying to teach somebody something that they are not open to learning is like trying to put a glove on a child who will not stretch the fingers from their fist.

The wife had a hard day yesterday. Her back felt very bad and her mood and psyche collapsed after it. As for me, I smoked too much weed and begrudgingly took most of the day off, though all I wanted to do the whole day was study Ruby.

12/07/2020

My clan joined a rival cults my own enthusiasm for any of the Martyr’s various cults was wanning. And so I left without leaving. And I did not follow where my parents went unlike all 5 of my siblings and their spouses. And now three of my siblings have three plus kids and are ‘straw poll’ by and large very socially conservative and not unsusceptible to the intoxicating war cries of White Christian Nationalism, though they may formulate the nexus of their rage slightly different.

“And Governor Nazi wants to trample all over everyone’s rights while her husband takes his girlfriend out on a goddamned pontoon!”

“They stupidly put wind farms in Texas and now they are frozen solid and not producing a gigawatt of power. Stupid!”

“And now They want bars0 open till 5 a.m. This after They are So concerned with public health and her mentality and what not. I’m telling you— the Ewoks are taking over the world! (I’m pretty sure she meant A-rabs, but I feel a little racist even making that correction.)”

I think my Grandmother’s consciousness peaked somewhere in the late 70s to mid-80s putting her disproportionately under the spell of Middle East Conspiracy theories and Star Wars references. She tended to garble the two in humorous ways from time to time in my topical passion. My grandmother did like to smoke a little weed didn’t she. Or at least her husband did. And then Debbie was such a stoner and her kids and Jason and Larry and Teddy and me and the Summersett girls and drinking and Hans and drinking and me and drinking and weed and dad’s weird kind of surreptious drinking which seemingly has played into my weed smoking habits. Obfuscate. Separate. Isolate. Corral. Abstract. Get with the program.

Not being in the cult suddenly put us in non-compliance with certain cult requirements of baptism, esoteric cult knowledge, attendance of cult meetings, private meetings with one of the cult leaders to share my darkness, having my off spring damped with cult water, following all cult protocol with regard to when and how and to where the semen from my body is released, ipso facto- having a bunch of children to be dampened with cult water unless of course I was not blessed by ITS SUPREMACY to have an orchard rich as Stashdar’s. Their cult affiliation has also, at least in their interpretation of the ancient cult texts (which many claim are simply update and reformed cult texts from even more ancient civilizations. Cults truly are remarkable, he remarked.

They seem to have deeply embraced this new cult. They have embraced the culture and teachings of this new cult with the zealousness of a Zentian Martyr. The are praying for me in my BACKWARDNESS and PAGANSIM. As my beliefs make me a heretic among my birth tribe, I am forced to be quite careful about how I express myself among my kin. This caution is tiresome and alienating. A seeming unending buffet of battles to choose from.

They pray to all parties including the father, the son, the holy specter, the immaculate incubator and a number of former and exemplar cult members whose lives somehow capture some aspect or even the fullness of that intangible life ordering goodness and even greatness of the cult. The power of its metaphors. The shallowness, but abundance of its language. The Dandelion was the symbol of the cult and every time we saw a flourishing cluster of Dandelion’s my family would look at one another knowingly reflecting on their flourishing.

Regardless of the fact that sure previously at certain times certain cult leadership-members may have been perceived to be a little soft on sexual predators in the pontificate despite penning a 900 page encyclical on human sexuality.

It was in fact a 12 DVD lecture series breaking down this 900 jumble of medieval fever dream into digestible Catholic Doctrinally sound sex rationalization. I have never subjected myself to this 12 DVD marathon, but was tempted to binge watch it in the GATHERING stage of composing this piece. That seems like a really big commitment of time. Perhaps we’ll skim the Wikipedia article of a few stray quotes.

“the body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God and thus be a sign of it.” JP II

I feared these DVDS like the VHS tape from “The Ring”. I’d wake up in cold sweats dreaming that I had watched the tape and be inexplicably compelled to become a raging White Nationalist Santorum Catholic devoted to Tucker Carlson (RIP RUSH! #dittohead4life)! A dunk into a theological acid bath that striped my slow coated Chicago-style big city liberalization off of me like the cheap veneer that it was.

12/04/2020

I believe that I can put crippling self-sabotaging self-doubt and self-recrimination and depression behind me, for they are on in the same, they are looping dumb eyed prediction of future failture, false roading, naivete, incomplete, stupid, turncoat, dyslexic, personality disorder, pathological liar, lazy, confused… the whole sick Bedlam Choral, but really what do I have to feel bad about? My plan is coming together despite me. I am inspired about books again! And music and writing are opening up to me in new and very positive ways. The process, the approach is becoming the point, a specific way of working that allows an end around or an end into art making, avoiding the too broad bullseye of unspecific “art making” . The process allows me to creatively follow whims while ensuring that I will accrue momentum building material for a variety of projects over time. I have internalized my practices of language and computing to the point where the work is simple the projects. Any idea or thought that I have can easily find a home in an existing project or if it does not and strikes me as something worth pursuing I can simply create a new file. Judgement is the key here. Having some intuition in what topics would be interesting to pursue and which ones have a lot of fertile material. If the material is there then piece on the topic will begin to pull mass to it. Once I am able to start spinning out finished pieces from the material— poems, short stories, novels, essays, letters, sketches, profiles, blog posts (writing, creating, tech, Chinese, heath (diet, stretching)— the full potential of the process will be realized. This will put me in a wonderful position to always have something (many things actually) stewing in the hopper. This feels like a more professionalized place to be with writing. Almost likem making candles or comething— you have a sense of the process and over time build a sense of the timelines required to complete the work. You plan your personal family economy around this rhythm and you build a career. What a nice thought and a clear, clean and simple plan.

12/02/2020

Can one escape this never ending cycle of guilt and recriminations?

What’s more interesting? What he’s trying to say? Or what comes out?

Simultaneously struck dumb by my apprehension to reveal my intelligence or my ignorance.

11/30/2020

The ghost riders on the elevated train head north on the 8:45 to Kimball. Downtown on the Metra, screaming, speaking, screaming, kids and money, if you don’t fight about these two things you should be pretty good. We don’t fight about these things and still find each other attractive and funny and creative and kind and thoughtful and we work together well, figuring things out, communicating through the challenges.

My substance use and abuse has put this balance and flow in jeopardy. I believe I now have my alcohol consumption under control. My once in 4 year binge sobered me up quite nicely. It was a super efficient collapse. Beer in hand along the strees back and forth to the grocery store. Be a drunk, but be a useful drunk. I am the Larry Johnson of the literary arts.

Drugs at times have answered my call for danger, excitement, adrenaline, urgency, unanticipated experience, self-space, ideological relief, inspiration, thought catalyzing. And yet, there is the inconvenient aspect of the habit which has led me to at times exhibit zero self-control with regards to controlling where and when I smoke, or rather continually pushing the envelope to smoke or handle weed in inopportune situations— trying to roll a joint on the sly in the back of the car with the windows up— being stoned and oblivious to how passe, rude, laidback, uninspiring my stoner mindset is making me. Fighting the rat race with rat poison? Trying to get ahead of the race by slipping below it. Not realizing how off target, or how unspecific my target was. How nebulous my goals were. The anxiety and the fear that people cultivated, extend, refuse or fail at releasing, letting go, informs their goals and ambitions. If you smother those with chemical calm, then where are you left, or if you are left feeling like some of that static has been mitigated, how do you continue to interface with people who are operating on a different frequency. How do you keep from getting your signals crossed up all the time.

But now I just want to be quiet and nostalgic and see windows illuminated with holiday lights. Smoke until the theatrical sense returns. The significant contrasts of light. The 10% elevated to the 110%. All theories. All possibilities enter the chain of thoughts, but in a staccato rambling tumult, unhinged, muttering, swearing at the uncanny memories that return— fanciful and cardboard, undetailed, flaccid, lifeless, inchoate bellowing emotions, one against the other in an unrehearsed chorus of pre-madonna divas. The intensity is there, but what about the harmony, the technique; can you harmonize the low and high, the false and the true?

Zing my grey matter keen.

Keen my grey matter zingier.

11/29/2020

And he vowed this would be the last time. No, this time. No this.

Depressed and self-medicating and had been for a long time exactly because I had not been doing what I felt passionate about. I worked, but I did not feel passionate about my work. I felt passionate about providing for my family and to that end I did care about doing a mgood job and building my business and taking care of my clients, but over time my allegiance to my clients increased and my allegiance to management became stretched, abused, taken for granted, seemingly actively discouraged. My experiences in the luxury watch industry will be invaluable to me once I get some distance from it.

He checked his mood meter and dismayed.

We have this ancient *Do/More* branded office chair— I love it and it sometimes depresses the hell out of me. I have lived in the city and functioned in the city and been sad and fell out with my family— grew apart. Its not my fault— they are not all conservative Catholics whose lives seem extremely fraught and chaotic and getting together with them does not seem super appealing given our precarious economic and vocational state, the pandemic, and the resulting tenuous mental health of both betsy and I. In a plane. Free falling. Leaving that which is no longer necessary behind. Purging who parts of my brain that I no longer need access to. Releasing conditioned tensions and unraveling contentious relationships. Forgiving. Self and others. Our limitations are not to be hated. Our brilliance is circumscribed by all the normal human shit that in and of itself can be pretty despair inducing. How to take the shit and pant with it. How to contain the shit, make systems for the shit.

Horse drawn wagons carrying receptacles and pumps to travel the streets of Paris in the night pumping out the shit and piss and vomit and old food and whatnot that collected in each apartment blocks septic tank. The shit has always been there. We have just had better or worse means of dealing with the shit. Feeling overwhelmed. Feeling unconfident that I have the wherewithal to pull the plane up in a timely fashion.

I have 17 nieces and nephews on my side of the family and not a single god son. I have been excommunicated from the family. Put in a situation to “self-exclude” from the Catholic celebration calendar because I am not Catholic. My family is more than I can handle. My family is more than my family can handle. I have a hard time putting up a stress firewall with my family and I don’t like what it does to me emotionally and mentally. My shadow exile. Distanced geographically, religiously, politically, culturally, linguisiticaly, rhetorically…

11/25/2020

1.5 Hazy IPA; 1.5 Sapparro; 1.5 IPA; 1.5 IPA; 1 Pale Ale’ 1 Pale Ale; .5 Pale Ale, .5 Two Hearted, 1 Milk stout.

11/24/2020

I pay $85 per year for a Divvy bikeshare membership. Thus, I always have a stead stashed a few blocks away max. I rarely drive in the city. My wife is our city driver. I am the out of town long hauler, typically the one to get us up to Michigan or out to Indiana or Tennessee and back. I think this sends a good message to the girls to see their mother driving and their father riding shotgun. My father never road shotgun, my father-in-law never road shotgun. Ever. When he passed out at breakfast on a high desert plain in Montana the day before we were to drive into Yellowstone we had to do some pretty persistent convincing to get him to hand off the van keys to his eldest son (who was 48 at the time).

This was 2008 and my Grandfather had just passed away. I had written him a short letter when he was very sick and I had felt good about the letter and he had liked it, appreciated it and had tried to write me back, it sounded like it was going to be some sweeping memoire of his life. It said he was the Jesuits man and that he felt like there was a generation gap between us. This was obviously true. He was good with birthday cards. We stood in the kitchen and awkwardly chatted about college football. He spoke in this very composed, collected, clinical way. He seemed bemused a lot. He would chuckle. He had a deeper voice than you would expect (in my memory). He was raised under the weight of Freud. Not super comfortable with hugging people, intimacy.

A bit soused again.

Skull light and buzzy

Used to be fun, drowning on the couch like this

Everything amplifying everything else.

My lack of vocational clarity and trajectory has been a great source of existential anxiety for me. Acepting this mantel, this pressure, embracing it, enveloping it in our practices, structuring life such that your practices drive things— your habits lead the way, you are not working on automatic, but you are working in an agile way on things that you are automatically interested in.

Weed has to become ceremonial again.

You are an alcoholic. You have this on both sides of the family. Fucking deal with it.

Annette, Michael, Jason, Teddy, Larry, Nina, Jody.

Reboot with alcohol. Fuck that routine. Stop being even an every day drinker.

I am right on that precipice of “do I need help”. The 25th was fucked up. I am feeling much recoved, but still not back into my yoga positive mind set.

11/23/2020

His body felt tense in the cold bed and he wondered when she would come to bet. Her warm mass in the mess of the sheets would shift his weight towards herr.

And I remember wanting to have a girl to take naps with and I found one and it was tumultuous. Mother, high school, college, oscillating confidence, screw down and get into and figure out, reaching out for some larger vision, enlarging vision, but really, you know what, who knows. Trying like some desperate Dan to rhapsodize your world into some kind of order. Spin a rag-quilt out for the masses.

11/22/2020

He hadn’t smoked in the morning and his head felt clear, though his mother’s text had still annoyed him when she had texted him about his mystery cousin. 50 years old— son of now dead uncle Doug or Craig or whatever, conceived in 1970 or 1969 and never met his biological uncle, my uncle, before my uncle’s death in 2003.

He died in the spring and I did shrooms with Stephen and Luke instead of attending his memorla service thing which was to be small and I felt kind of drawn there to be with my mother, but also didn’t really feel like there was much of a connection between doug and me and the rest of the family. Doug individually yes, but connected to the family, not as much. So we had done shrooms and we played dominoes – “5s” and the artist that had mady all those wild layerd images that I started to get lost in like strange intergalactic space stations, Escher inspired labrithyns of shapes and connections, suggestions and possibilities. Was his name 5ive? We had granola which I had made and had been proud of making because at that point in my life I did not make all too many things and did not feel super impowered to. What is that dopey limitation we put on ourselves to block us out from really accessible things. Derivative- not so accessible, but granola, not so hard. It had Thunderstormed as Stephen had predicted it probably would and I was incredibly paranoid and afraid of the lightening as we sat on the front porch and watched it explode and flash before us with a tremendous waloop of thunder right behind it.

My dead uncle visited me in the form of a three foot high Dia de los Muertos effigy skeleton effigy and we listen to the Mojave 3 and we sat in the living room feeling the mystery of the streets— the proximity of our neighbor— the uniqueness of our own headspaces— celebrating our subjectivity— up all night— burritos the next day feeling strung out and happy and befriended— a year later I would be riding a camel in the desert in China after having spent the summer in Florida, the fall in Berlin, and having moved in Xi’an China at the beginning of the spring. This must have been 2004, no?

Angry at your ill sentiments

Your sultanic obsession—

The excrement of thieves collected cake like.

The disbelieving Drew Brees chameleon daughters

We’re smarter than your average martyrs, but still not starters.

He was punny. He was a very fucking punny guy.

My puniness is a symptom of a shit lit diet.

11/20/2020

People doing creative things, speaking creatively, speaking in creative ways, interacting, not just collapsing in upon one’s self, which is where I have been,

unbelieveably so to some extent. This compression.

Seeking out the alms and the hand-me-downs

As we clown our way around

To some round about form of self-expression

Why even make a thing of it?

Why not just be wise and get on with your life?

Don’t piss your wife off

Getting pissed on your night’s off

Drink and drank

Sink and sank

Stink and stank

Polled the rank and file

They ruled, was vile

Once a motherless child

Reviled with no false alternative

Cursed to furnish the worthless mirth

At the company picnic.

The worst world’s first

A great big pagan revue

Living in a garden apartment

Bumping Aphex Twin

Considering my alternatives

Worldly perfect, perfectly bred,

Mistaken for a lady, all her lies well-tred

All the lies stripped of their tread.

All his wives leavening their bread.

All his concubines perfuming his bed.

11/18/2020

Back in January (1/31/2020) I had set a goal: 10,000 words a week and 25 miles. 10,000 and 25 seemed very reasonable to me. One long run a week would knock out a good chunk of the mileage and a string of solid, quite mornings would blow though my writing quota without too much strain. Plus, the discipline of it would give some ballast to my hyped up sales life. Sitting and thinking or maybe reading and sitting and writing in the morning before the second or third cup of coffee and the three flights down and two blocks to the train, two flights up, five stops to Belmont, fingers crossed that the transfer will be there to walk across the plateform to, then three stops to Clark, and three or four flights up from the underground and a three quarter’s mile hustle along Division or Elm to State and then Oak. And then my workaday sprint up and down the three stories of story front we occupied on the most exclusive shopping street in the city. I spent my day mostly standing or bounding up and down the stairs or striding the impossibly long distance to the back of the store, where my many responsibilities would draw me in an uncomfortable and imbalanced amount of time. More coffee throughout the day. Oh, someone brought donuts, how nice. And then off work and hustle home. Pound a tall boy and a bag of potato chips in the park outside the Newberry Library, like the chips and the beer on the train to Grand Rapids, wobbly on your feet bumming cigarettes in the Michigan summer night. And later trying to get cigarettes from that gas station that had just been rammed by a minivan. We went somewhere else and the clerk kind of put his arms up and shrugged at the mess all around him. We smoked cigarettes and talked about what, what… I have no idea what we talked about, but it was nice to hang out and drink beer and smoke cigarettes like a gang of beatniks after an earlier drunk on the train and taking pictures of the landscape and writing in my journal and journeying on and on without a destination.

Tried to get some reading in last night— but just felt tired again— just felt the oblivion of the night descending upon me and so I followed her into the depths and in the depths I while away the early A.M. hours on our green cat-scratched couch.

Writing, including details as they bubble up— suggest themselves, you know, what can you say to art— the million choices that go in to all that you would like to make— and some make and make it— and other fall apart angry and shitty— bitched out and mother consumed— you called the Governor a Nazi, you floated out highly debatable assertions into national conversations on race and equality and the like— social justice.

I want to fly over the tropes and the traps of white liberation. We cannot help but be sucked into the politicking of the moment though can we…

Would love to say that I only do politicks in the even of all out war.

Politicking is all about dividing. Setting up camps. Securing funding. Using the scalpel and the sledgehammer of language to railroad the conversation inti a narrow set of clear choices— it is the opposite of reality and the opposite of the free market— a proliferation of choice, ultimate choice, ultimate competition.

In the political arena there have been concerted efforts by both parties to restrict the “free market” of the political system— there certainly has been much written about this. I accept that we have a system— I recognize that it is limited and imperfect and I accept that.

Otters have a pocket for their favorite rock.

11/16/2020

And YES! we waste time combing through some “insignificant” notes from 4 years ago, but there is something rich there. Something tragic about talent, and popularity and celebrity and violence. And fascinating/horrifying Florida. Orlando where the three closest restaurants to my apartment were McDonalds and I was alone and car commuting and hiding from the heat with the air-conditioner blasting frost on all the windows when I was out for the day that one time.

Could expand on that tragedy- she was a contestant and third place finisher on that show *The Voice*. Before that prominence she had been a youtube celebrity and after the voice she seemed to be managing her career well. And then a super fan who had had dental work and hair plugs put in and the traveled to Orlando from his far flung Florida home and shot the woman as she was spreading her arms out to embrace him. He shot her three times and then shot himself dead after struggling with the original victims brother and then breaking free. Very sad. Her mother died two years later from cancer. All in all a pretty tragic family, no? Who was this crazy guy though? Why do people do that kind of stuff? What happens between the bad feeling and the bad action. That is the shadow. That is the shadow, I know I know…

11/14/2020

My programming backlog has me feeling full low.

Caught in a moment unable to embrace the familial warmth all around.

Conflicted about when to work, when to play, a very old story, no?

Hating Saturday for its ambiguity and seen from both ways-ness

Caught up wrestling with this other mind, this Saturday mind,

Suddenly only half-convinced of the wisdom of the mission.

No, that’s not it, it’s all or nothing, it’s ***Alles oder Nichts!***

Tired of this Saturday mind. Tired of feeling conflicted about time

And space and religion and politics . How can it all be so tiresome despite all our dear technology… or perhaps so tiresome because of it. The ubiquity. The pumped into our house-ness. Way more invasive than anything George Orwell cooked up for 1984 back in 1948.

What’s the point of any of this other than to play our part? I personally like my part and think it is a very good one. I have a good one. Satanic self-ness my mother says— as I faulter in the green of her fundamentalist dream kingdom. And I am rubbing smoke and sparking aggression. Feeling the false energy in my bones— nervous system— because the night expands only and does not contract and death is the hunter of the infinite night.

11/03/2020

Smoking a joint out on the side porch in the mid-day, sweet Marcel is curious and lurks around. Ella the downstairs cat is cuddled up somewhere feeling sore. According to local legend, she once saw another cat out a window and was forever deeply traumatized. It really fucked her up. Anna is in the garden thinking long thoughts on intersectional projects. Haas downstairs barking his gruff Haas bark. Bari is down the street at her page and book binder shop. Ellen is at home grieving writing poems that heal a wound by owning it, by honoring it, by carrying it, by holding it near, by allowing you, at some point to draw you to others, with that new certainty of our aloneness and the deep compassion that wells up in your heart for the people all around.

Dealing with your shit. Getting it out. Purging it, because you have to now. Because you are older now and can’t carry it around anymore. What does it mean to truly release this? Reach a baseline and come to terms with your own existence, your own mistakes, wasted days, how to you gather the gumption to carry on, and with style.

And there it is… that yearning again, that desire, longing, that openness that eludes me still.

My shamanic process has delivered me to a distant shore, but wait there’s more

11/01/2020

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

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

Time does not stop, but I lose my finely delineated place on the timeline, my vector in space, my spine once reasonably aligned starts to overreact, working like an abacus under fidgetly, nicotine stained hands, tabulating my crimes. Unwind? How about drink till were blind. I’ll find a poet’s oath on the other side of reasonable. I’ll take my place upon the bar stool, beside a cadre of other unrealized purveyors of the written word. Oh, to make seem spontaneous and causal a compression of my decades of struggle and wasted time and mistakes.

11/26/2019

And what just happened was me writing.

What just happened was me allowing myself to write.

Writing is good.

Writing is blind.

Writing is a salve.

Something to call up the dead.

Something to breathe life into the living.

Each sentence a complete and crafted **message** onto itself.

I want to believe that if I can just use this spreadsheet every day, I will have a better handle on my life. I don’t want to be out of control. I feel out-of-control or at least set on a certain trajectory. That anxiety one feels when you can’t seem to shake your anxiety. I can write myself out of this if I work hard to write myself out of this.

7/1/2019

Let’s call it a comeback. Not sure when my last productive time of writing was. My creative writing class in college stands out as a time when I was finishing stories. What did I write? I wrote about being on the boat and I wrote about the world without icons and I wrote about *Let Bygones Be Gorgons* I wrote about my trip to the west coast and I pulled real details from my life and then I sprinkled in some stilted dialogue and some pointed description. They came together well enough that my professor printed out a list of the top 10 creative writing programs in the country and encouraged me to apply. And what did I do. I graduated and went to MN and wrote not a single finished story despite the fact that I was surrounded by people that also had ambitions to write- literature, songs, etc. I smoked a lot of pot that summer. I took mushrooms for the first time. And then I saved up enough money to go bum around Europe for a while and while I was there I wrote a fair bit I wrote vignettes about places I went and things I did. And I began to sense a great emptiness in me. A lack of talent. A lack of drive. A lack of confidence. I had an identity that I could have pursued through training or more diligent execution, but instead I dithered and I played at being a writer. I was a twenty-something hobbyist.

In Germany I wrote. I wrote a little bit about Roosterhead that was inspired by a vision I had at a flea market of a seedy urban neighborhood dimly lit by red lights in the rain and the camera panning along the shabby façades of the buildings and down toward the smoky, beat glamor of a Chinese restaurant decorated with heavy fabric cloths and tapestries, all decor saturated by cigarette and cigar fumes. The camera follows a path through the restaurant to a back room where we find our hero placcid at a table alone. He has feasted, the remnants of a half dozen dishes are scattered on the wide round table. Roosterhead smokes a cigarette and with his black, beady eyes regards the a picture of a 1940s Chinese pinup girl on the wall. He exhales and a smoke ring debonairly floats across the table and forces its way into the nicotine saturated wall.

I have attempted to write stories and been caught in a room. Caught in my own room. The nothingness of the thoughts in my head. The nothingness in the thoughts in my head. All content that is volition without substance. My mother returning to me in thoughts- this invalidating figure. A figure in whose eyes I am ultimately a failure as a person. Is this the Catholic world view? How did you view non-Catholics? How do I view Catholics? How can I truly integrate with my Catholic family? Read more G.K. Chesterton or some shit like that?

We have lived beside this sea for many decades, many days.

The white sands contain stories that have been lived and will be lived again.

We walked into the night and took our time unwinding the long string of misunderstandings that have come to define my life.

The damage that was done was done.

The creature in the night was close.

The weaselly mutant breathed with wretched exhaustion.

The time has come for us to throw caution into the wind.

The time has come to become.

The morning has come to be loved.

It is time.

And I do love this morning. I love the close breeze and the softness of thoughts that accompany it. I love the holy ghost distractions that reach into my consciousness and screw out the bellowing wind. The ghost distractions of our dearly departed dead. The past. We will write for the past people. We will write for the past truth seekers. I cannot image another day spent in this hell. This unknowing. This uncommitted existence. And these are rambling words with shades of truth. We pack up and move to Duluth. We summer in Eagle Harbor. Let’s just do a couple of weeks. It would be rough because we couldn’t swim. But I would go there and write and live my life in an Andrew Wyeth painting where my most striking aspect would be the absence that I conjure up.

I have given up the ghost. I have removed myself from the canary road existence to attempt to enter into tradition. All the traditions coming to me in a dream and you beating on a drum to scare my demons out. And if we could actually get there then gorgeous. If we could actually get there then lovely. If we could actually get there then bangarang and roombadoom howdy do.

I can’t call you my brother without you getting inside my head.

I can’t call you my sister without you getting inside my head.

The fragrant memories that you have traded for a life in the war department.

The standard fictions that the mother of your children sold you to become the mother of your children.

The cynical fascists that control everything with their power. Their money. Their penal pride.

And why the coarseness? Why the crudeness?

Why the manic approach of the spiteful, cruel charm that was supposed to be my hero amulet.

I should have been a better person for you. Instead I was a cynic and a shit. I fucked up and brought this shit down on myself. We got to the other side of Ashland and that was enough to be prideful. We had done something that some other people hadn’t down, now weren’t we something pretty? Weren’t we something artful? In the hall the winner from ’03 is drunk and ignored his promise has sprouted spores of mold and his breath is acrid with the prophecies of another world.

And the poetic spirt, humanity. The surge of breath in life. The life and death in surging. The time that encompasses it all. What did I read about time from Einstein… something about all time being cosmic time. Something about time being the fabric of the universe. And suddenly we are considering time. Time something that we cannot escape. That we measure and analyze and reassess and all of these strategies are what they are. This and no more. I cannot call you back. I cannot call you back. I am a grown man in the service of the king. We do not need to be here of course. Sharp winds and moving picture shows. We want to find something for him. And is that what it takes. His father moved in here once upon an evening. His mother moved in here once upon an evening. And they paved the way and they weren’t supportive of me becoming a lawyer at all really. Well kind of in a passing sort of way. And I told them that I wanted to use the extra time to write and I don’t think I did much writing then with the exception of writing a few letters. I remember having a long phone conversation with Justin and telling him that I would retire before he would despite the fact that I would be going back to school for three years. There are so many things to do now. There are so many things to do. And do any of these things mean anything at all. These words represent something that we have never seen before. These words represent something that I have never known before. We climb to the top of the Eiffel Tower and jump. We fly from the top of the Eiffel Tower and out over the lights of gay Paris. We are living in this incredibly connected world and our loneliness has never been greater. Though I don’t know that is true. I have known loneliness. I have know ghostly fan fiction that I have hacked out to get my darker emotions out into the light of day and I have hacked out my happier emotions to get my good emotions out into the light of day. I can live in this world with you. I can live in this world with you. Making choices and making eyes at the temptations of the day. I want to live and be productive and be creatively engaged and yes there will of course always be struggles and conflicts, I don’t think the human consciousness can function without those. Buddha lack of desire shall take you to the other side of the moon. We are moving into the future. Beating on a drum. Beating on a canyon of dreams. I know that you love me and I love you and I am falling asleep in the conception of myself as someone who loves you more than you love me. I can’t possibly love you alone and broken and as if to prove the point plaintive Polish pop music comes floating on the minor keys up from the back courtyard where the Polish carpenters greet the morning with their grinding ban saws, as the old structure gives way to the new.

07/02/2019

And I didn’t have a single morning like this last month. Morning, soft morning, the airplanes off to where, where. Plato communicates through the ether of time. Poetry immoral? Unmanly? Poetry and reveling in that which we would be ashamed or embarrassed to do in our own lives, but as audience members we praise the emotion and passion, even while in our own lives we suppress and control. What is good for the city of ourselves?

That’s an interesting metaphor. The self as a city. How are you living? How’s the mayor doing. You could extrapolate on that and run with that- the self as a city. The self as the city. How is your personal economy doing? What was your past, what does the future hold?

And while I am very pleased to be up this early and set up and typing (I was up at a quarter to 6:00 and showered and made coffee and got Helena up, who woke up early herself and is now sleeping on the floor), I feel tired and hot already in this chair. I don’t have a work desk, work table and that is some pretty annoying shit. I don’t know if I have enough energy to do any of this. I am old, I have always been old. Thinking of the will. Thinking of peace. Thinking of work. Thinking of grace. Did this kid have a divorce or something?

These fucking unobtainable objects of desire, which they make well. Which they call out and catch shit for. I am not going to go there. My stoner mind wondering the streets of my derelict cty.

And all of this morning shit, feeling the morning weakness in me and all I come away with is a metaphor. My metaphor is losing its steam. My steam is losing its drumbeat. My drumbeat is losing its reality. I need to get the financial stuff on the computer so that I know what I am looking at. But that is a big part of the city isn’t it- a big part of the city is the financial well-being of the city. The financial well-being of those dependent on the city. We try to make the best of it. We try and do our best. I am losing myself in this process. I am finding myself.

Betsy met me downtown last night with the girls. They arrived right on time as we were leaving the store. Betsy and Esme and Helena. This is our family, this is our city- Betsy and Esme, Aaron. I am feeling pissed off. I am feeling hot I want to be at repose and relaxed and work but I know that I have to work hard and dig and push and scrap and hustle. Work, work, work. Oh, but to have the vision to choose the work that suits you. I should have been a counselor in high schools of the boreal universe. And that shit didn’t make any sense but it felt good coming out and now I am distracted by my rambling birth and I am here and I am not here. My ability to concentrate feels shot. I feel tired and full of shit- literally, literarily. I liked that pun yesterday Sub-bourbon Mom. She speaks with a tragic confidence. Declaring her late night TV show roster as if it were some kind of an accomplishment, a pedigree. This self-deprication is intended to what? We are mindful of the morning. She calls to us and we find her and I am up with her attempting to sooth her. We are drinking coffee, but we should be drinking water. It’s fucking hot already and the day hasn’t even begun yet. My little baby daughter is sleeping on the floor and I am shirtless and squishy bellied and belly aching. There are many ways to be in this world. There are many ways to be in this world.

And Siagon fell and my baby is sweet. And Saigon fell and the Americans abandoned Vietnam and Saigon fell on April 30, 1975.

Greenwich Village was a place, unlike the military, where he didn’t need to adjust he could just hang out. David Blue is who I’m rambling about whose real name was Stuart David Cohen. All these hep cat Jews knew what they were doing. Or did they? Did they live in this same world or pleasure and pain? Did they die of heart attacks at the age of 41. Did they get good at doing drugs and running around with fools. What is the best Dylan biography. *Down the Highway*, *Behind the Shades*, *No Direction Home*.

What is the point of all of this? Maybe I need more exercise, because right in this moment I feel ineffectual and hot and stupid and lazy and the weight of the wasted years makes me want to just get high and play Uno with my daughter. But why can’t the weight of the wasted years, just make me want to be sober and play Uno with my daughter. Nothing really matters all that fucking much. I need to get that money situation figured out. I have that information somewhere. I don’t have to be fucking sheepish about any of this shit. I don’t have to be sheepish about any of it. I just need to be clear about where I am going and what I am doing and be me and do the things that I do and grow in the way that I can grow and let go of the things that I can let go. I am living. I am alive. Just by living, just by being alive I am succeeding. These things are unclear to me. Did they say these porches were all right? We attempted to make good on promises that we used to make to people. Dear Jesus let us expand. Dear Jesus let us grow. I am falling asleep in my pure belief in justice. I am falling asleep in my pure belief of truth. Hand me the keys to the kingdom and I shall return you to your youth. The intertexuality of all of it seems important. A letter of encouragement to my brother would be nice. Just being able to sit down and write a letter to someone without it making me feel depressed. Just being able to write a song without feeling depressed.

Just being able to kick the can down the road without feeling depressed. I am fighting depression. I am fighting death. I am fighting flaccidness. I am fighting heartache. I am fighting for the ability to listen to music and be free. I am looking for a way out of here. I am looking for a way to be free. Here we go banging away at the same old intertextual theories that I don’t know what I am talking about. A clear head. A head of ideas. Stoned I come up with something to share. I wish I had some green right now to help me appreciate the morning. Instead I am just sweating and feeling the limitations of my endocrine system. People don’t talk to me. People don’t remember me. People meet me in the street and beach the sideways looks I cast at them. An assuredness that is absurd. A sense of divine certainly. What about beer in the morning? What about a place to answer the day back to me. And I know that the see is only crossed with discipline and that is what I am seeking here. But obviously I am lacking something (as I crack a beer at 8 in the morning with the sun encroaching on my and my floor sleeper and the cat moves through the apartment with lithe feline moves.

What is the end game here? To just be a literary cat- somebody who reads and writes and engages with the written word in a robust way. Somebody that accepts the yolk of work and supports his family the best that he can. Somebody that is disciplined enough to keep my affairs in order and get through the day without getting fucked up. There is nothing wrong with a buzz me thinks. There is nothing wrong with a buzz me thinks. I like to imbibe alcohol in small quantities at strange times. How can I write my brother a letter? How can I do that? Well, you stupid mother fucker, you could certainly just sort of fucking sketch it out and the fill it in over time and when you have it all together you will be done and then you can put it in an envelope and address it and put a fucking stamp on it and send it off to the motherfucking ends of the earth or wherever you want it to go. I want to be that guy that writes 3,000 words a day. Some nerdy fucking guy in my creative writing class in college intoning like he knows shit what the fuck was his name Ben and did I ever find out if there was any connection there. I don’t think I did. Or did I. I was the connection Ben Seederburg or Cedarburg or Seedyburg and so forth. And he is a charming man and confident about what he knos and he pushes and pushes and pushes and I am climbing up and over the top of the road. And are talking about ways that we can get through to the other side of this island. And I am sleeping in the middle of the silent seas and I am calling you back. I am calling you back into the middle of the moon. I am in the middle of the moon and beating the street up. I can’t catch up to where you have been. I am lost in this race against myself. I am lost and trying to push myself to win. And only day two into the month I am drinking at 8 a.m. and the polish music starts and the planes fly overhead and the AC unit drones incessantly. Droning incessantly. Who wrote that first? And if we are going to copy it at least we can acknowledge that we are copying it. And if we are going to work, at least we can focus on working. And if we are going to do shit, then why don’t we just do shit.

I ran to the desert to be near the end of the world.

I ran to the desert to be in the know.

I ran to the desert to learn from the sun.

I ran to the desert to know your dry naked skin.

I ran to the desert to forget my arctic existence.

I ran to the desert to pun my way free.

I ran to the desert to force my mind open.

I ran to the desert to simply be.

I ran to the desert to eat milk and honey.

I ran to the desert penance to seek.

I ran to the desert my boldest ambitions before me.

I ran to the desert to escape being weak.

I ran to the desert my mother to forgive.

I ran to the desert my heart to

That smart girl I knew. That smart girl I half pursued. Left to our own devices at the end of the year. Where did she go now and didn’t she care. She spoke to me without interest. She spoke to me without fear.

The heart only knows what it knows.

The heart only knows its own scars.

Ambivalence is an unnatural volition;

even the stars break on the side of hope casting their light magnanimously,

radiating starsong out and out long after their collapse.

(long after they are dead/long after they have died)

And this is it all meta and shit. One beer in my gullet, feeling refreshed. I don’t know that two beers would move the needle much. I don’t know that sloppy drunk before noon looks good on me. I don’t think we can make this about me. I don’t think we can make this about yo. I don’t know if these momentary lapses can get through to the other side. I call my friend. I break on the side of hope. Take me to the garden. Take me to the street. I am leaving this kingdom without a single night of sleep. We have been reviewed and we have been moved. We have grown old, we have done exactly what we are supposed to do. We have dwelled in uncertainty. We have mo0ved through with the good. I am lonely in the middle of the room beating chaos on the father figure good. And we work together and we deliver that which has been. I am a lonely shop keeper with a secret stash of gin. Good times come and good times go. My hopper is empty, my consciousness shot. My day ending well, my day ending flush. We speak to the earnest crush worthy moratorium of the blue eyed daughter factor that had made your heart proud. You took the money to the people and they returned it to you with interest. You took the money to the people and the returned it with scorn. People in the papers- the obituaries, the athletes. Nothing in this world shall be complete. Nothing in this world will call me home. Nothing in this world will need what I need. Nothing in this world will give what I give. We can’t find our lives without giving up ourselves. We can’t call the men without giving up ourselves.

I kind of feel like if we can make 1 out of every 3 three pointers that we shoot then we win. Is that how the world works. What about defense? 3 and D. When I was in high school I had no idea what 3 and D was. I got myself into too much foul trouble because I was too slow and not smart enough. This shit is going to blow me up. This shit is going to strip me down. I feel ripped on this existence. And I half think about grabbing a beer from the fridge, but it would be my second beer of the morning and that sounds excessive. I should be drinking water. It is hot and the day is early. We will have many things to do today. We will? What the fuck do we want to do today. I need to look into betsy’s account and see about getting my name on it and getting Helena and Esme as beneficiaries and I need to get my 8000-10000 credits invested in it. I don’t think any of this shit matters. This mother fucker is all about these luxury watches. Which is great, but what the fuck? Is there not anything else that might be more interesting to him. Working with children? Giving back? Living the high life? Getting high? Doing drugs? Doing Meth? Fucking women who don’t know their names? Fucking women who don’t know their names. The Latter Day Saints come and greet me with suspicion. I am lonely in the moment and I am falling asleep in my good intentions. Breaking away from production to simple jack myself off and feel good about the radiating pleasure from my loins. I need to step away. I need to be in the prison of myself and appreciate what it means to be free. Am I a dumb shit? What do I seek? What do I need? I feel fucking wounded in this moment. I feel like Christ himself has come down and burnt me with his tongue of fire. I am needful of so many things and the earnestness of my plea won’t get me anywhere. The earnestneess of my please won’t get me fucking anywhere. Time keeps moving in me and all I can do is attempt to create modes. Modes of being that are sustainable. Modes of being that will develop the skills that I would like to have in this life. Modes of being that I can play with through the years and share with the people that I love and strengthen the bonds that I have made. I need to believe. I need to grow. I need to give. I need to grow. I need to black the pageant our of the medicine cabinet. I really am not that tragic. I am a man. I am a white man. I am a white American man. In many ways I have a lot going for me historically. What said there have been a lot of really shitty white American men.

Looking through the Riverside book last night at the Pharmacy (the 5 and dime really, what else can it be, before big pharma, before car became king and kicked us all to the curb. I try to climb out of this situation with my intellect intact. I try to crawl out of this situation with my back still relatively straight. I try to crawl out of this situation with my honesty breaking along the lines of the system. I am a broken daughter of a corrupt ring of slaves. I am an asshole. I am a knave. We move through the ghost chorus of the sea inside. We demand resolution, we demand resolution. We need you to confide in me that we weren’t your hurt son. We need to demand that we get a better deal than we have now. We need to demand that we get a hero’s welcome. We need to demand that the sun does not burn out our eyes when we look upon her. I am sorry for what I have down. I am sorry for the trouble that I have made. The silent broken dream of a kid who has never been laid. We make our claim at immortality and we chomp and fade away. Living in the unusual places, playing in the spiteful day. Settle us in. Settle us down. I am a fancy puff, I am a water clown. Standing in the zone of the pool. Standing in the zone of day. I go feather walking through the unnerving tendency to stunt and fade away. We need you here close to us. We need your hero call. We need the feathers of our father’s chorus. We need the phony false alarm. In the night. Our middle of the night. In the moon, our middle of the moon. In the shit show. The middle of our shit show. In the cancer, the middle of our cancer. Getting used to accepting things you cannot control. Getting use to controlling the things that you can control. A light touch. A deft engagement. We weave a false narrative. We beat our precious drum. I am a kingdom believer. I am a broken scrum. In the middle of the day we play at being a piece of shit. In the morning we play at being a piece of shit. Trying to filibuster the fuck out of Dodge, the wretched worthlessness of the new street revival and the broken day trip to the hurtful chorus fear mongering that predated the streets of your charms. I am not alive in this room. I am not alive in this room. The street shuttering and hearing. The near broken chorus of the friction that you were talking about. The heat on my skin. The fist in my mouth. I can’t call the chorus out. I can’t shift the spit. I can’t split the decision. My mind is at loose ends.

July has historically been a bit fucked for me. Two years ago getting high with sky and playing basketball sometime around that day. Trying to connect with Carl. Trying to bust through to the other side of elements that I have found less than useful. We could have programmed our memory lane. We could have shifted our wealth off shore. We could have stuck to the money men and slipped out the back door. This morning I am lonely for you. I should have never left you there. This morning I am lonely for you. I never should have left you there. There is content in this morning. There is an exit and a start. There are stats and there are heroes, robust objects emerging from the dark. I plead my case and then retreat, the barrister children haunt me in the park.

Radical empathy. An empathy for my characters. An empathic reception of my better intentions.

15 pushups on a hot July day. My mind starts shooting symmetrical patterns towards my third eye. My whatever chakra. I think about my father and his miles and miles and miles of running. Push. Maintain. Push. Maintain.

We have played at making progress. We have played at maintaining. We have found humility in our own wretchedness. We have found fortune close to the sun. We have found enemies in the street. We have found friends in the castle. Wallowing in our own shallowness we have gone daily into battle. I make my plans and sleep. I make my beats and weep. Red sweater moving from ideas about life and Christ and sanity. Sleep remembrances of other times.

Shitting all over this process and just feeling down with it. Shitting all of this process and just feeling fed up with it. I have an agenda that moves me to despair. I have an action eyed vision for the priest. I count up all my lost ways. People with agendas playing in the devil rays. I am damned if I do. I am damned if I don’t.

But what I wanted to say was this:

Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords, Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide.

And now I too have the bagel belly of a beast for all seasons. The sanguine fiction of losing myself to the farther out wind.

I ran up on the shore and could not look myself in the eye. I ran up on the shore and could not make myself reply.

**06/13/2016**

My plan for the day balloons and I feel a bit overwhelmed. I see my output and I am underwhelmed. I work and I try to get things done and I try and I fail. And when I have alcohol in my blood I feel happy and hopeful, but I have a difficult time balancing out all my different desires.

I haven’t been stretching and I feel tense and turned in on myself. The ideal is to be loose and centered and open to receive the universe with a solid base. Expect that everyone wants to hit me. Expect that everyone wants to attack me, smack me, sack me.

I shall forever struggle for that is life and that is the rhythm of life. To live and to struggle and to pitch back and forth against the weather of life. Oh, the storms, oh the soft summer days when you couldn’t quite look up.

And if I am writing and if I am living in language and if I am present for my wife , for my daughter, and if I am writing letters to be present to my friends whom I no longer am close to. Then good. Then life. Then solid. Then you are living your life are you not? Not apologizing for that which you cannot control. What about the idea of writing a short story for yourself. Writing something big and bloated and ambitions and then cutting the crap out of it for fun. Cutting the crap out of it because that is part of how you live in language. And you don’t have to worry about wasting money because you have

**3/06/2019**

Trying to find my creative process. My creative process that balances out all of my interests and my ability to provide for my family. This is not a fearful quest- this is glorious. You are a modern warrior. A knight. A ninja. A worker. A bastion of culture and progress. You see the truth. You have glimpsed the truth and you are trying to hold it in your mind. He had glimpsed the truth and now he is just trying to hold it in his mind.

Why can’t I do this sober? I haven’t tried? My level of non-sobriety is not much of a problem. Using alcohol and marijuana less would be good for my health and good for my savings. Put sleep first over all of that and you will see results. It seems like Brian’s sleep is way out of control for him. Let that be an example to you young man. Stay in some semblance of control of your sleep.

At 40 I was finally able to clarify my obsessions and accept them and push toward them in a more balanced way. We all have to live within ourselves and that is fine. Life is about accepting gifts, but it is also about accepting limitations. Accepting cause and effect. Accepting the fact that we have limited energy and limited emotional wherewithal. Accepting that we need the sun and we need rest. We need our daily bread and we need the love of other people around us. We are all in a plot of land. More herbal than we would like to admit- with our have roots will travel devil can care attitude. I am not afraid of this Geek Sublime. I am not afraid of wasting my life. I have wasted half of it, I am almost there. Almost to the finish line. We all die. What a gift to live and die. What bliss this existence can obtain by being temporal. By being fleeting. The radiating moment. That moment may never return. We are the stories we tell. We are the stories we live. We are traveling through a deep ocean breathing and believing that we should believe what we believe. I am not afraid of the night. I am not afraid of the night. I am running my way into the night. I am running my way into the night. We are not alone in the twilight of our night.

**03/09/2019**

Drugs and Alcohol are too mental...They neglect the body. My body gets neglected when I am all heady with drugs and alcohol and I feel that is unavoidable. You need to strike a vigilant balance. I don’t want to give up drinking alcohol and I don’t want to give up smoking pot, but my number one priority is my responsibility to my family. I need to be available to them. And I need to best deploy my energy to be there for them/enjoy them/love on them, earn my living, and launch my career.

The LifeXL is an approximation of where I am at… focus you in on what your focus is on… reign in your habits- getting up, going to sleep, exercise, substance consumption, project focus.

**3/15/2019**

The trashy theater. The art school inchoate arc. The attempt. The reach. The underwear reading. The risk. The telling. The attempting to reach out beyond. Be brave. Push boundaries. Attempt to reach beyond.

Our theater attempts in college. Memorizing lines. Smoking on the stage. Markijuana memory and nerves. Met my wife back stage. Listening to Moby play in ear buds. An excuse to get closer. An intimation of all our future intimacies. Closeness. Tupac Shakur mural. Moby smapled, ambient masterpieces. Slow build, flow build. That guy Phil offended because a lot of his songs are structed the same way. The simplicity of the songs undercut their effectiveness for him. I am driving at night and trying to zone out and find a flow. What is it with humans? Why are we so prone to fall into life denying hair-splitting analytic moods while at the same time being very capable of full-brain numbed devotion to structures are cobbled together mostly of inchoate notions and sound bites. A roving chain of slogans and aired grievances. A roiling howl of patriotic bawling to keep the post-millennial tensions at bay.

And the going to *Remember the Alamo* on 3/15/2019 to see Nancy perform before Sky and Nancy got divorced. And feeling like it was pretty sad. And did I drink two beers as I was walking there? Felt pretty good by the time that I got there and then afterwards we had pizza and beer and it was all very nice. But their marriage was dying at this point. This was the ides of March. Later

**06/13/2016**

Drinking and marijuana alienate me from myself. They too often become poppy flowers and lay me low with the lotus eaters. The best of times with them are when they have focused me in on creative processes. And they have done that. They have shut out the other voices and responsibilities allowing me to fall deeper into a momentary whim- how pure and childlike that is. How pure and without guile such a moment is. A moment of pure and childlike creation.

But I fail when I realize that my larger being is tied into the multiplicity of responsibilities and life structure. The things I need to do to sustain life. Yes, yes, live in the moment. Live in the moment-- embrace it. Live in the moment-- breath it in. Savor it. Savor each and every pain and plan and complication. Embrace each passing day. Wake early and do the things that dig into your soul and slow time

**07/09/2021**

If I can do all of this—the writing and programming and guitar strumming and stretching and parenting and partnering without edging off with pot and beer so consistently I will truly be set.

And maybe that isn’t true, but if it is then that is a good story—it’s a comedy. And if it is not, then that’s a good story, it’s a tragedy. The only true failure is the non-executed. The non-tried. That failed mindset of the never was.

This said after being back the surreptitious alley beers and the day smoking before the girls get up and then again while the girls go out, with showers and shirt changes and tooth brushes and visine rituals to keep the stony aroma form baking itself too deeply in. A smoke screen for his smoke screen.

This circling, cricling routine. Wandering out and around the material in ever narrowing? Ever widening arcs?

He felt isolated. It would be good to talk though what he was doing. Though, no it really wouldn’t. Or it would, but it could be done without context. Like Erik. He wanted to write to Erik and he had been, but how to bring it back and make it short, digestible. Comprehensible. Nourishing? Same thing with letter to Stephen.

**6/8/2016**

Space and time bind me in space.

No more drugs, he says,

The openness there in crushed me lazily in my bed.

Am I depressed? Merely a tired parent? A middle-aged man?

Aging, struggling to cope with my coping habits.

Placate yourself and shut up, sugar down your gullet, keep smiling,

Just don’t show your teeth, some people find that offensive.

Dear Aaron,

Lunes. Lunar. Which Tarot cards the moon appears in. New Moon. Xin Yue. Twilight connection. Esme. Renenesme. For Esme in Love and Squalor. J.D. Salinger. Short Story. Another Day for Banana Fish. And suicide and Heidi Doyle. And I have a copy it in Chinese. Nine Stories. 九故事。Pick a few words from the book-- Chinese characters, in translation. The simplicity of the title is pretty wonderful. Like the *White Album*. *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*. There’s a certain wholesomeness to the words. A richness. A rounded nourishment.

Coffee and pancakes etc…

Nick Cave-- try and talk about why his news letter is so incredible. His perspective is really inspiring and life-affirming. And he has walked through the fire. Ut he continues to passionately engage with life. Writing. Performing. Traveling. Curious. Stretching. Strutting. Striding.

Anthony Bourdain. Kobe Bryant. Covid. Destroyer show-- the crowd emptying out of Thalia hall. Read some descriptions of Thalia hall. What angles do people take. How can you evoke that feeling being outside of the show, heading how, the girls are at home, We are tired. We got balcony seats. My hair is long I have been writing poetry. There are many long haired poetry writers in adteendane that night. Eleanor Friedberger opened up. She was ecxcellent. Whipping up songs on the fly as she punched up loops and pre-recorded tracks as the warm up act and then later in the vevning absolutely destroyed not one but two Destroyer songs from Poison Season (right?) The more loungey, meandering songs that sound like they should be song by some aging starlit high above the street of Manhatten in a faded glory hotel ballroom. And she nailed them and reved them up and strutted around Dan Bejar’s broken syntax like a back alley hustler on her way to Broadway.