**Pen and paper**

A supposedly controlled stain on a yellow plain,

horizontally ruled with smart blue stripes.

A red pair of vertical rays

mark the left margin

perpendicularly precise.

To the left I begin,

in my right silence,

mending fences in myself,

confronting labyrinths, violence.

Following winding ways to move

about my blindness,

my indecision,

my flagging good taste.

***You called me from the road and I missed your call.***

Beating back the hands of time.

Beating them back.

The centuries receding.

Day breaks awakening scattered diamonds in the rough.

Job stress. Kid stress. Down. Stressed. Messed up.

Getting down. Getting up. Broken. Clown faced.

Standard. Below average. In the thorns.

Wildman. Caged. Rage. Ages and ages.

Night fell on the blue, green canyon.

The waters had returned and brought with them life.

Life had begun here and would begin here again,

though gone were the days when we were young

and so gallantly unprepared.

My memories are like dreams now:

sartorial suit, heavy frames,

affected city-speak, bangs,

a cigarette holder from J.S. Dupont,

a scarf for a tie by Yves Saint Laurent.

And so yes, please, now, please, yes—

let my people go.

Rust or luster,

what will linger when I’m busted?

Art deco lounge sounds surrounding,

lifting up, oppressing to the sky;

fading, falling, going home to figure.

A rich pitch shifts then abruptly settles—

a pebble to a pond without a ripple in its wake.

06/28/2021

*And the gravity of the thing determines its progression*… Makes all my caterwaul mother-writing make sense I guess. And now on to the new, perhaps even just idling— all of this idle, this stutter, this extra staccato—all, of course, to be excised in time. I am a barber, a butcher— patient care-take a pain-pride concern of mine; aspirationally so much more than just a mad opportunist mermaid chasing his call. Once upon a time, he came into a bunch of wide-lapeled tuxedos. Now all the bums get buried in monkey suits. Least he could do for his big city call.

Stephen Rogers

175 Van Dyke BK NY 11231

Dear Stephen,

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 his 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 children are in essence sociopaths that adults have been charged with by fate to reform as penance for their own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is certainly not to say I would discourage people from having children, but just that if they did, they should, you know, brace themselves… for love.

Best,

sensitivity: “a sense of being somehow, somewhere connected with the other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is a norm” Nabokov (afterward to Lolita).

Thank you for being. You’ve accompanied me this year, in and out of my thoughts, my memorys, reflections, connections, appreciations, hopes, good-wishes. And then, as has been my practice this year, I’d jot down some of my thoughts to you… on my computer… I started doing this with a number of people, and relly began to enjoy it and it became this great fragmented balancing influence in my life. This hopeful repository where I reached out beyond myself and not even consciously, because on the conscious level, I’ll admit I truly feel just completely overwhelmed most of the time, meaning that saying Yes to anything else seems ludacris, I don’t have nrealy the time or wherewithal to take care of all of the tasks already on my plate, many of them put there by me… am I going to finish my plate… refilling it before I can even choke down the last helpings doesn’t seem like a sustainable plan. Every day these past months has felt full and long and energy darining and I am incredibly gateful for the work I have been able to do. This year has been all about surfing the silver linings.

Trying to craft… to lost myself in task. To reinvent myself with the works of my hand. To spiral deeper into the questions and obsessions that I just can’t seem to shake. The horror of the grave rank all over this. This forever path to death.

Started this back in April. It feels like this all started last April and many years before.

* Three of wands (reversed)
  + Stand high. Infrastructure built. Overlooking the sea and the mountains beyond. Solid. Observing. Leaning on my girls planted beside me. They are growing. Maturing. Changing. Blossoming. Raising new scepters of celebration.
  + The end of troubles, suspension or end of adversity, disappointment, toil (NYC shows signs of hitting apex…US passes 10,000 deaths).
* Queen of wands (reversed)
  + The proffered sunflower was a comfort. Her black cat stood coolly by. She must like you, she said. Then her kind heart reached out through her perfect chest and faraway the cold, far away the sea. Associations are energy (mental energy, mental associations).
  + Good, economical, obliging, serviceable, (also- opposition, infidelity, deceit, jealousy)
* Three of pentacles (reversed)
  + Creating, charged with creating. My work will come in time. Give it time. Do not let the lizard mind take over. I feel good and sober. Creation feels good.
  + Mediocrity (in work), puerility, pettiness, weakness

And then my Achillies heal blew. And themn my middle finger got skinned. And tthen Helena stopped nursing and Esme had Hilda taken away.

John Fahey found me right at the right time nearly ready to make him a gift of the Ides. Expanding the folkways of my mind.

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

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.

Joh Fahey Christmas songs moving my soul in February the day after I turned 42- the answer to everything as after making my way from the Keweenaw to Seminole swamps on Highway 41 t all along LSD through Nashville,Tennessee, dreaming of the Natchez Trail and the sea to shing sea symmetry of these mortal shores.

Mug red from rooting my snoot all through the dust,

Digging the details of my own disintegration.

Ice cold Coke at a crossroads country store.

Somewhere out near Timberlake near the entrance to the Natchez trail.

Overcome by the gestalt. The images all encompassing.

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

My brother Marcus sent b=me a pound of Stumptown coffee recently. Its not bad. It doesn’t smell bad. In fact it tastes pretty good and smells pretty good and I was very gratefully to receive it, but then I opened up my bag of Cascabel Ecudaor and the next level syrupy depth of your bean’s aroma make the Stomptown beans seem like unprocessed civet skat.

Music has been a time of gifts. My brother gave me a book. It’s his favorites. It came in the mail. It is called “A Time of Gifts”

Corrosive habits of drinking…

A year ago in February I was in rough shape. Just kind of comatose in my jumo. Hustling through the motions if you will. The crack of covid has been a life savor. Which seems fucked up to admit to, but it has given me the impetus and opportunity to make some massive reshuffles in my life that have open a path to a new career as well as blown open my writing process, writing continuing to feel like an unshakeable vocation that just won’t fuck off as I really wish it would sometime. It has made my pursuit of everything else I have ever tried to do sort of half hamstrung as I return incessantly to my notebooks and my reading and my process rambles. The fragmentation of parenthood and running my watch slinger sales machine let me just portaging for way to long in search of consistent paddling. This year has brought me to a deeper understanding of how to work slowly, but surely, and find assurance in that, find balance and settledness. My writing has always been about trying to realize something about my life, or establish my way of life, or sustain me, I am really not entirely sure what, which is one of the reasons I continue to be drawn to writing I suppose. But at any rate, I think that sufficiently covers the META part of this letter where I simply ramble on and on about the writing of it and the whole process that that was just to get on the writing letters to completion trajectory and then getting to the point of actually editing the letters and pieces and then sending them to people or posting them on line or trying to get them published or whatever and what a head fuck and inertia initiator all that kind of self-defeating loop spinning navel gaze. And really note knowing how to start. Not know what to expect. And then knowing the idea that you learn as you go, just do it! But there is a lot on your mind and between Chinese and then sales and kids and now tech the WHY of writing just started feeling weaker and weaker. Less convincing. More self-indulgent. Cynical. Self-defeating. When projects lack traction and lack a clear intention and you do not have the wherewithal to commit to a single project, which you feel like to make any kind of measureable progress or forward momentum you have to chose a single project, otherwise if you just write and write as you have for years, about obstensibly nothing, fragments, descriptions, poems, journals, memories, playing with language, doing language, not completely understanding it, but seeing now the openness that it slowly brought you, the vulnerabilities, the ill at ease, it has honed you to this point o=in your journey, this juncture in the formation of your judgement. But now I know the river is with me and I flow with the river and the river gives me agile structure and the river gives me agile flow. We are constantly creating. Everything goes into the river. Everything is welcome in the river. Writing is fishing. Writing is editing. Writing is first drafting with abandon and a plan.

Smoking a fair amount.

Listenint to music. Fela Kuti “Open & Close”, John Fahey, Skiffle, Late 60s psychedelic jazz guitar, youtube channels of vintage music being played on a record player in another room while its raining (with or without thunder), and then the straight nature sounds and chopin and electronican, the Drive Soundtrack comes up

The witchcraft of listing them and then saving them to a file.

We are suppose to be accountable. We are suppose to keep our shit together.

Some kind of Fela Kuti rambling Rhodes solo backed by lowkey jump-funk guitar.

I feel like I have been tasked to get a bunch of shit done. And my family’s economic and work-life balance hang in the balance. But to get some shit down I just need a little bit of cover. A stretch bit of canvas in a monsoon season of shit storms.

My youngest daughter is screaming in the other room- her screams stress me the fuck out, but also the thought of betsy being stressed out by her screaming stresses me out. It pulls at the very fabric of the cover that I have created to try and get shit down. It pokes a hole in my too stretched canvas. The cover I need so badily is suddenly leaky, my Palace of Soliture is melting and going to shit. Plus, I want another cup of coffee from the kitchen. Date I risk it. Dare I risk getting sighted and pulled into this storm fully?

I get caught and come out and wrangle Helena a bit because betsy is in her “hands-thrown-up-inn-the-air-mode” sitting on the couch , half-reading to Esme while Helena flails around on the couch whining ambiguously but incessantly about her feet and toes and socks and slippers. She is either upset about one or more of these things not being on her feet, or she is just frustrated that betsy had the audacity to try and put her socks and slippers on her so her feet wouldn’t be cold in our drafty old apartment with its generous windows that we neglected to laminate with plastic to keep the cold at bay, and so our furnce and blower run incessantly and the iciciles reach towards the ground from our third story walk up in this coldest snap of the year. This dark winter with the impeachment try starting and the country grouchily confronting the massive hangover left by this most recent political cycle.

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…

Modern life seems to be getting more intense, but I am not sure that it is. Are we just getting less adept at coping with it all. Or are will getting too ambitious. Are our expectations too high for how this all should go and how we all should get along. Why can’t everyone just get along. Driving angy and madness and frustration into some sort of creative, productive, learning act to increase the likelihood that my family will achieve a heathier work life balance and I will be able to settle into a J-O-B that doesn’t cut so coarsely against the grain of my being.

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.

My friend I am so sorry that I have not done a better job keeping in touch. Parenthood and the never-ending, ever-grinding vocational question keeps running my creative impulses and my socializing impulses into the ground. In some ways I am proud of myself- I have really tried to limit my social media engagement, sports, obsessive news reading.. etc…

Things have been fraught though, no? Finding that balance, that perspective, that level regard has been a trick. And I am not saying that I am some objective force, but I fel like we can do some things to temper our subjectiveity. Checking your ego, being clear on your responsibilities and subverting your selfish or self-destructive impulses to serve those responsibilities. And many of those responsibilities are carvered out by love. Having intentional containers for things. Which is not a message of repression or somehintg, but more so an act to deal with these manifold issues and complexities in a focuses, isolated way. These buckets are leaky as hell and their contents have vapors that waft up and out and mingle without the other brews. Its like a basement of buckets. And it is not super pretty and it kind of stinks down there. In fact I would not want to bring anybody down there and that is all right. I mean, shit, think of how casually protective we are about our carnal privacy. We don’t go around worries that someone is going to figure out that we shit occasionally. But there is that expectation that we get our shit in the right place. And we flush. And we wipe. And we wash. And we light a candle or engage a fan or open a window. Sometimes we follow our excretion with a shower or a walk or a tall glass of water. Which is just to say we have put a shit town of time and effort into our casual mastery of the BM. Now the EM is a little more catch as catch can. Our needs are the same, but the evacuation methods are way more varied- therapy, candles, fans, showers, exercise, journaling, poetry, drugs, alcohol, over eating, rage, complaining, kevetching, joy robbing, soul slicing, dream fileting.

It is all about how you frame it no? It is not about the truth or the issue or reality or anything it is just about power. And that power has to be maintained around some sort of fulcrum. Control the fulcrum, control the power. Identify the fulcrum, even the meta-fulcrum and crank it! Flood the zone with SHIT!!!!

Visions of the suburbs where Jasmine Mulan, Elsa Belle, Cinderella Ariel, Aurora Pochahontas are all tizzy spinning around.

**02/05/2021**

Over taken by a process. Multiple processes. Overlapping. A couple of different tides acting on my days. Multiple moons. All the voices from the canyon echoing up to inform and haunt. Truly have been over taken-- dashed me deep into creative sands. Devastating, but still somehow good. The fact that you are reading this right now is proof that something broke through, took root, solidified.

Memory, destiny surrender (yield)

Matrimony, patrimony

Finally really feeling John Fahey

Finally finding an intuitive voice

Shapeshifter- couldn’t pull together a comprehensive message.

11/20/2020

Peach warmth to the east where the clock tower be.

Lincoln to the west on the iconic parking lot sign of the now defunct and physically demolished and removed, erased Lincoln Restaurant. I am glad the parking lot sign remains and that I can see it from my window.

Ribfest at your front door, ladies and gentleman. We find ourselves weasled in to the city ingratiated salacious, fated, mated to destiny, like the plight of a pair of dice, might’ve been nice to have been just a couple of lab mice with thee, huddling behind glass tapping for our nutrition pelts, pink eyes bulging.

Dropping off into the deep, dreaming of Billy who went clubbing and ended up in hospital after getting billy-clubbed by a Bobby.

He seems to have reached the end of his line, though I’ve never known him to lash out rashly. Wash me clean of all this Mabeline and get me off this furniture from Ashley.

When is this? When was it meant to be.

Beyond smart. Beyond observational and correct. Beyond best facts. Big facts. Facts dripping with don’t look behind this curtain negative capability acts. Seemingly to imply more than the words actually say. Having some sense of who will be receiving the words and allowing them to do some of the heavy lifting, filling in of the blanks. Dot connecting. But doing so in a generous way. A trusting way. Not an alienating way. Not in an academic way. Not in a, thanks for your interest, but please get the fuck out of here and read this and this and this before you come back and try to make sense of my big minded circumscription of their truth. Why isn’t writing just a list of references. What could possibly be the reason to write anything at all.

Responsive. Agile. Doing that which is necessary in a timely manner. Finding flow in this all through your practices.

Language- body, computer mind (writing, coding, yoga): chasing the right silence, possible burning through what would have been my savings to try and buy a house to live in with my family as I pursue my nonexistent career.

I don’t throw this out there as a pity party opening line. Vocationally I have always had a good sense of what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to DO language. Something that I think I realized as a Junior in High School. I have no been spending the last two plus decades trying to figure out what that means and now how to support my family based on this doing or notwithstanding this doing.

Writing letters has become a big part of this DOING of language. Not that I set out to make this the point of it, but my letters have evolved for me into sort of “anti-tweets”. Anything but instantaneous, long and rambling, focused to an audience of one, possessing very little NTF value. Am I responding to a culture of two? Friends create a culture, or encapsulate a culture, or encapsulate a shared culture or a culture that is exemplified by the time that the friends have shared. Friendship makes food understandable and alcohol and dining and celebrating. My current vocational grind, remember way back Adam Wilbur feeling like he had this homework assignment just hanging over him, something that had to be answered and that he couldn’t relax about until he had his job question figured out. Smart guy. I suppose I had for many years sort of pushed the moment of crisis off, or have attempted to chop the major crisis up into small more bite-sized and therefore a bit more manageable crisis.

I am sorry we haven’t been in better touch over the years, but I don’t feel bad about it, now do I blame you or me or anyone for it. Everyday seems chalk full of things that I need to do and should do and would be great if I did. My socializing has collapsed. My wherewithal for day to day support of other people who are not my immediate kin has really collapsed. At some level I am really just trying to tread water, find a stride, scrap up motivation and hope and vision.

This is a very good plan. At the very worst case scenario, I will emerge from this whole thing with my typing much improved and my HTML, CSS, Javascript, Ruby, git, Bash, Commandline, Tarot, Mandarin and limberness much improved; also over the course of this whole fiasco I have lost 30 pounds eating a mainly plant based, low-carb diet (unfortunately/fortuanately limiting my beer/alcohol intake), and exercising the mantra “Flexiblity is Strength” has replaced my previously more “performance” exercising mindset. My father is a very fit individual and a dedicated long distance runner who is casually obsessed with his time trials and his splits. I realize now that over the years a good amount of our communication in person and over the phone has been him breaking down his time tirials or workouts or race performances. My meaning her is the performative, tracking and goal setting and consistently competitive mindset was also sort of hardwired with my ideas about engaging fitness practices. With all of my time at home I have had the openness of schedule and space and lose fitting clothes to really get into stretching and stretching building chest and torso extension and contraction. Breating deeply. Getting my leg up high on things. To open up my hamstrings and my groin. Suspending myself in the shower from the sides of the bath tub as a gentle strength building maintaining routines. Lingering in doorways to push against them to expand my chest and stretch and flex out my shoulder blades. Pushing up against the top of the door frame and push up from the floor, feeling the strength of your body in your torso from two direction simultaneously, letting your body comfortably sttarinn and stretch where it would like to strain and stretch, gently, not forcing anytiihng and allowing your body to balance and relax where it would like to balance and relax. Hold for the stretch, subtly building actual stretch by following the mantra of chasing, maintaining with “Flexibility as stretch”. And then flexibility and stretch and the attendant balance invite more athletic stretch and strength building engagement and playful engagement with all people and animals and objects that you encounter. It is a Yoga of the world. An act of placing ones own body in space. An act of awareness that is unobtainable. But sought through an attentive engagement and pursuit of flexibility that at the very least supports my long sessions of sitting.

My main vocation is and should be getting an APP of two off the ground. To this end I have woefully been working on a foundation which often feels some time to be a mil wide and wafer thin. I suppose any endeavor feels like this in the beginning. And I have to remind myself that I am still pretty green, despite the distinguished flecks of silver creeping in the feathery hair bits up around my ears on the sides of my head.

I have recently gotten my very first function console based CRUD APP up and running. This little baby can CREATE, READ, UPDATE, and wait for it, wait for it… DELETE. The APP is an address book/CRM that gives me exactly the functionality that I have always wanted in an address book or personal CRM and never had. It is very basic, but that is the point. It prime value is that it allows me to access a simple stream of all my daily actions. Allowing me to track projects and timelines of personal and “professional” projects in a clean simple feed. I can also access individual project and contact files which filter out my timeline on projects and communications just pertaining to them. As I mentioned in our phone call, I will make a simple note about our conversation in your contact file and it will be there as a reference and a memory jog and a timeline setting to reference and recall things in the future. Sorry for my wild ramblings, but thanks to the stretched out timeline of this whole project and the in and out rhythm of it and then the editing and boiling down and cooling off period, it has been some a fun way to scult language and play with language. Not in a performative way exactly, or if so in a deeply personal performative way. Performing so to speak for an audience of one. And speaking, or rather writing in a language for two. Built upon a constellation cluster of shared memories and timelines and conjured up connections, or projected futures, or resonating musings, mutual basking in the confusing nebulous muck of the universe. Feeling a shudder in the shadow of the hearse. Feeling grateful to editing when it comes to ordering the verse. Mirth might still just save us portly in the end.

And this is why. This is enough. When I have the wherewithal. When I have settled in and found that right silence. 维达默. When I able to just shut up and sit back and pop open that sweet cordial that is the essence of the good conversations and shared experiences and laughs and meals and so forth on and on. It is somehow tapping into that and reflecting on that and finding a rhythm in my thoughts surrounding that theme. And then just rambling around and coping and pasting and referencing and reading intuitively. Flipping Tarot cards every now and then. Translating the attributes into Mandarin. Reading Mandarin and English articles or at least parts of articles in the New York Times App. Something you would have to pay for in just the English, but seems to be conveniently subsidized and free to the public for the Mandarin/English version. My love for the language learning App Pleco is what made the idea of getting into web and software development sound interesting and appealing and even possible. Just stick with something for awhile. As long as it takes. If it is what you want to do just get on that road now and go. Everything else will fall into place. This is how a life is lived. Go. Live.

If you ask yourself while reaching for some water to pop a pill, “Am I at my healthiest or my most ill right now?” The explosion of engagement with work and working and writing and coding has made all the ambiguity worth it. I have just been trying to keep my head down and surf the silver linings. Find ways to make alchemic sense of all these scatter symbols: Scattered Tarot deck, Chinese characters, Diamonds delivered on street corners with masks,

Is Britain waning on the world stage? Oh-no, Britain is still powerful and sexy), but in secret, you see, like 007. Smoking weed and stretching has yield some pretty transformational experiences. I have had to be mindful that this is ritual space. This is deep getting out of the marketplace and into the mud hut of human mindset and settling. I have traveled to some mythic places and feel my ego crush itself under its own weight. I have tried to stop acting. I have tried to stop winning. Releasing me need to be right. Is that a safe or even responsible position to be in in the Trump era.

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

* Ralph Waldo Emerson December 9, 1841

Is it radical of me to say that I want to vote and I don’t want to spend all my days talking about politics, though I do want to think about politics and I do want to be a good citizen, I just don’t want to be under the expectation to respond to every polarizing headline or baited barb or commiserating eyeroll even. The pandemic, being unemployed and trying to change vocations, having betsy and my girls look to me for a vision of what’s next, confidence in what next, both confidence that I can take this challenge on and that I am going to enjoy taking it on and flourish taking it on and birth a new ear where I have more vacation and more frequent long weekends, a key plank in my plan to rebuild my broken social life and distanced, fragmented extended family connections. I should also note that during this process I have gained a greater degree of peace about this distance and fragmentation though. I realize a lot of my desire to connect with my cousin and uncles and aunts and so forth really is coming through my mother and wanting to support her somewhat manically insecure sense of having a “close” family. Like somehow not having a “close” family that relishes “getting together” somehow reflects poorly on her and causes her some degree of anxiety, reflecting the brokenness of the world and the brokenness of our culture, issues that will be resolved once we are all reunited for that big family reunion in the sky.

Trying to explore some other ways that aren’t running and drinking to release and process negative or if not exclusively negative, certainly excess energy.

**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.

4/30/2021 Pedregal Colombia Caturra Colombia Castillo roast 04.27.21 @175 Van Dyke BK NY 11231

14:14 by my wristwatch. Coffee maker on the fritz, cooking hot and steam and brewing the coffee hot and unevenly. Just want to turn the thing off and pour the water over by had.

Finally read more of *God in a Cup*, had ordered a copy so long ago. Drawn towards writing, but without a conviction on what to write and fear that I didn’t have a set style or a set voice to ride. Didn’t really have a trade to ply, I was just throwing darts at a board, regurjating old war stories I’d heard about the Lord. 20s and sad trying not to be board. Not a big personality. Not trying to push my agenda on anyone. Wanteing to be a writer and an artist and a creative, but being insecure and unsure about what kind of a commitment that was. I kept writing, but always as a utility. A way of balancing myself out, cheaper than therapy. If writing is therapy then what are letters then? Unloading on a friend. Arrogance and insecurity. Certainty and absolute suspicion. Pretension and obsequious underplay. Not sure exactly where I am on the board, on the map. Not sure which tier of ROLEX timepiece watches I have obtained. My compass. My north star.

Coffee warm in my cup and betsy out the door with Helena, descednding from our third floor perch, out the back way on the back stair case that was rebuilt by the Faygo Drinking Russians. Blasting *The Show Must Go On* in the early morning as they switched on their boom box.

Rebuilding the deck. The horrible trajedgy of the collapse near Wrigleyville. The reputation of Wrigleyville. Should talk to Phil about this. Then having an *E.R.* episode based on it. *E.R.* being one of my main reference points to Chicago. The el. The hospital. Snow. Waiting for buses. Tired. Stressed. Caring professionals.

Andrew Wyeth and N.C. Wyeth. In the Spring home from school with the flu one of my last time luxuriating in being sick at home, under the weather a home and on a Sunday, getting to miss church and stay home by myself and watch Television. This was really special. This was like some sort of holiday. Then watching one of the Sunday news show watching a piece about the Wyeth family and really being taken with the story of the family and the intergeneration artistry and craft and the evolution of aesthetics and the poetry in form and color and that late summer feeling with the barometric pressure shifting or some deep sense of absence rolling in and washing over you. Something recognizable and welcome, something coming from a ling way off and traveling back off just as far. Grief remember and ritualized and returned to.

And then coming to Chicago and having my Freshman orientation group wanting to check out Niketown and me opting to pop into the Terra Museum of American Art which was right across the stree and free and open. And I walked in and there were all the paintings that I had seen featured in the Sunday morning news show. The weird beard in the ornate general’s jacket, the woman in the field reaching out with the wind picking up the grasses and the cloth of her dress with the farm house white and below and the land rolling into woods and cliffs and the ocean beyond. And the grandfather with his luscious, ornate illustrations of Rip Van Winkle and who ever else and there they were, and the gray empty rooms with the view to the sea. And the like large like the ocean is large and the rent room and the sandy walk from the cabin to the water and the white clapboard cabin that warms with the wood fire and when the ocean gets turned on for backing. And we swam in the lake every day and both got tan and strong and I knew that we could do this for many years and that we would lose many things in those years, but that if we could keep this and both keep it the same way and keep the same understanding of it then we would not lose it and we cold keep going and get through anything, losing anything, except this and we would be all right.

And the Eagle Harbor dream creeps in. And the inferred meaning. The felt meaning. The intuited meaning. The non-direct meaning. The prepherial meaning. The indirect meaning. The deducted meaning. The constellation among the stars.

The stages of reading development.

Dead serious just needed a BLAH into the night… into the stream of messages in the sphreres. I needed to send it out through the stratosphere, though I also had the addresses of half a dozen sympathetic readers. Cause that has always been the question with me— why write. Why not do something else.

I almost went to law school before I knew you. You might already know this. But then I didn’t go because someone had given me a book about going to law school and in the introductory chapter it said something to the effect of if there is absolutely anything else you want to do instead of law school, please by all means go and do it now. To do law school right like anything really, you have to let it own you for a couple of years and then grind it out after that. You like long hours though don’t you? Lots of hours to get that heap of debt widdled down so you can get yourself under a big fat mortgage. One of the possible other things that the book suggested was learn a foreign language and that was such a draw for me. Which is kind of hilarious to say, especially given my mixed results with language study, but I didn’t go to law school because I wanted to learn another language first. And then after German and Spanish and then getting more traction and having a deeper fascination with Chinese and feeling its deeper relevance to our current epoch, and sticking with that over time and having it run me from the bottom to the top of Michigan Avenue/Oak Street Luxury Sales jobs and then after my grand finale store’s great glass façade was smashed in by a free-wheeling U-Haul and a flash mob, shot me out the other end older, father of two, having gotten into selling for the language, but having been all to burdened with the fact that for years now I had been selling for the selling and that the language was less and less frequently a useful tool.

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

* **Bill Moyers on Joseph Campbell**

**01April2020**

Morning. Reading Coleridge. Reading/Sing Nick. Reading the Gospel of John. Reading Tarot. Finding my mind.

**(Various letters)**

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 and reads… Knight of wands, Queen of Pentacles?

betsy has become the queen of pentacles. Snaking through this story. Making herself known. She is only known. And where does this story go without her. It goes nowhere. And I have been learning to layer on. I have to learning to stay sober and straight and fearless. Look me in the eye and say you are fearless. Look me in the eye and say that you have no fear.

It is not the Queen of Pentacles though. The final throw was the Empress (reversed). Which was proceeded by the Knight of Wands

* **ADD CONTENT- Knight of Wands and The Empress**

Good Morning Stephen

0819 central 02/07/2021

It is my mother’s birthday. Later I will call her and Esme will play happy birthday for her on the keyboard my mother, aka Mema, gave Esme for her birthday back in October. CASACABEL Ecuador. It was roasted on my birthday 02.03.2021. Buttery, nutty, sweet, roasted malts, and fruit tang: really taken with the aroma this morning. The sun shines in direct rays of light reaching the refrigerator and its menagerie of wallet sized photos and kid artwork and Esme’s ever expanding word list which we add to when she comes across she a word she’s unfamiliar with, something we’ve said or she’s read or we’re read to hear or she’s heard on the radio, wherever we run into it, she’ll call it out and ask about it, when remind us to add it to the list: artificial, prolific, smitten, oblivious, quarantine empathy, chaos, melancholy, aggressive, simultaneous, exaggerate, specific, massive, agile, incredulous, vacant, ominous, taper, rhetorical questions.

I stand in the sun with the liquid gold on my face—the golden shower of sunlight just raining down on me, drenching me in renewing warmth. I am stretching, stoned, exploring my subtle body.

*4th Draft*, *subtle body*. Just as 3000 handwritten yellow legal pad pages have explored my subtle mind. I have travel a million miles and arrived nowhere. I’ve travel to the mountain which is the center which is everywhere. I am at last writing as I have always wanted to write. And that is just to say— consistently.

Coding and writing and stretching have put together the road map for this 4th decade hustle. Enjoying getting deeper into Tech and web technologies and am liking the many LEGO parallels, especially where everything goes with everything else or can be patched through or interfaced or whatever. Going from digital dislocation three years ago to slowly, slowly building my familiarity with Ruby and then post pandemic jumping into the general web technologies—CSS and HTML and Javascript. Now I am trying to get some level of competency with some web platforms (React and Rails) and get at least some exposure to the wide array of skills needed by a modern web developer.

2010- Valpo

2011- 12 Varsity Tutors, Burberry, Global LT Tutoring, Kaplan ESL

2013- Omega

2015- Rolex

2017- Graff

2018- Razny

2020- Covid

Scattered… compose thyself. Get it together, man!

Have found practices that ground not grind.

Found glide, integration, abstraction, maturity, motivation

***Underpinning all you are is a vast ground of silence.***

The Moon, the moon, away tonight,

I hope she’ll come back soon.

**06/26/2021**

How does one fully engage with life without becoming a sort of wild maniac, unhinged and isolated from everything they strive for. Handfuls of sand my only hot reminder. This though had against the backdrop of my OPPORTUNITY COST thought. What is the opportunity cost to do what you want to do in this life, sure, what do you give up not doing, but also, how much time and energy do you have to put in just to get the opportunity to do your good work, your necessary work, your nourishing, fulfilling, life sustaining, life completing, mature and generous acts of humane contribution.

Writing has its own sort of COSTS. Extracts its own sort of price. I am still trying to figure out what that is. How do you take on the distractions and challenges to your writing and coding? Do you get angry? Do you find some secret emotional reserve to express an emotional truth you hardly feel because you are tryng to maintain so many different states. Exist on so many different plans. What you are reading. Going there. What you are writing. Memories. Poetic revelries. Rhapsodizing on all the inchoate particles of our souls. Losing myself in there somewhere. Boiling down. Simmering still my roiling stew.

Caught in limbo. In purgatory. Wanting to work and being ready to work and having all the tools that I need to work, but then not being able to work because I am being distracted by my favorite people my wife, my daughters, who do not merely seek to distract me to fill some need in me (entertainment et al.) but because they need me, they need my attention and consideration and pursuit and nurturing but where is my wherewithal to do any of these things, to put out the one so that I can pursue the other? My Garmin watch with GPS went dead over night and now looks back at me with a blank reflective screen. betsy is laying on the couch because her back hurts. There is kid-pooped on bed clothes on the back porch, dad was up early smoking weed and stretching to greet the morning. When mom gets up looking slender, bed softened pads stiffly from the bedroom in search of the heating pad. The girls are in the kitchen, she heads into the opposite direction into the front room to lay on the love seat. What is my role here? Do I go out of my way to express my sympathy. I get the girls situated. I get her cofffe. Then I am off to the office to write, I am not even coding I am just writing. I am trying to get settled here, but I can’t. I look around me and there are stacks of yellow notebooks. My legal pad long march toward a more intellectual existence. I am an intellectual. I am not a very good intellectual, but I am trying. I have identified my fields of interest—language and information. I want to get behind language and get inside information. I am pursing these ends through intuitive free writing, intuitive free reading, concentrated Web Development skill building and continued pursuit of Mandarin.

The process of pursuing all of these ends gets muddled by my apparent need to consume a goodly amount of THC. I would be very interested to see what kind of flavor this project would project if the THC component was dialed back. The THC has been a direct reaction to note having an easy consistent physical or temporal working space during this whole intense, transformative year.

So this is where I need to be brave. This is where I need to be brave and boring and Dad like. Where I need to sacrifice something that seems important and necessary to me in order to get a better grip on my responsibilities, freeing myself to more adroitly manage the ambitious collection of projects that I have arranged for myself.

My life is so small, my life is so full. Though much is taken, much remains. To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

*I am feeing overwhelmed by the challenges of the day so if you could please prepare yourself to not get a full day of work in today and being available to help me that would be good.*  
 This is how madness begins which seems like an aggressive attack on my wife, but it really is not trying to be. It is attempting to state a fact. To see a contradiction. To catch a glimpse of the apparition that is haunting us, has been haunting us. The bug in the code in our emotional and linguistic makeups. She is telling me I need to be sensitive, maybe that is all I nee dot hear here. She is in pain and I need to be sensitive. But after days and days and days of this. The ambiguity. The uncertainty about time and blocks of time. The shattered expectations and fragmented intentions. A years of wildly convoluted working ways. Leading to a productivity of a sort that is difficult to characterize.

I have gone to a strange protean state. An amoral, swashbuckling, acquisitional knowledge hunt. I am the lonely hunter. I am my way in the modern labyrinth of competing visions. There have always been competing visions. What have historically been the interfaces that hold the competing visions together. That knits them into the same universe. A silence that grows beyond them all.

We spoke yesterday. After the shit went down and I got lunch on the table and betsy got home from her appointment and I’d brought up the groceries, then it was back to my 8 by 8 room… really a very similar to my room on Concord all those years ago. I spend more conscious hours in this room than I did in that Concord room. I have been thinking of that room and that that time. Thiank about how I first began writing a novel (and totally failing or at least not getting any traction and wondering when the ideas and the traction were going to show up. Really trying to do what I could to get the traction going and get the dieas to start raining down—I wrote, I read, I traveled, now mind you all of these efforts when done in the most desultory manner and without much of a conviction about the worth of what I was doing. Since high school I have always had this – guess I have to go somewhere attitude. I did not know where I wanted to go. Betsy helped me get to Germany and China. My camp friends helped me to get to Chicago, otherwise I very likely would have – what—gone up to Marquette, attended northern and became a teacher or something? Honestly that would not have been a bad life. Get a teaching degree at Northern and then get a job teaching in a public school somewhere in the U.P. Stay close to my parents. My father. My mother. My uncles and my aunts. Stay real close with all of them. Summers on Lakes and boating and small towns for festivals and outings. Shake off this cloistered feeling. This isolated feeling. This heemed in feeling, this easily forgotten feeling, this lack of neighborhood overlap. Rural children has an overstated sense of importance in their community because they are more insolated from other competing communities. In a rural community you have fewer communities overlapping, fewer choices. Fewer ready-made options.

We are drinking the Flores. One of the few things that I can consistently do for my wife is make her food and coffee and clean. These fundamentals have become a very big part of our relationship affirming vocabulary.

I think understanding one another’s currencies is very important. We might not ever understand our own currencies. *Strange Curriences*.

You know with love comes strange currencies  
And here is my appeal  
I need a chance, a second chance, a third chance  
A fourth chance, a word, a signal  
A nod, a little breath  
Just to fool myself, to catch myself  
And make it real, real

These words, you will be mine  
These words, you will be mine, all the time

These words, you will be mine  
These words haunt me, hunt me down, catch in my throat  
Make me pray, to say love's confines, oh… (*Strange Currencies*, REM*)*

Well, maybe there's a God above  
As for me all I've ever learned from love  
Is how to shoot somebody who outdrew you  
But it's not a crime that you're here tonight  
It's not some pilgrim who claims to have seen the Light  
No, it's a cold and it's a very broken Hallelujah (*Hallelujah,* Leonard Cohen*)*