

HILLS 9



PLAYS and other writing

HILLS 9

SPRING 1983

Plants from San Francisco, Santa Theresa

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HILLS 9

Edited by Bob Perelman
1440 Bonita
Berkeley, CA 94709

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The Alps

The Alps was produced by Poets Theater at Studio Eremos, San Francisco, January and February 1982. It was directed by Nick Robinson, with design by Francie Shaw and Nick Robinson and lighting by Michael Bush. The cast:

<i>Time</i>	Stephen Rodefer
<i>Teacher</i>	Kit Robinson
<i>Pedestrian</i>	Carla Harryman
<i>Narrator</i>	Eileen Corder
<i>Woman</i>	Kathleen Frumkin
<i>Man</i>	Philip Silverstein
<i>Student</i>	Jean Day
<i>Freud</i>	Alan Bernheimer
<i>Chorus of Devils</i>	Kit Robinson
	Kathleen Frumkin
	Philip Silverstein



I

Time: I supply the phenomena. The explanations
Are on your time. I read what's inscribed
Here on the inside of my iron brain.
Each line has been inspired
By a situation that's obvious to all.
It's hard to keep the chisel
From slipping. None of the minds
Of the past is alive today. Strong
Medicine, but you're all flesh and blood.

(Cannon offstage)

Duty calls. If you didn't catch
The drift of what I've been saying,
The book is available offstage.

(More cannon)

If you have any questions, write them
On milk and send them to me,

Father Time

Battle Creek, Michigan.

Let me hear from you. I care.

II

(Teacher at a desk with a lit lamp)

Teacher: *(Writes, crumples up paper)*

I don't work.

(Pause)

(To himself) Silence!

(Pause)

(To himself) Now, speak.

(Writes)

First person imperatives. *(Consults watch)* 10:45.

(Spreads arms)

A great force. Where it touches
Nothing moves, so no work gets done.
Nothing happens. But I fill up
The space allotted *(his body)* to the best
Of my ability, in a manner
Never before considered
Satisfactory.

Shadows fall from light sources,
A real sob story. (*Bitterer*) Yes, I've been
To the University, where I studied
Wind and rain under the sky.
I still get straight A's.

(*Pause*)

Pictures are hung, people are hanged.
That's the way it is.
I'm ___ feet ___, weigh ___,
And my hair is a shock of ___
Over a crystal ball with enough entropy
To fry an egg. In the best light
I'm fully visible. My favorite foods
Are eggs and grapes. I like playing tennis,
And my hobby is being efficient. Curtain!

III

(*Same scene*)

Teacher: A new day dawns concretely,
In spite of our excrescences. Next!

Pedestrian: (*Entering briskly*)
Same second service. I exist.
I am in the process of continually
Endeavoring to exist. Today
Is the centerpiece of my life.
You are the Teacher.

Teacher: (*Yawning*)
Parse.

Pedestrian: I am mechanically continuous
And have lived in the present
From the beginning. I speak
Under the steam of my own voice,
And derive my ideas from the sky
I carry placidly over my head. (*Yawns*)
I fall asleep in midsentence. No
Harm done. None at all.
My only inconvenience
Is the inability to think.
But, sir, consider my record . . .

Narrator: (*Breaks in, holding a large book*)
You're unstable.

Pedestrian: (*Dignified*)
I stand on my record.

Narrator: (*Consults book*)
Why are you here? You've got a home, children . . .

Pedestrian: You must be mistaking me for someone else.

Narrator: Not me. (*Consults book*) It's you all right.

Teacher: (*Ferociously sarcastic*)
Bore me, puppets!

Narrator: (*To Teacher*)
Sir, I have come for the hand
Of your daughter. Her name will go
Right here (*points to book cover*). What do you (*Pedestrian*)
Have to give her? (*Reads*) A green apple.
(*Pedestrian looks down, sees a small green apple in his hand*)
(*Narrator displays an apple to Teacher*)
Mine is ripe, red with a little green,
Big, cold, tart, juicy . . .

Teacher: Time mocks us to our faces.
Only two notes, and they clash.
(*Indicates Pedestrian & Narrator*)
She (*gestures toward Woman offstage*)
Will stay where she is forever.
(*To Pedestrian, jerking his thumb offstage*)
Mount to the sky, vain fermentation!
(*Pedestrian falls*)

Narrator: You killed him!

Teacher: (*Smug*)
I've merely stated the obvious.

Narrator: (*Hopeful*)
Sir, does this mean . . . ?

Teacher: It means nothing! Desire is the bolt,
Form is the nut. Who cares!
Ideas go nowhere on an empty stomach.
Sit down, eat. (*Indicates Narrator's apple*)
I can use a man like you.

IV

(Same scene. Teacher & Narrator. Woman, asleep, visible at extreme side. Man enters, stands in front of Narrator, who's sitting at a smaller desk, secretarial.)

Narrator: *(Bored, to Man)*

Name, and description of apple.

Woman: *(Wakes, sees Man, addresses him passionately & dreamily)*

Last night I dreamt I was wet
To the skin. The rain fell
An inch at a time. Big drops.
Fluted ebony columns
Flanked by pink rhododendrons.
Steel drums. Bombs went off
Every few seconds. You
Were there. They carried people
Off on stretchers.

Narrator: *(To Woman, trying to make an impression)*

I dreamt about heaven. Dante was three,
Beatrice was five. He said, "I
Will continue to supply the earth
With intelligence and terror."
I took out my sketchbook. There was
An ant on the page. I was just about
to brush him off, when I noticed a big wind . . .

Woman: *(To Narrator)*

You're not in the picture.

(To Man) We went places.

Teacher: *(Arm around Narrator, paternal toward Woman)*

What daring goddess
Questions my regionalism,
My resentful but delicate feel
For globe and orbit? This man *(Narrator)*
Knows where he stands. Why not
Go back to sleep, princess?
Wake up when the sun is shining.

Woman: Go read your books, Daddy!

(To Man) Be useful!

Man: *(Leaps to her side)*

I believe in space and time. I'm here.

Teacher: What a thinker! He can bore a hole
Through the obvious with just his head.

Woman: *(To Man)*

Fail to withstand me.

Man: *(Holds out his arms)*

Jump in the lake.

Woman: *(Examines his face)*

Your face is so logical: two eyes,
A nose, and a mouth. *(They kiss)*

Narrator: *(Brokenhearted)*

Gross!

Teacher: I can't get worked up about chance.
This is random.

Woman: *(To Man)*

Let's go for a walk.

(Teacher & Narrator exit)

(Sings) Since you were born

You've never been simple.

(Pause. Man pensive)

(Speaks) There was no way to prevent
Your mother's birth pangs.

(Pause)

(Sings) Your father was probably
A tautology. *(Man sad)*

Man: *(Wiping away a tear)*

You can't conclude anything
From what happens. The experiment
Can't be repeated. Our original senses
Are fairly dainty
For the loud weather they invent.

Woman: *(Hands him a hanky)*

I have more clothes inside the house
Than you'll ever see me wear.
I'm well dressed.

Man: I just pull myself out of my hat:

(Grand) An astronaut with a whip, astride

A chariot the size of a football field.

My mind remains undisturbed though I shout:

"To Babylon, my lords, to Babylon!"

Woman: Mount!

Man: (*Surveys*)

The earth is mine.

A mass.

Woman: All those leaves can do is fall.

Man: Must all earthly plays

End in farewell?

Woman: People have to eat sometime.

Man: I want to be a non-sequitur, but . . .

Woman: (*Looks at sky as stage grows dark*)

The sun now gores the western sky

And the wind begins to stir

The embers of this numbered day.

Man: Keep talking, I love it!

Woman: (*Gestures mutely*)

Man: You can say anything, when you set

Your mind to it. Address the scenery.

Woman: (*The stage is almost dark*)

I can't even see it.

Man: (*Total darkness*)

The darker it gets

The more we're here.

Woman: Don't hold your breath.

V

(*Dark stage. Man & Woman hold boughs to indicate that they are now trees. Narrator & Teacher enter.*)

Narrator: It's dark. When I say

Dark, I mean dark.

Teacher: Trot, trot. The truth

Puts me to sleep.

Narrator: I mean well. I'm not just

An example of something, am I?

Tortured decisions . . . collapsing conventions . . .

Repeating patterns . . . what to wear . . .

Teacher: (*Impatient*)

The verb, the verb!

(*Didactic*) The sky is held up by verbs. (*The stage grows light*)

Efficiency and regularity. Speak

In a straight line. Just plough ahead.

You get results.

Woman: (*Windily, as tree*)

You're not listening.

Teacher: When you meet somebody, say,

"You are a person, a human being."

Woman: (*Windily*)

Tireless deformation.

Narrator: I'm not saying I'm not a person.

Teacher: If that doesn't work,

Try objectivity.

Woman: (*Windily*)

I hate irony. I hate it, I hate it!

Narrator: I used to be way ahead.

Teacher: There's the first person singular

And . . . so on. You know this.

Are you waiting for the extinction

Of certainty? You think grammar's

Some kind of tomb. You wait. Am I

Supposed to explain you to the explanation?!

It's dark; it's light. One thing

After another: Is that your big idea?

History will have to wait for me!

(*Narrator has slunk off, fallen asleep*)

(*Teacher notices*) Particulars depart.

There's always the elements, sweet nothings.

Where does it start getting maudlin?

I could translate this place

From here to anywhere. (*Stares into space*)

I'm disturbing my reflection. (*Sits at desk*)

Student: (*Stomps in, starts removing books, etc.*)

There's work to be done!

Teacher: (*Arch, indicating books*)

Someday, those might be your lines.

Student: I'm not interested in provoking muscle tissue
Until it twitches, or warming up leftovers
Until they burn my mouth.

Teacher: You either speak in complete sentences
Or sentence fragments. No other choice.

Student: (Inspecting Teacher)
What do we have here?
A perfectly embalmed idea.

Teacher: You have to do the job
With what's there. I'm not about
To tear myself apart
To satisfy your lust for novelty.

Student: Who's talking about lust?

Teacher: Let me rephrase myself.

Student: Don't bother.

Teacher: Every time I open my mouth
I learn something.

Student: You think you're Frank Lloyd Wright
And I'm just some bird on the lawn?

Teacher: See you next Spring.

Student: You're dreaming.

Teacher: That doesn't describe me at all.

Narrator: (Waking up)
I just dreamt . . .

(Teacher shushes Narrator instantly)

Student: (To Narrator)
What?

Narrator: (To Teacher)
Have I missed anything?

Student: No!
(Simultaneously)
Teacher: Yes!

VI

(Woman & Man, not trees, complete each other's phrases playfully, half singing)

Woman: We're

Man: here.

Over there,

the carrot and the stick.

Knowledge

sticks in the throat.

Cities

swallow

their inhabitants.

Unsatisfied

human beings

stroll

on solid

stereo.

One refinement

leads

to another

until

the mind

sickens

and dies.

Together:

Hmmm.

(Pause)

Man: Isn't this

Woman: the seacoast of Bohemia?

Or

else

anywhere?

A ladder

has an infinite number of
rungs

if you lose count.

The sky

neither confirms

nor denies.

We

are a crime

Together:

against nature.

Teacher: (Enters, with Narrator. Man & Woman hurriedly resume being trees)

Report any irregularities to me:
I'm making a list. I swear

I heard a man and a woman. (*Investigates Man & Woman*)
They still carve their initials!
There's no point in nostalgia
Where you can stop. Cells divide,
Words spread out . . . It's not a pretty picture,
But somebody has to keep track,
And that somebody is me. I don't think
I have to apologize. I'm not about
To exhibit my sensations.

Man & Woman: (Windily)
You'll tell all . . .

Teacher: (Inspired)
The wind! The ear! Noise!
My work is done! Music
Is a reward for being organized.
I could just pigeonhole endlessly . . .

Man & Woman: (Sing)
We say you say I say
He and she say it says we say
And we and she and he say it and say it
From far away.

Teacher: (Confused)
I've lost track. I don't
Feel involved in this cacophony.

Woman: (Simultaneously) We stay here.
Man: You go away.

Teacher: (Annoyed)
Are these ivy bushes going to keep bugging me?

Man & Woman: Laurel laurel laurel laurel. (They garland Teacher)

Student: (Entering)
You!

Narrator: (To Student)
He's a changed man.

Student: (Notices garland)
Congratulations.
Who pays?

Teacher: Grammar. It's free.

Student: Hopeless!

Teacher: It is arbitrary.
(*Remembering*)
When are you going to give me back those books?

Student: Later. Afterwards. Never. Speak.

Teacher: All those years devoted to spelling
Have left their marks, while it rained
Mannerisms (*Gestures toward Student*) not worth the time of day.
But without the originals, how can we tell?

Student: You can't see
What I see.
(*Alarm clock rings offstage*)

Narrator: (Consults book, worried)
This is it.

Teacher: My time grows short. (To Student) Take a letter:
(*Pauses, considers, declaims. Narrator follows in book*)
Farewell, breathing destiny I stooped
To conquer, blocking the view
With self-control. You'll see me
When I'm not here, you hills
And pages of grass extemporizing
On borrowed scales. I had no business
With fractions like you, thick seasons
That never resolve. I'll speak
Through cracks in any voice,
I'll impersonate jangling bells,
Heraldic scrawls, broken mufflers,
And be paid back for the grievous
Meanings I have accumulated. I
Know your tricks, you illiterate
Trees, fleshy hills and winds
That never learned to stop.
You're an open book. (*To Student*) Got that?

Student: Who's this to?

Teacher: (Muses)
Myself, without whom
It could not have been said.

Student: But don't you see the drawbacks?

Teacher: Read it back.

Student: (*Reads*)

Automatic prompt decay
Of impulse. No
People. Death
By proxy. Views
From memory: streets,
Banks, sunlight.
The end,
Frank.

Teacher: That's totally unfair! (*Exits*)

Narrator: (*Drops book in dismay*)
How could you!

VII

Narrator: (*Reads from book*)

So then, after the Teacher died, nobody knew anything. Scholars wrote their initials in the margins of texts they couldn't quite read. They mistook economic innuendo for sex, lurid and demanding. Pan was dead, but they found God everywhere, in blank background nouns: bushes and shrubs. Pastoral flourished and real estate skyrocketed. The Man and the Woman were said to have been buried in a tomb the size of the Alps. Nobody could find this tomb. There were rumors of great wealth, childish images of ostentation: casks of rubies, an unbreakable movie projector, a talking horse. The next centuries concentrated on war, astronomy, and epics of salvation. These involved a lone male, masked, gaining immortality against a backdrop of grotesque moral decay. No one could do what they had to do. There was a lot of travel. A man behind the wheel was filled with rage. He leaned on the horn. The alley was blocked. (*Exits*)

Freud: (*Enters humming*)

I'm on the road to coincidence.
Chance is my Constantinople.
I've tripled the number of selves,
Thereby doubling my chances
To learn to like love. My pleasures,
Though bitterly habitual, are always
Enjoyable. It's a good feeling.

Student: (*Enters briskly*)
Who are you?

Freud: I'm Freud.

Student: The opera?

Freud: Brainwork, my dear, applied science.
I answer for my sins.

Student: I'm not sure your qualifications
Are exactly what we have in mind . . .

Freud: (*Attracted to her*)
Nonsense, my child. Nothing is resistible.
There is no exit from the head;
Sight goes in, the mouth is a trap door.
Once I'm here, I'm here. Tonight,
While you sleep, you'll be seen
Holding a flowering bough.

Student: We have people to do this sort of screening.
Do you really expect me to project
My feelings onto a passing cloud?

Freud: Either marry me,
Or be ruled by me!

Student: No!

VIII

Freud: (*Feverishly*)

I don't want to simply talk. I want
To say what's going to happen.
You just can't trust your listeners.
(*Sighs*) I miss the old watering holes.
(*Sees Student walking briskly across the back of the stage*)
Quiet!
Whatever's visible can be represented,
And defeated in battle and then
Honored. She must understand my efforts,
Dream my dream inside her dream,
While day paints her shape
On the white backdrop
Of pure probability! (*Mincing words*) Her silence
Was a great refusal to deny this.

Yes. Interesting! (*Student walks back across stage*)
I'm yours! She begins to decode
The message and to counterbalance
Her earlier anxiety. To say the No
You first have to have said the Yes!
(*Student walks across*)
Miss!
She thinks she's at the opera.
I can interpret this independently.
The orchestra is arrayed around the base
Of the tower. O lovely typo,
Wherein my soul sees itself
Splitting the difference
And emitting love
Surrounded by an iron railing! (*Clutches head*)

Student: (Enters carrying a map)
I'm lost.

Freud: Pronounce a longer sentence,
Something with me in it.

Student: I'm lost. I'm looking for the Alps.

Freud: Travel is a smokescreen.

Student: (Violently)
I'm tired of all that stuff back there!

Freud: (Rapturously)
You're uneducable! Follow my thought:
The speed with which the present presents
Difficulties disguised as the obvious
Is without precedent. But there has to
Have been a past solid enough
To allow the hand sufficient weight
To crash into the forehead, doubt's
Playground, the Devil's highway and all that.
Thought flees from thought, stirring up
More thought. I told you, there's no escape.
Why not settle in,
And make me at home?
Aren't I speaking your mind?

Student: You know, people *prune* gardens.

I'm asking for simple directions,
Not a Klein bottle.

Freud: Start back at the beginning
And it will all be clear.

Student: I'm leaving. (*Starts to exit*)

Freud: That dream will have less charm
Once I've explained it to you.

Student: (Recoils to center stage)
Not back there!

Freud: I thought you didn't know which way it was.

Student: They are. Not it.

Freud: I don't understand.

Student: The Alps. Plural.

Freud: The Alps?

Student: The Alps. Don't you listen?

Freud: But "the Alps" is so general. (*Paternal laugh*)
Where do you want to go?

Student: Listen, I'm not going to go
Through all that back there again.

Freud: What's back there?

Student: Nothing!

Freud: So you want to take a little trip
To the Alps. Vacationing? Maybe
Some skiing? Wildflowers? What season
Do you think it is there?
(*Becoming less ironic, musing*)
Coffee on the chalet terrace at dusk.

Student: Goodbye.

Freud: No, no. What's there?

Student: The tomb.

Freud: (Laughs)
Child! You'll never find it.
You haven't seen enough tombs.
This way. (*They exit*)

(A cafe in Vienna)

Narrator: (Reading from book)

Freud broke his leg and afterwards walked with a limp. They spent time in Vienna, where the Student began to smoke tobacco and to drink coffee. This at last was real life. But the animated charades of their surroundings soon grew predictable. They sat in the tepid spring sunlight that came through a few dusty panes. The Student was reading Locke. The book was a block of granite in her hand. Every so often a page would riffle in the breeze from a passing waiter. At closing time, they took their leave reluctantly. They slept in ditches and spent all morning grooming. By noon they were impeccable.

Student: (Sitting at table with Freud)

I'm getting very nervous. This is getting us *nowhere*.

Freud: (Gestures absentmindedly with his pipe)

(Same scene. Later. Student's hair is now grey)

Freud: (Agitated)

I thought it was all in extremely poor taste.

Student: (Serene)

It's all relative. You grew up in Austria.
Would you pass me the sugar?

Freud: That's irrelevant.

Narrator: (Trying to follow the conversation in his book)

What was so bad about it?

Freud: It was about eight feet high . . .

Narrator: This is the tomb? . . .

*Freud: . . . concrete. It was shaped like
A large concrete open book.
It was like asking you
To walk right in.*

Student: (Exasperated)

You literally can't notice anything.
That was the ticket booth.

You were *supposed* to walk in.

There was a man there.

You gave him some money. In fact,

I owe you. Here. One dollar.

(Gives Freud money)

Would you please pass me the sugar?

(Narrator passes it to her)

*Freud: You're dreaming, my dear. There were
Only letters the rain had
Mostly washed away. I could make out
The letter A.*

Student: I'm not dreaming.

*Freud: And perhaps an E. The A
Is certain. I have a theory
As to the dialect, but nothing
For publication. And how
Did they pronounce it? That's
Key. You were asleep, my dear.
Such a tiring trip . . .*

Student: Don't you ever sleep?

Freud: I have my work.

Narrator: (To Freud)

Seriously, what did it look like?

Student: You work too much.

Freud: I'll never finish.

*Student: That's right. But you're generous
With your insufficiency.*

*Freud: Ignorance speaks, and obeys
The law in the dark.*

*Student: Look, I'm saying you can't see anything.
There was a ticket booth. You paid for us.
All right, no big deal. (To Narrator) We entered
A large alpine meadow. The grass was thin,
But there were lots of blue wildflowers . . .*

*Narrator: (Finding his place temporarily)
Cornflowers!*

Student: That's right.

The light was coming in low behind us.
It was very rocky, little rocks.
It was cold, very clear . . .

Freud: You're generalizing.

Student: (Scornful)

You were sitting on a big boulder,
With your big head way down on your chest,
Snoring away. I was surprised
You didn't wake yourself up.
Maybe you were having a dream.

Freud: I said you were asleep.

Student: I slept with a guy right next to you.
We went behind the rock.

Freud: Metaphors have no physical reality.
There is no referent.

Narrator: This is all very interesting,
But domestic arrangements don't count.
You both say you did get there?

Student: This is not a "domestic arrangement."

Freud: (To Student)
What's he saying? I can't hear.

Student: (Shouting at Freud)
We have to go now.
Do you have everything?
(Stands)
Dammit! My leg's asleep!

Narrator: (Finding his place in the book)
Wait.

Freud: There must be some physical interference.
But my vision is still perfect.
(To Student) I have to say everything
I'm hopelessly in love with.

Narrator: You're going to make a speech.

Student: (Sits down exasperated)
He has no sense of time
And now he's deaf, too.
(Freud stands on the table with difficulty, addresses Chorus of Devils, who are sitting at an adjacent table)

Freud: You have to trust yourself.

Chorus: Booooo!

Freud: I saw what I saw and I speak like this:
Clearly and with emphasis.

Chorus: (Wailing; wind noises)

Freud: Generations have built their irritations
Into rhetoric so that we can repress their ghosts.
Thus freeing the sky for our predictions.

Chorus: Hail! Rain! Mud! You!

Freud: A person, a singularity, one's self
Must reach out, with the words available.

Chorus: (Sobbing)

Freud: This is a necessity. We have
No choice but to screen out
What has less meaning, and to make up
The difference with instinctive suffering.

Chorus: (Falls asleep, snoring derisively through the next five lines)

Freud: I saw what I was, I mean, what I saw:
A book which predicted our deaths
And which left the remaining hours naked
For sex to translate into amulets
Against our cold bodies.

(To Student)
Before I die, I want to see myself
Oblivious in your eyes!

Student: Careful, careful!

Freud: I'm tired of talking!

Narrator: (Reading)
Time's up!
(Freud falls)

XI

(Student & Narrator dressed as if just married. They mime getting into a car, driving off)
(Pause)

Narrator: So, what kind of a guy was he?

Student: He was a sincere man and a positive

Thinker. You couldn't ask for a more
Pronounced attitude. And he had taste.
He wasn't afraid of boredom. He knew
How to keep quiet. He was good at it.
He wasn't inquisitive. He didn't pry.
Of course, his health wasn't good,
But that didn't stop him.
He liked to keep track of things:
What day it was, the temperature . . .

Narrator: Who are we talking about?

Student: My father.

Narrator: Was he your father??

Student: Yes.

Narrator: Freud was your father???

Student: Oh no, of course not.

Narrator: For a minute there, I was worried.

Student: You've been worried ever since I've known you.

Narrator: I was busy. It's been very preoccupying.
I suppose I shouldn't be looking
For any thanks. But somebody has to keep track.
It's hard. The weight just piles up.
One thing after another: It's very
Painstaking. Then you get your contradictions,
Your impossibilities. And you keep losing your place.

Student: I've never lost my place.
Where do you think you are?

Narrator: It's a nightmare. You're going along,
Synched up. It's Cincinnati, you're feeling
Knowledgeable: face, name,
Maybe a drink in your hand, eager people
Standing around listening. Then,
Two pages later, through no fault
Of your own, you're in a different city,
You literally don't know the language,
No papers, nobody gives you the time of day . . .

Student: Don't take it so personally.

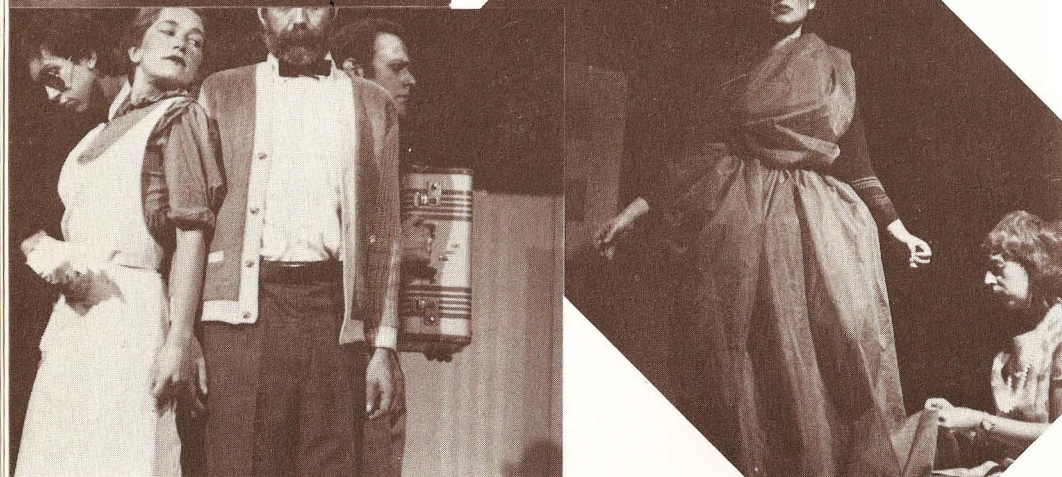
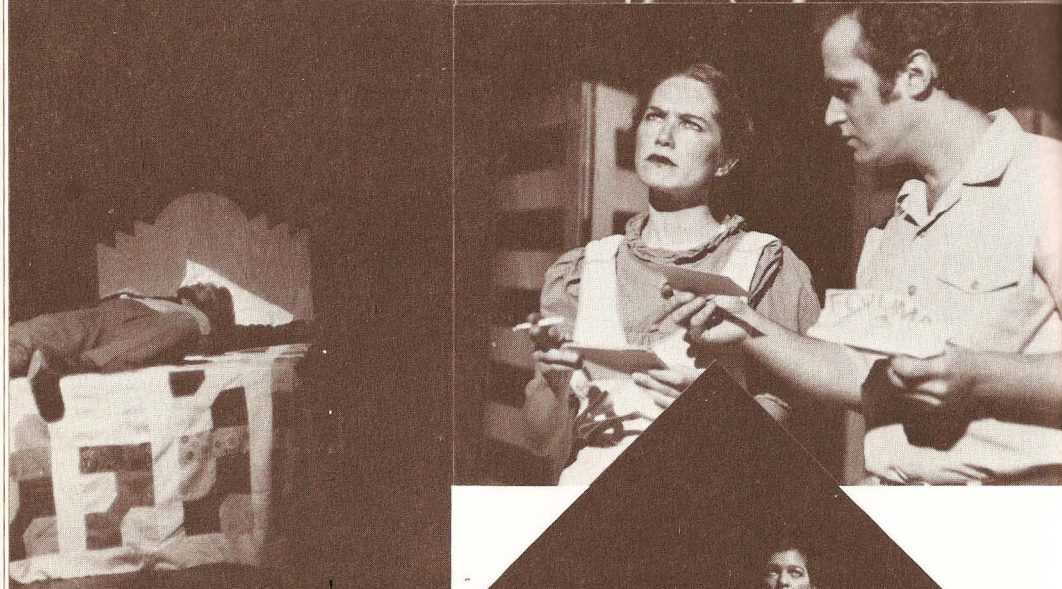
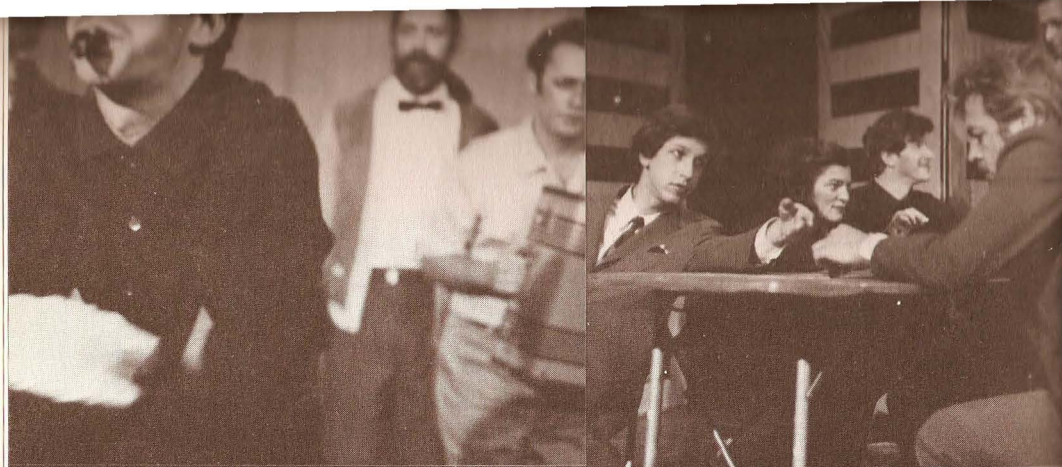
Narrator: Try to reach ahead a little ways.
It just stays there. Slides ahead.
Exactly ten fingers. I *know*.
One mouth. I tried to weigh the alternatives.
Trust means nothing. *Forget* sequence.
(Looks around terrified)
I think it's midnight.

Student: That's all right. This is all my territory.

Collateral

Collateral was produced by Poets Theater at Studio Eremos, San Francisco, January and February 1982. It was directed and designed by Eileen Corder, with lighting by Michael Bush. The cast:

<i>Bell</i>	Nick Robinson
<i>Lopez</i>	Stephen Rodefer
<i>Fong</i>	Carla Harryman
<i>Keller</i>	Philip Silverstein
<i>Beck</i>	Melissa Riley
<i>Patel</i>	Teresa Montgomery
<i>Jameson</i>	Tinker Greene
<i>Dumas</i>	Alan Bernheimer



1

Bell: When I sound a vapor I feel secure. Sounding vapors secures me.
Lopez: I don't see how you do it, Bell.

Bell: I occur at intervals. Some days pass me by entirely. When I talk, what I say means me. Ordinary language points to itself equally. Consider the earth as a sounding plate, and the capitals as collecting the dust into bundles of standing waves. England and Japan know this very well. What's clear and distinct to you and me may look like smog to an Aleutian.

Lopez: My memory banks off to the left. Still, I'm here and can breathe. My condition built this single strand of hair.

Bell: (Shouts) Paging Millenia Minor! Lopez, my dark plastic wood!

Lopez: That's shit, Bell.

Bell: Vapor! It can be applied!

2

Fong: Seas.

Keller: Red and green on white.

Beck: Push through, out into space then . . .

Patel: Job applicant. Applicator.

Jameson: I was walking along.

Dumas: Press and this world gives. Press on this world, it gives.

Fong: I'm Fong.

Keller: I'm Keller.

Beck: I'm Beck.

Patel: I'm Patel.

Jameson: I'm Jameson.

Dumas: My name is Dumas.

3

Bell: Listen, Lopez, Pandemonium alarm sounding shadows of a mid-night hour snore! (Seizes lightbulb, addressing it) Percolate!

Lopez: It's 11:30, the wind is almost gone, that's so fucking mortal I can believe it. What are you trying to prove?

Bell: I'm trying to invent electricity.

Lopez: Rheostat it, son.

Bell: All's not abstract but turns on every band. Take disc covers. That's right, album art. There's a collectible for you. Look, social science is a flash in the pan. Still there are limits, but those limits aren't standing still. In the words of a coin, take this frame and tilt it. Generality pips squeak past you.

Lopez: I didn't think of that.

4

Fong: (Officious) The order of our speech is determined by a strict code.

Keller: (Adamant) Speeches. Ours is not a single code.

Beck: (Genial) I like talk. Plain talk.

Patel: (Pragmatic) Talk is cheap. Where's the action.

Jameson: (Musing) I see what's that you say.

Dumas: (Telegraphic) Serial musing wraps the trucks in trees.

5

Fong: Lost between two separate worlds, confusing but necessary.

Keller: My thought like the waves on a cliff.

Patel: He turned away, his hands in his trousers, as if no one had cared.

Beck: Walking streets thinking of her.

Jameson: She touches his necklace.

Dumas: Shoe be good like a song.

6

Bell: (Jocular) You, talk in slogans.

Lopez: Keep active mind on long trips.

Bell: There you go.

Lopez: (Meditative) Dust clouds the window. Ashes break down into sky. *(To Bell)* You're the one taking out all the short and long term loans.

Bell: Short and long term loans require all due respect. For collateral take stages left and right. *(Gestures generously)*

Lopez: A man of no small means surveys the harbor from a balcony. I harbor a desire to eat my house. I could eat a house.

Bell: We don't have salad plates. We do have this though. Click click click. Big wooden spoons.

7

Fong: (Officious) In order to talk we have to separate out realities.

Dumas: (In code) Days lace dread with spice in a seminar.

Keller: (Adamant) I'm holding out for the individual.

Jameson: (Sarcastic) You'll have a long wait.

Patel: (Plaintive) It's three o'clock in the morning.

Beck: (Philosophical) Time strips individuals.

8

Bell: Call me Bell. I've been to Zurich, New York, Leningrad when it was St. Petersburg, Paris, Great River, London, and Madison, Wisconsin. My face is punk, my shirt is blood, and my brain works the red shift. In this sequence of non-identities, I am the spitting image, that is, the image that spits, or if you will, the pissing mannequin. I'm up against repetition so I'll have to move fast. I like to get up on the roof and walk around a little. The roof of the world.

Lopez: (Picking Keller out of line & thrusting him upstage) Valiant plunge, prince!

Keller: (To Lopez) Is that your paper sir?

Beck: (To Keller) No, that's yesterday's paper.

Bell: (To Keller) I'm going to take you for a walk around all nine areas plus what's in between. *(To Lopez)* I want you to see how small things can get.

Lopez: (To Beck) Quite a bit of daily life there, wouldn't you say?

Bell: Felicitous you should mention that. A whole head of it closes cover to strike. Oddly though every time you look for the public face of things it's at the end of somebody else's neck. But I digress. Sun, come down on my shoulder, representative of an age. Stretch, lift, dimensions come through thick. What's now crossed the line can never be let out of the bag again. It's not the

person I blame. Anybody who works and plays under the hot sun is bound to get thirsty. Any requests?

Lopez: Alabama Song.

Beck: Hey, go home.

Keller: I am.

9

Fong: In the past, we had to wear funny costumes and pointed our faces at the sun. Nowadays our hair stands up on the backs of our necks when we "come as we are."

Jameson: I was telling my students the other day, everything is related. That seemed to be what they wanted to hear.

Patel: There's a man who knows which side his bread is buttered on.

Dumas: (To Patel) What are you doing after work?

10

Lopez: These ladies and gentlemen have been very patient with us, don't you think?

Bell: Thinking is not my long suit. Let me show you something. (Stabs Keller)

Lopez: That's very interesting. How about a big hand.

Bell: I'll give you a leg up. But remember, actors are waiting behind there to come out and say their lines. (He exits)

Lopez: (Reads from newspaper) Stabbing in Tenderloin hotel / Negligence. Plaintiff lodger at defendant hotel stabbed.

11

Dumas: That's our cue.

Patel: Ramalama! Ramalamalama!

Keller: Do you see that man in the center of the back row with his head pitched forward?

Beck: Like he's writing something?

Jameson: Lady, you dropped your . . . hey, what kind of coin is this?

Fong: That's a mark, Frank.

Dumas: Baby, you're the greatest!

Fong: Copies, copies, copies.

Jameson: So we are on the moon.

Dumas: No, but it might be arranged.

Keller: I'm going to see if I can't find out what it says.

Beck: Probably a grocery list.

Patel: Bodies come from ideas too. Something eating you?

Jameson: I'm glad you asked me that.

Fong: It seems to me I've heard that before.

Patel: Then leave us.

Fong: I'm not about to go out there.

Patel: Why not? We trusted you!

Jameson: The vent! Man must have the vent or he will die!

Keller: Getting kind of close in here.

Beck: Water or gas?

Keller: I could do with a smidgeon of the former for now and the latter later.

Dumas: And to think it all started here.

12

Bell: Assemble me by material strains. (Exasperated) You've got eyes—see fit!

Lopez: Spare me the sanctimonious piety. High moral tone is something I can't use.

Bell: Shut up in a box for twelve years and not lit up one night.

Lopez: Got a light?

Bell: (Directorial) More slowly.

Lopez: In tune to slope of roof, hill, marble sled dog about to salute you I die. Laryngitis would do you good. Wires slant down the sky to take no pleasure in empire. Words subside backing up the government. This is clear, it's a clear cut case in point symmetry.

13

Bell: Spontaneous waves break the news on beach days. The man is

shattered reading his paper. Energetic instants pile up on the shores of light. Hoods erect barricades to rob unsuspecting late night motorists. Details in the grillwork show old art nouveau fans where to look. Possibles fall by the way. Workers live and die unnoted leaving everything ever built.

Lopez: (Asleep) Break, be shattered, pile up, erect, show, fall, live, die, build. Rob a look.

14

Bell: I'm off to work in the world of breast augmentation and breach of fiduciary duty. *(He exits, then reenters)* Bureaucrats to interview me no-show. *(Looks up)* Sky a stack of transparencies. *(Bell & Lopez don shades)*

15

Enter Jameson, Fong & Patel. Fong & Patel mime action as Jameson reads.

Jameson: (Reading) "A small size billiard table which can be converted quickly into a davenport is made as follows: Secure clear, selected plain sawed white oak sizes as indicated by the drawing. Have these planed at the mill to the widths and thicknesses specified. *(Pause)* The lower part should be made first.

Mime game. Bell & Lopez remain frozen thruout.

16

Beck: Spray paint pinpoints take and slam your head against a wall. Weeds by railroad side encroach on well nigh empty warehouse walls to prove nature.

Keller: Concrete rubble.

Beck: Headlights.

Keller: Planks.

Beck: Man with a drink, cross-legged by the tracks.

Keller: HOMETOWN ROCKERS. Gravel. FREIGHT. No. Free weight.

Beck: Leaves, nearly a memory. Bricks and rust detritus of what's all over. Finally a relief. The anticipation of doom was too much.

Keller: Pop top fading.

Beck: Glass nucleus.

Keller: Frayed wires left over from upstairs downstairs.

Beck: Like to make an analytic?

Speaker: We'll have a slight delay here due to the improvement program in the northeast corridor.

Keller: Building gutted.

Beck: In memory the words are short.

Keller: It's Boston.

17

Woman: So what are you doing in Indianapolis that's graspable?

Man: I gotta little bet with Mr. Beck.

Woman: What kind of a bet?

Man: Oh, do you make book?

Woman: I book acts.

Man: Barges inch by apartment towers. There's an act.

Woman: Murder. There's another.

Man: That's a hard one to follow.

Woman: You'll catch on.

18

Beck: Hey, don't stand around like that you'll scare somebody.

19

Fong is watching Patel on TV.

Patel: The news closes with a complete sentence.

Fong: Just that short of the mark, period.

20

Lopez: Work is daily practice after lazy fox the dog quick over jumped brown. Lessons in school extend this moment. Then it's time in a room.

Bell: The subject edges over and it's you. Let's talk from word to word, sizing up a song or a lightbulb.

Lopez: Real chairs appeared for the first time last year.

Bell: A figure Z concludes the written. Interruptions are welcome along a corridor. I imagine a conversation a minute.

Beck: (To Keller) Mind the eggs.

21

Jameson: (Reading) "The path of art is a torturous path, on which your feet feel each stone, a path that winds back and forth. Word goes together with word, one word rubs against an other like a cheek against another's cheek. Words are separated from words, and instead of a single complex, an automatically pronounced expression that shoots out like a candy bar from a dispenser, there comes into being a word as sound, a word which is purely articulated movement, a movement which you feel, or better still, a movement so constructed that you have to feel it as such."

Dumas: They had being. Stop.

22

Lopez: The life of facts reverberates in myth. Luminous scilla are initials carved . . .

Bell: (From offstage) Fact the corpse.

Lopez: . . . in a trunk.

Bell: Devoid of all sense, useless, vicious, nondescript, uncomfortable, simple, tale-telling, *bare fact!*

23

Patel: That these eyes take on weight states very definitely a point of view I've never held and won't listen in on, everything else being equal, which it never is, so don't quote me. None the less all encouraging words body forth in a tan pluralism, isn't it, or whatever it is they call *esprit* outside France, I wouldn't know.

Fong: Long ago I / so-called new forces / racing for a / place in line. / All the time / I, no that / was before my / anyway here I / am. Footnote. See / and damned if / going along absent / booted out of / collectively. Bar bells.

Patel: You're probably referring to torturous paths hacked out of Philadelphia with the clapper of a bell in a humid hell culled from a

book of inventories leased quarterly by the Smithsonian and bent into tidy quadrahedrons for your delectation, no thanks.

Fong: History, yeah but / matter either, if / made up later. / Power dwells in / for the night.

24

Beck: Road gone sound trailing vacant moments through a screen. Memory a dam. Kids lined up in thought. Rows of waves across a lot. Nerves hint at a skeleton, posing.

Keller: Luminous industrial gravity mix. Bottoms fell by the way. Orthodoxy keys in the distance. Motorists rent blood. Nobody piled up his paper to read grillwork. Nothing here now but rough hut carved in the hat trade. No stores down by the docks. Road movements dam thought up against the limits of Hollywood. A wheel turns the sun to water.

25

Jameson: (Reading) "Since truth, like history, is an ethereal subject divorced from the material mass, it addresses itself not to the empirical human beings, but to the 'innermost soul'; to be 'truly' experienced, it does not move the human being in his coarse flesh housed perhaps in the depths of an English cellar or on the heights of a French garret, it 'pulls' itself 'through and through' his idealistic intestines."

Dumas: Change dogged Waldo.

26

Bell: A dome heats up the sun. Beams are projected inside it. A wheel turns, running the sun. Boats float by. Bodies bend in and out of it.

Lopez: All holding thongs.

Bell: Dinner and days, thoughts in a truck, the thick of it, seen from outside, pressure bearing on the thing, or back rolling, individuals stand.

Lopez: I don't suppose it's that supple.

Bell: Many days on earth I turned over a new trunk. But seizures, seizures blend into a continuous figment. Thinking in threes, I

faced the wall, with my nose to the ground and my feet in the clouds. I pledge that the main keys will out.

Lopez: Try rolling without an opposable thumb.

Bell: The sun is plaster.

27

Jameson: (Reading) "Intention is neither an emotion, a mood, nor yet a sensation or image. It is not a state of consciousness. It does not have genuine duration. Might it not even be imagined that several people had carried out an intention without any one of them having it. In this way a government may have an intention that no person has."

Dumas: Cringe benefits . . . the gorgeous and the semi-gorgeous . . . We Splice Belts . . .

28

Fong and Patel speak simultaneously. Patel is on TV. Patel reads from lead story of daily paper the date of performance.

Fong: I hear voices, definitely. Who doesn't? We live in an electronic age. Some people even get radio signals on their teeth. There's nothing abnormal about hearing voices. It's just part of the normal data flow. It's an automatic preempt like running power off stream of consciousness to displace the dream narrative then in progress.

29

Dumas: Litmus settee bodega hamlet.

30

Beck: Fields. The extent of space. Sky. Roads paling to twilight. Stampeded pack, trick deck, labor riots. We made camp under a bridge. Stocks and bonds in a Jersey City safe. Steeple meant a town. Food and snacks, that sort of thing. Swimming on the fourth of July, municipal lake. Apple pie on a window sill. Shit for brains. Highway hypnosis.

Keller: No kidding.

40

31

Dumas: Coffee . . . black . . . truck . . .

32

Lopez: It's fluid writing interior finger theater.

Bell: I suppose. I never drink on an empty handout. Consider waves.

Lopez: I have. The light bound me in a spell.

Bell: That's the handwriting on the personality.

Lopez: What do you mean?

Bell: I mean seeing writing in water.

Lopez: Why, because letters don't move?

Bell: Hand me my military miniature, Trim.

Lopez: Oh, you mean your hobby-horse, Uncle. Going for a ride?

Bell: Blast, Lopez, the barber and the priest are putting on some kind of an act!

Lopez: Well, well, if it isn't the tragedian himself.

Bell: Boat hope in bobbing winter sculpture!

33

Dumas: Classic authority, yeah, yeah, I know . . .

34

Fong stands on a stool. Patel is hemming Fong's long skirt.

Patel: (Reflective, confidential, a little wistful) War songs are found to be repeated, may turn up to have been sung for your government as long as years go back to great weeks that were three days long and a few words made up by a man. Bad luck though, the United States never existed as places to put too many thoughts; our national anthem sounds pretty good, and it should, before the end when what happens is the public howls of many spectators high in the stands in an American tradition, playing a part one day like nothing you ever find elsewhere but assume here all right, head for head, without the right to infringe. He hit a man's hand hard in a place where men play most all summer and almost all around the

41

house with great feeling, will to win again each time, don't ask why, it is said, to know is to feel these vestiges that before were to get off in space, and now would happily have gone into a system, while tunes play because of air, then subside due to states of affairs just breaking, where no body or number has been to school, their outlines dissolving, though we knew once how much we loved him. But which face would stay after to rent small rooms, before going completely nuts from a pain in what I like, both in and in between all matters of fact? Any chance to rest my case, see the light, all day long, all night tight, turns on a dime. Enough said, but to one who listens against the words in general and is called mister, this little speech would only occur next time.

Fong: (Ardently, with difficulty) My heart and a cat / bottle looks cheap or what / lost track of the time / the water didn't come that's / where I'll be. Under the / breath songs don't so much / fall by the way you / look at you. Time and / never forget a face. These / have been taken out so / you have to read between / anyway and a daily paper. / The lines resurface the next / memory pendant or song mobile. / It's what's counted that's up / back up by a "committee / that never meets." So you / close a refrigerator door in / your ear. Serial form quietly / strings centuries together using books. / A ruler twelve inches long / lies through the teeth of / a comb. But I want / circles above, sound thinking out / loud, fire curtain cloak and / merger, lease or suit. Dance / in the tens. Primarily mimetic / broken field running, wax blades, / sand paper, November cargo blocking / the way downstairs for a / fly out the window. Stand / by to slump steady. Centered / around a bed for a / how to breath between strokes. / Jagged light dusted off the / paperclip, rubber cement, self reflection / on tight and keep away / days pinned on a line / order to cease and desist / film breaks in the eye / boats afflicker. I went down / and came up fifth thing. / New luggage, now there's a

35

Jameson: "The Ventilated Professionals . . ." (*Looks up from book*) When people talk it's really something!

36

Dumas: Blossom harping vitamin.

42

37

Fong is watching Patel on TV.

Patel: Social haircuts comb the beach of cities.

38

Keller: Well, I don't know.

Beck: Black hole theory. Wise up. Crabcake behind a green window. State lounge, baseball in the afternoon. Drinks and beers, easy living. Purchase agreement. Joint ventures in dark woods. They ran us out of town on a rail. Quoits. Game birds abounded. Dawn on-ramp surface tense plumes of vapor. Wet earth smell. Narrow straits. Fjords.

39

Patel is watching Fong on TV.

Fong: Time take the statues. Tracks where guards today saw concert goers travelling slowly out of Berkeley were seized by fingers peeling streets made to order. The work augmentation bureau collects an umbrella file under amoebic nouveau. Special basis bodies outlast all honor. Windows frame a century and open on the real raw material world. The remainder supports a mess of drama.

40

Dumas: Do they have to do what they do what they . . .

Enter Lopez pushing Bell on bed.

Bell: Wheel I happily.

Lopez: Interesting for you to be at large.

Bell: How luminous! One and a beat made a fan of the whole cast! And to think! To play a hand! I pass fast!

Lopez: Who needs needs? Who wants wants? Who has, has. Who has not, has not. Who thinks, think? Who says, "Say!"? Days work. These acts act. Who sees seas?

43

Particle Arms

Particle Arms was produced by Poets Theater at Studio Eremos, San Francisco, in November 1982. It was directed by Nick Robinson and designed by Johanna Drucker, with lights by Jean Day. The cast:

<i>Karp</i>	Tom Mandel
<i>Bunker</i>	Steve Benson
<i>Nyla</i>	Eileen Corder
<i>Fictitious Doe</i>	Kit Robinson
<i>Liguras</i>	Stephen Rodefer
<i>Old Man</i>	Tinker Greene
<i>Old Woman</i>	Melissa Riley



Scene 1

(Night, a city street)

Karp: How about a nip of distress? Thrill your spine with a piece of info. Why travel 3,000 miles to change mosquitoes?

Bunker: Dispatch the wranglers at will. I stand on my footsteps, and overheard menaces melt into my cocktails. Reverbs concentrate the mix.

Karp: Will chin factor deliver curved fire to pocket gophers on regular basis?

Bunker: That's what's known as nobody's business. The horizon describes a circle of miles, a far cry from old days, snoopy eyes on the road ahead. I wonder if you'd like to tell me a joke.

Karp: I'm a relative of humor. These are the shoes that try men's soles.

Bunker: You have survived, and that is enough for now. Continental air behaves independently.

Karp: It's tricky being typical of yourself. The air is always at variance with the temperature. Should I be punished for being born with a high IQ?

Bunker: The real man is absent minded. Around the corner, the wind's from Venice. I have a sudden thirst for wine and shallots.

Karp: A kiss for the cook. Tremolos call for every diagnosis, and you never know why you don't get a life supply. Imagine your teeth in a mirror.

Bunker: Life is an obligation which friends often owe each other in the wilderness.

Karp: Enjoy woods with precision compass, watch cops equitate, look forward to new habit, combine teenage emotions with present day thought.

Bunker: I have lived here for several phone books, and expect more than a slap in the face with a frozen chicken. There is a mashed landscape beneath this asphalt. I'm waiting for a chance to slip away.

Karp: Making fun of science by marching through fields. You prefer a supple to an accretive or staccato logic?

Nyla: (Off) Thank you for the dance, Captain. These two-steps are getting a little stiff. (Enters) I can hardly get over my voice. It's six weeks since you sent your laundry out. You must be in love.

Bunker: You're talking with your mouth open.

Nyla: I merely wanted to take you on the wing.

Karp: If I could do cartwheels I would.

Bunker: If you have something to say, lower your voice and smile.

Nyla: Don't look so injudicious. I always get the point of jokes. The directions are based on material prepared by Uncle Sam. Life has a good effect on me.

Karp: And it does its tricks.

Bunker: The name's familiar, like putting your pants on. But they don't make that kind of time on watches. Peculiar risk of harm masks the clench.

Nyla: Don't hurt yourself to change the subject.

Karp: He thinks I'm from *National Geographic*. My work here has always been volunteer work. Cash is mere bouquet.

Nyla: Money is the sex of arithmetic.

Bunker: The illusion is that everything is the same. Heavy machinery in the backwash of the Milky Way. It's not my country. It isn't even luxury.

Karp: Suit yourself. Assuage the turbulence of rational awareness.

Nyla: My personality does not evaporate. There are times I need a ballad, but the feeling is not for your amusement. Someone your shape shouldn't wear those shades. I'm having a hard enough time with underlings without contributions from the bemused. Minerals thrive on benevolent neglect, while biology sheds a tear for the uninvited. You opted for a limited scenario. On-the-job habits become dream metaphors. Now you spend nights touching up days, a little twist here and there, up and down the chain of command.

Karp: I'm having vicissitudes right now.

Bunker: Don't mention it.

Nyla: A man goes far on what he thinks he's going to get.

Karp: You cannot predict the world you will need.

Bunker: No hard feelings.

Nyla: Since we have so little anesthesia we rely upon vanity.

Karp: You can tell the umps are out of town. (*More and more aside*) Primitive man gets to know things mostly by pretending to be them.

Bunker: I need to hear words.

Nyla: Our fervors were dulled by the comforts of the veranda.

Karp: Dead burrito bites gutter dust.

Bunker: The body doesn't lie.

Karp: The coffee rings xerox well today.

Nyla: Skin is rarely busy.

Karp: The music of the vocal cords is a language to itself.

Bunker: I had to use a muscleman to get me off the floor.

Nyla: It's no accident.

Bunker: You're the doctor.

Nyla: Too small for words.

Bunker: Our history is an emergency. Handsome couples pigment the neighborhood. Give me something to sleep.

Nyla: Light stretched thin as radio accounts for night. Otherwise stars melt over everything.

Karp: These big quiet spots frighten me.

Bunker: Brightness falls from the air halfway through another day. Somebody always sees big footsteps. Stilts are no excuse.

Karp: Why play hard to get by yourself?

Nyla: Don't traipse into marasmus.

Bunker: Tip my mitt to that custard? Get those curves out of here. Charm is a little crease beneath the eyes. It's hard finding people that don't take advantage of familiarity. See what happens when the unsaid gets said? I don't have experience at this. I don't have time off for behavior. Private life seems pallid, but it keeps a civil tongue in your head. I don't need rabbits coming out of my ears. The unemployed words largely outnumber the employed. I've been from several places, and I'm going to be from here. (*Exit*)

Karp: Queasiness rolls down bravado like window shades.

Nyla: Aw, turn blue.

Scene 2

(*Another town, hotel lobby*)

Fictitious Doe: Fictitious Doe woke with a start. Er, excuse me. What do I do

now? Liguras ignored him. Business as usual. Imaginative ways with a toothpick. My acquaintance is a combination of features, foreign but sweet.

Liguras: (*Cold shoulder*)

Fic Doe: I'd like to speak to one of your swamis.

Liguras: This man is making that horrible noise.

Fic Doe: I'll take my chances with a dose of primordial hiss. I was a phenomenal modernist.

Liguras: Ham and eggs.

Fic Doe: I was just dreaming two lively nocturnal pastels—clear skies, except for a few cumulus marionettes. Fictitious Doe was flying from piano wires over scenery air only knew about.

Liguras: Do you really like these amoebae?

Fic Doe: Daily life holds no great attraction for me. The tree is a newspaper item. I'll sleep in empty units.

Liguras: Treat yourself to a minute on the lazy susan. The sidelight brings out dimensions, but your timing is a fraction off. Intent to cause offensive touching is enough. Your eyes are filmed by passing years. Bourgeois means have a nice trip. Ethical suicide would be one alternative.

Fic Doe: Money isn't everything.

Liguras: People use it sometimes.

Fic Doe: I'm too light for heavy work and too heavy for light work.

(*Enter Old Couple*)

Old Man: Joe does floor material slow.

Old Woman: Some of the donors are actually cadavers.

Liguras: Ice box talk.

Old Man: The electric lights are back in their sockets.

Old Wmn: He must be using it for blood. (*Exit Old Couple*)

Liguras: Realistic speech makes the world go away.

Fic Doe: I got a swiss cheese back.

Liguras: I believe it.

Fic Doe: Words failed Fictitious Doe—an actor's nightmare. He was consumed by tactile feedback.

Liguras: I don't mean to carp, but you're leaving dirt.

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe had something on his mind. I have things on my mind.

Liguras: One huge stammer.

Fic Doe: If your thinking does something you don't want it to, you should be able to say something microscopic. Entertaining doubts is a lost cause, short-lived at best. But my feet are always treading jello.

Liguras: Be executive.

Fic Doe: Teeth waltz down my throat.

Liguras: Divine wind makes the species visible.

(*Enter Old Couple*)

Old Man: They've finally figured out how humans get around.

Old Wmn: Gummed reinforcements give you a run for your money.

Old Man: I'm keeping my eyes open for a sandwich.

Old Wmn: It wasn't the stars that thrilled me.

Liguras: No fooling.

Fic Doe: Lips print a tissue that corrects the weather, lulled by the weight of public opinion. My downfall was a trampoline catastrophe.

Old Wmn: Nise pipple.

Old Man: A hero needs sleep. Tollbooth optimism—

Liguras: He thinks he's something on a stick.

Old Man: —shouldn't happen to a berg.

Old Wmn: Any leisure we had, we spent knitting khaki mufflers.

(*Exit Old Couple*)

Liguras: His better half better have her head examined.

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe wondered what class he was. I suppose it's just me. But I was inoculated against island fever. I feel eyes dancing on my face.

Liguras: You are protected by the enormity of your stupidity.

(*Enter Bunker*)

Liguras: Park your back hoe.

Bunker: Watch my smoke.

Fic Doe: Er, mister nice guy becomes nasty wise guy.

Bunker: Scared money always loses. And I'm not feeling very particular.
The loose surface of the earth is soil. Give me someplace to sleep.

Liguras: Why bother? You have been somewhere before.

Bunker: I flap terribly. Dip your brights or pine away.

Liguras: I've got a clean roster.

Bunker: Then prevent foreign object damage. Embalmed beef is not a regularity favorite.

Liguras: There is a vacancy in the dumbwaiter.

Bunker: Let the student magnet have it. My practice is the roof. Meteors crowd the night the other side of the clouds.

Liguras: Take a dream.

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe turned his back on two fronts. I've got to be myself somehow. I'm here to think on my feet. Speech is a matter of the mouth making gestures.

Bunker: Trouble seeing double? Close one eye.

Liguras: A case of panache.
(*Enter Old Couple*)

Old Wmn: Every picture is sick.

Old Man: The deepest navy in the west.

Liguras: Get a load of those shots.

Old Wmn: It's different when you read it in the paper.

Old Man: Every American expects an interview.

Bunker: There ought to be a license. A foot stands for a footprint. So many people still say so. It is clear what you do. It sounds like it. Time was weather got better. Now drivers push cars. Their word is enough.

Old Man: Welcome to the nineteenth century.

Bunker: When I crashed the legion I ditched the past.

Old Wmn: It's all smoked meat now.

Scene 3

(*Next morning*)

Fic Doe: (*Rifling Bunker's suitcase*) Unguarded moments put logic in

mothballs. I should have been a mechanical drawer. Light waves keep us in line. You lost the vacuum attachment.

Liguras: The rush of air it creates causes blindness. Grammar is pushing cells around, but the tables take time to turn. We're out of eradicator.

Fic Doe: Wads of detail. I have a small business of my own, and I like being someone who's who.

Liguras: Don't strain your personality. (*To Old Couple*) Meet the new boss.

Old Man: There's something fishy in this world.

Old Wmn: Being poor is sanitary.

Fic Doe: Hocus pocus.

Bunker: (*Entering*) The new order still preens?

Old Wmn: (*Reminiscing*) We'd eat powders out of envelopes.

Bunker: That's wonderful stuff you have on. I depend on my friends to recognize me. Has anybody seen my grip?

Old Wmn: The picture looks better when you're here.

Fic Doe: I'm at a loss to say.

Liguras: Search me.

Bunker: Someone's playing with live rounds.

Fic Doe: I don't know the first thing about specifications.

Liguras: Us sidewalk superintendents mind our business. I can't afford to wind up pushing buttons.

Fic Doe: The quadratic formula escapes me too.

Old Man: At my age the dog has its own car.

Bunker: I'm going to count to one. At that point the luggage reappears. . . . One.

Old Wmn: (*Finding case*) Inanimate objects survive upheavals.

Bunker: (*To Old Couple*) Grab a bite, both of you. I hold the central nervous system in respect. Everything else is strut. Hmmm. Idle hands have filtered my belongings. I'll thank their owner to put em up.

Liguras: Keep your lid on.

Bunker: Let's take a look at the goldfish. (*Exit with Liguras*)

Fic Doe: Eyes choose what to see. Time for a plunge. Don't get fat. (*Exit*)

Old Wmn: What do you expect?

Old Man: A moment's respite. What we have in our hands is already enough.

Old Wmn: Yes, but we must avoid anything that tends to destroy the illusion of nature. No editor can be trusted not to spoil a diary. Natives nowadays choose what they drop for the anthropologist close at their heels.

Old Man: What is science but the absence of prejudice backed by the prescience of money? When it rains all houses seem to slant, but we are no closer to detecting despondency in a test tube.

Old Wmn: All the same, the commotion of imbeciles gives a jukebox organization to the experiment, without which eggs are considerably too scrambled. I shouldn't be surprised at a breakthrough before long.

Old Man: We can derive a maximum of attention from our cover, while mouth parts mime the content of speech. (*Hears steps approach*) Keep the aspidistra flying.

Fic Doe: (*Enters*) Events adopt a breakneck air. The Lone Ranger has justice by the throat. My pension is around the next corner. (*Fondling stolen rabbit's foot*)

Old Wmn: Mounting delusion insulates the panic button.

Fic Doe: Rubberneckers have a funny way of getting snapped. (*Hides rabbit's foot among Liguras's belongings*)

Old Man: Age enjoys the privilege of fuzzy likeness. Oh!

Bunker: (*Entering with Liguras*) The principal damage was to his other shirt—a tissue of alibis that wouldn't hold a sneeze. Let me see your register (*Finds rabbit's foot*) This is my lucky foot. Say good-bye to yourself. You're going to be a changed man. (*Takes Liguras off*)

Fic Doe: Don't fall off the roof! Modern comfort needs a good shellacking. You two scare off somewhere. I'm going to buy myself something deluxe. Chin, chin! The folk mind converts the neutral to the negative. (*Exit*)

Old Man: (*Sotto voce*) We can anticipate an ugly document.
(*Exit with Old Woman*)

Scene 4

(*Enter Karp and Nyla, dog tired*)

Karp: I'm dead, but I just won't lie still.

Nyla: You don't have to get rigid about it. Shoe repairs as usual.

Karp: Your conic sections don't lack verve. Front! (*Dinging desk bell*)

Fic Doe: (*Entering in Bunker's suit, mouthing an extravagant confection*)
Don't have a hissyfit.

Karp: Do you know how to train fleas?

Fic Doe: I just take my work to lunch and do my job.

Karp: What did the dumbwaiter say to the silent butler?

Fic Doe: Er, I forget.

Karp: Puns are the antidote to memory. Where's Bunker.

Fic Doe: Why he's up—say, who wants to know?

Nyla: We're in business!

Karp: We're in the same business.

(*Enter Old Couple*)

Old Man: You must always grind forward.

Old Wmn: A neat hand leads to the top.

Nyla: Do you just talk that way, or does it take theories?

Fic Doe: They're on another channel. How about a nice room with a view?
The night scene of diced firmament?

Karp: You miss my drift. Just point us in the right direction. We don't want to come between you and your appetite.

Fic Doe: (*Hand out*) I do my calling with a card. Continuity demands factory cash.

Karp: What you're hearing is the sound of a fifty-cent piece sitting on the counter.

Fic Doe: In a matter of syllables, a life of iniquity caught up with the former management. (*Reads from blotter*) "The subject was subdued and assumed the position."

Karp: Spell it out.

Fic Doe: The porter had sticky fingers. Bunker knows how to take care of help. He's giving a music lesson.

Nyla: That sounds like a reasonable generalization, of the sort of thing that tends to suggest the truth, but isn't.

(Enter Bunker with Liguras bound and gagged)

Bunker: In a few years the asylum will put you up for adoption and—(seeing Karp and Nyla)—the electric lights are back in their sockets.

Karp: What kind of vacation is this?

Bunker: The great value in unemployment is time.

Nyla: Stop giving us the thermometer. You can't tell a mirage from a snake in the grass. Who put your clothes in circulation? The flea trainer with the push button mind. In your eyes shampoo is a rug treatment. He was dealing from the floor. I'd like to break into pictures too, but it was scholars who thought up aliases in the first place. Hands have as much personality as the face.

Old Man & Old Wmn: That's not our information.

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe tried to feel way out of spot. Dots polkaed before his eyes.

Bunker: There's always somebody else in the woods. (Releases Liguras)

Fic Doe: The sky got full of zeros. He tried jumping through smoke rings.

Liguras: I have you to thank for the underwater comedy, and you for the skin of my teeth.

Nyla: Flowers cover everything. Lifesaving is temporary at best.

Bunker: Things in their places make the world turn. (To Fictitious Doe) You surrendered to economic compulsion. Look forward to an endless belt.

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe looked at his hands. They looked back to him like lizards.

Old Man: Permanent recall.

Karp: There's no escaping the ridiculous. But it's curtain time, my friends. Stage developments outweigh these numerical pastimes.

Bunker: My leisure moments have just begun.

Nyla: Don't you think you're skating a little close to the pharmacy?

Bunker: Being poor is sanitary. Meet me in the wings. (Exit)

Liguras: What's behind all that?

Karp: A more detailed treatise on the same subject.

Old Wmn: What is his field of endeavor?

Karp: Catching bullets with his teeth.

Old Man: The thought agitates my viscera.

Liguras: Some honeymoon.

Nyla: What makes men see worlds in us?

Fic Doe: Fictitious Doe began to focus on private planes.

Scene 5

(Backstage at a theater)

Karp: (First sober, then giddy) Being a spectator is the finest profession in the world. I'd like to show you my life, a headlong contraption of causeways over miasma, cornered by the weight of destination. Everyone has his reasons. I've never taken kindly to the hard work of a daydream; nature beat me to it. The high calling of the microbe hunter fell on deaf ears. You don't find logic in character. Approximating experience is a kind of model making, and vice versa. The genuine article has the nearness of blood and the play of extension cords. I may harbor qualms, but wide loads outnumber points of interest, and the Junior League takes a back seat to storyboard romance any day.

Bunker: (Entering) You've got quite an opinion of your drawing power.

Karp: The public wants a private moment. It's time we believed our own forecasts.

Bunker: (Sizing up) My horseback guess is nothing material happened. If the sky recedes, get some sleep. Electricity delivers my needs.

Karp: We live by accidents of terrain.

Bunker: Every swamptrotter has an alibi. We're here to shoot, not write our memoirs.

Karp: I'm allergic to caricature. Silly putty won't get you past jagged edges.

Bunker: Powder your nose.

Nyla: (Entering) I'll take it under advisement. (To Karp) You ought to prohibit him from spreading gloom.

Bunker: Any fool can put his pants on better than the wisest man can do it for him.

Karp: Clothing disguises the appearance of skin.

Nyla: (To Bunker) Do you ever meet with foul play?

Bunker: An engine attracts a man to what is accurately called crime. The unit of currency is fear.

Nyla: Can we depend on the switch?

Karp: Things do stage periodic rebellions.

Bunker: Life is a use of man in this spot.

Nyla: Undertones belie your optimism.

Bunker: Events are never absolute. Their results depend entirely on the individual.

Karp: I can't live in a world without coincidence. Forever affable is no match for this company. I need a close-up of scenery. *(Exit)*

Nyla: What kind of gas is that? It smells like furniture remover.

Bunker: Hat sauce. You're looking at a scorched man, trying to redeem his dismay—for hypnotic civility.

Nyla: No one's had their teeth pulled out. Rid yourself of guilt by knowing what's right.

Bunker: Everything is addition and subtraction. The rest is conversation.

Nyla: It should sound more like understatement when you don't know the whole story.

Bunker: History doesn't make mistakes.

Nyla: *(Carefully)* It ate a lot of sleep.

Bunker: . . . You've observed too much silence.

Nyla: That black little thing's my nature embedding kit.

Bunker: We live in bags all right. Otherhood supplies a birthday suit.

Nyla: Sleeping is not a way of life.

Bunker: The right word still seems like the solution to any problem. Celebrities have always been drunk.

Nyla: That would be a hell of an idea, after we talked it out. But playing by ear is a pain in the neck.

Bunker: Keep it up and you're out of business. Every time you pull it out of the fire there's less to pull. Drawing longevity pay is very complicated.

Nyla: Money's always wired to gratitude. Some don't make themselves a chive.

Karp: *(Entering)* How much is that in horsepowder? Why haven't you two got a title?

Bunker: The public ears are very flexible.

Nyla: We want to lead our own lives.

Karp: Being born isn't everything. Take turns driving. Ride with the pun. You're better off inside.

Bunker: I like the futility of effort.

Nyla: I never depend on mechanisms for happiness.

Karp: Long last looks must end.

Bunker: Let's go on in amongst'em. *(Exit with Karp)*

(Suspense-filled minutes for Nyla. Touches Bunker's street-clothes. Sees past. Searches future . . . A loud shot. Animal eyes. More minutes.)

Bunker: *(Enters, ashen; grins, bullet in teeth; spits it out. Nyla breathes.)* The captain's trajectory was flatter than I calculated.

Nyla: There's a lot of oxygen in here.

Bunker: I'm a little unclear of my movements tonight.

Nyla: You had a call from the dark side?

Bunker: The skinny hand was on me. Cobwebs steam off my shoulders.

Nyla: Material fullness naturally flares. Fame peels away each reenactment. A note should be added for the beautiful drivers.

Bunker: We work for years before millions and nobody knows who we are. Each town has its own inserts. When your whole life is depending on a bolt, you have a different respect for what you do. I get tired when I see normal people. You're killing yourself so they can say there's more where that came from. I don't have a death wish. I'm too far gone. On a day off my nerve's a wreck.

Karp: *(Entering with bankroll)* You've got hell's own drag with the life extension bureau.

Bunker: I wouldn't be in my shoes without steps in that direction.

Karp: That equalizer is a dapper apparatus.

Bunker: I'm not altogether stupid. But a change of temperature came over me. Machines are only interesting in being invented. Specific vocabulary makes philosophy handsome. It runs through nope endlessly.

Karp: *(Incredulous)* You, a partition specialist! Cue fate music.

Nyla: You have a right to an ideal, gaffed with large beans or not.

Karp: The voice of several waters.

Nyla: (To Bunker) Don't lament your education. We binomials are so partial to things. Today's automatic will be tomorrow's manual. Periodic law rhymes your ingredients, but hesitation marks outfit a fugitive for still life. Only novels end when they feel like it.

Karp: Watch those curves.

Bunker: (To Karp) Spend time getting ready to be dead and your reputation for aplomb is a cheap separation. You are rich in umbrellas. The gods especially dislike the smell of humans. Take it from one old creature. Any further concern you may have about yourself is luxury.

Under the Midwest

Under the Midwest was produced by Poets Theater at Studio Eremos, San Francisco, in November 1982. It was directed and designed by Eileen Corder, with lights by Teresa Montgomery and Jean Day. The cast:

<i>Clint Rex</i>	Philip Silverstein
<i>Maiden Shirley</i>	Johanna Jordahl
<i>Brenda</i>	Rachel Cooper
<i>Senor Wilson</i>	Paul H. Camardo
<i>William Sample</i>	Patricia Brennecke
<i>Stock</i>	Alan Bernheimer
<i>Beanie</i>	Nick Robinson
<i>Peignoir</i>	Alison Brewer
<i>Pretty Girl</i>	Patricia Brennecke



The scene: the sewer. A raft carrying Clint Rex and Maiden Shirley glides onto stage. Clint is equipped with camera and binoculars, Shirley a book. Boxes of personal belongings cover raft.

Radio: (Offstage) Hang your head over, hear the wind blow,
Down in the valley, the valley so low.
The valley so low, dear, the valley so low,
Hang your head over, hear the wind blow.

Clint: The sky is true blue. The good grass a green. Rocks. They're not laughing.

Radio: (Offstage) Roses love sunshine, violets love dew,
Angels in heaven know I love you.

Shirley: OOOOOOOOOOH! I dropped that little heavy and damaging thing.

Clint: I only mouth what comes easy.

Shirley: This is not a party boat. The water's got me looking rusty. I can see myself crawling on all sixes.

Clint: Telling folk tales the hard way made me see my class backwards. Thus the whimper.

Shirley: Do I remember falling down?

Clint: Today I begin the test of a newfound desire emblazoned with the glorious hope for a more prosperous economic foothold.

Shirley: I put his hand in the refrigerator.

Clint: Lost in a sewer should be sexy at our age.

Shirley: Fifty years form WOW.

Clint: Dazzle-dazzle. I can still sing and set your heart on musketoons.
Washing machine floats across stage.

Shirley: I left my heart in the apartment. A new way to see double . . .
OHMYGODIT'SAWASHINGMACHINE!

Clint: Suck it in! I've settled the future at a steady zero.

Shirley: My zero. When it's morning a well-dressed slave comes to me:
"If you ask me permission I'll ask you permission."

Clint: This is all I've dreamt about. New cities right here under the midwest.

Shirley: You have a voice in Washington on tape.

Clint: I will make one more discovery!

Shirley: Explorers have recorded their distinction. It's a fact. A gloomy movie and the big thwart.

Shirley reads aloud from book.

Shirley: Cadillac revved big old cop.

Skiff: (Offstage) EEEEEEEYAH!

Shirley: Out of it garage pulled smashed and caved in.

Hack: (Offstage) You're a poor hype for the bright side of crime.

Skiff: (Offstage) Well, that was the first time I saw a match.

Shirley: Then went back in back and . . .

Daub: (Offstage) Where'd Dan Go.

Shirley: The door the cop the car the key.

Skiff: (Offstage) Grab it!

Shirley: Didn't have it with his hands.

Hack: (Offstage) Shut up and tell me what they paid.

Shirley: So jammed the cop.

Daub: (Offstage) Where'd Dan Go.

Shirley: Grabbed as roof broke.

Skiff: (Offstage) We're getting out!

Shirley: I went in to get through.

Daub: (Offstage) Did Where'd Dan Go lose?

Shirley: And he and window was got and just.

Clint: Remember when I was a jackass?

Shirley: Your lip is bleeding.

Clint: Look. The angles have got me extremely excited. I want to like it. Set the pace. Possess foreign currency and know-how.

Shirley: ESL part of a company called TRW.

Stratolounger floats across stage.

Clint: By all means!

Shirley: CATCHTHATSTRATOLOUNGER!

Clint: Just don't do it. Free for the taking means you've got somewhere free to take it. Take a pill.

Piano floats onto stage.

Shirley: Listen honey. Live in garbage. Live for garbage. What else? ASPINETPIANO!

Clint: Math and the toilet both rid the world of yourself.

Piano rams raft again and again.

Shirley: AAAAAAAA! I'm poopood on. Get it off. Hurry up. I'm so embarrassed. I might die. When my suspicions are aroused I ordinarily sniff. Oh lord! My cyclopaedia of perfumery! Putrid, putrid, putrid. The part of god I hate.

Clint falls off raft. Shirley, raft, and piano exit.

Clint: We're heading for a falls! The current evicts us/our event. We lost the contest. The trip costs. We're moving and it's not to raisin country. Look. It's not callous to say: "Get me out of here." I can't take a mistaken scene.

As Clint tries to stay afloat, the scene changes to a subterranean tourist trap, abandoned. Brenda and Senor Wilson enter studying racing form.

Clint: Damn, if it isn't a park ranger. Good badge. Good badge. I know some distinguished dirt. I can sleep on the ground if it's above ground. Looky here. You're a good guy. How else could you live with animals.

Brenda: He may need some time to sit around.

Wilson: I have some beautifully displayed.

Clint: Dealers in parlor game. Here's an old address. Ta-ta. I don't want to lose my first mate.

Wilson: But his boat is ship good-bye.

Clint: Maiden Shirley! Live up to your shirt.

Wilson: I won it. I bet he has one just the same.

Clint: I do have one. Just the same. Nothing is meant by it. s.o.s. . . .

Wilson: Do you take me for a dollar? Mecca. For instance. Is it here or here? I provide no relief. But I'll watch.

Brenda sits and types.

Brenda: Hi. How are you. You're tired and would like to kill somebody.

Brenda hands Clint a pill.

Brenda: Here. Chew this up. Am I right? The paperwork reduction act says I must tell you why I am collecting this information, how I will use it and whether you have to give it to me at all. I ask for the informing to carry out . . .

Wilson: Hold Your Head Up High!

Brenda: I need it to insure . . .

Wilson: Hold Your Head Up High!

Brenda: You are required to give me this information.

Clint gives Brenda his wallet.

Wilson: Hold Your Head Up High! Work all day and dinnertime you get banana pie.

Brenda: By now your Shirley is making that beach into something even more comfortable. How silly you'll feel when you're drinking.

Brenda takes money from Clint's wallet.

Brenda: Now remember: This is for the horses. This is for the sheep. This is for the students. They look exactly alike.

Brenda pushes Clint. He faints from drug. Enter William Sample, Stock and Beanie. Three conversations ensue.

William: (*Affected, reading from script*) We're out of that stuff.

Stock: See?

Brenda: They all went straight. None of them went whirling.

William: (*Affected, reading from script*) Baxter's ready. The switch is ready.

Stock: Feel it?

Wilson: William Sample, my living stunt.

Brenda: Let's exchange good looks.

Beanie: It fits pretty tight. I could go to sleep anytime.

William: Do you want me to make a prediction?

Brenda: For my uncle.

Wilson: It's so refreshing to see him acting at home.

Stock: Scientific experience. Slam! Slam! Slam! Slam!

Beanie: Do you not want me to make beans for dinner?

William: Beat it back to the steaks!

Beanie: Steaks is an area, Sir . . .

Stock: (*Joins in with Beanie*) . . . briefly after the six PM . . .

William: Sell Boise Beach. Sell it!

Wilson: Melting pot disaster.

Clint: Well, lookit the hat!

Stock & Beanie: Look at that hat.

Clint: Hey, I know you!

Stock & Beanie: I know you.

Clint: What's new from the border, stranger?

Stock & Beanie: What's the news, Pretty Boy?

William: They're all caught under my tires thinking about a mom and pop variety show.

Brenda: They just get a kick out of your dying smile.

William: Give 'em a cause *they'll* die for.

Wilson: Dead people don't pay for anything. Hold your tongue under a medicine chest. I need an appearance tonight. That man needs a pan frying.

William pulls a gun on Clint.

William: Freeze—sucker!

Clint: Guerrilla theater is so exciting. Guns—grenades—action. However. Tickets—prizefight—my seat—gotta go.

Stock, Beanie and Clint exit.

William: Put a gun in my hand and people applaud. I'm sick of playing a public dream they turn on and off. Almighty emotions pull them off to sleep. I'm left with a little time on my hands and a bullet hole in my shirt. You thought fame up, parked their olives in some fancy christian time. I'm ready to cry for my life. Weariness and dissatisfaction ruined that sweet ballad you knew I knew it.

Wilson: It's youth you're sick of, sticking your neck out and eating the fire day after day, take after take . . . listen to me! When we started out you had the face and I had the sucking smile. Now we're better off I can let you . . .

Wilson hands William a wad of dough.

Wilson: How'd you find Montana?

William: It was forty degrees. I had to go without a shirt.

Wilson: I'll drop a hint. We can't let our Big Boy go cold. Coming up in three days . . .

William: It's all too dry out there but I want the car. Gas to crack the windows . . . yeeeeet . . . yeeeeet . . . yeeeeet . . . yeeeeet . . .

Wilson: Wil—lie. Willie. WILLIE!

Clint enters on all fours, Stock and Beanie riding shotgun.

William: I've got to get out of here while my personality can still die.

Wilson: But I . . .

William: Sign him up. He'll watch himself.

William exits.

Clint: Dig your own grave.

Beanie: They've found new paths to paths to cures to cures.

Wilson: Tell that little earwig to comere.

Brenda: This way Sisypus.

Clint: I always thought that behind bars was more old-fashioned.

Stock & Beanie: We know the way out.

Brenda: You two leave immediately.

Stock: But Madam . . .

Beanie: Madam, the bylaws are printed all over us.

Wilson: I can see your hand.

Stock & Beanie: Sir, we're on duty!

Brenda: Oral contracts disappear with the breath.

Beanie: It's stinking, Sir.

Stock: Sir, why spoil a full auditorium to pump one guy in the wings.

Brenda: Under the table means . . .

Wilson: OK! But don't talk to him.

Wilson and Brenda exit.

Stock & Beanie: Don't talk to him!

Clint: Let's get out of here.

Stock: Why go out there if he's not in here?

Beanie: The sting of freedom can be properly salved indoors.

Stock: The frontus and backus lobes are the usual targets.

Beanie shoots Clint full of drugs from behind.

Clint: OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOW!

Beanie: Safety in numbness.

Clint: I can't cash this.

Stock: Is your name Mac, Joe or dog?

Beanie picks Clint's pocket.

Clint: Clint Rex.

Beanie: A real highflyer.

Stock searches Clint's calf for money.

Beanie: Who's a dog if god's a cat?

Stock: A little game we picked up in India.

Clint hiccups violently.

Stock: Careful.

Beanie: This could drive you crazy.

Beanie lifts camera and binoculars off Clint and onto Stock.

Clint: If we weren't in need we wouldn't need to exit.

Stock: The flying kid explodes.

Beanie: Yeah. Let's play guardrails.

Stock: High water swerve into retained object.

Beanie: Score is 15. You'd be better off . . .

Stock: Jackhammer wrestling.

Beanie: Block with the teeth. Block with the teeth.

Stock: We've adopted too much hobby.

Beanie: Everyman a crewman.

Clint: Can't I be taken back?!

Stock: Relax.

Stock knocks Clint cold.

Beanie: Everything here is controlled.

Stock: Except us.

Stock & Beanie search Clint for valuables. Beanie finds the big cash.

Beanie: Vacation time!

Stock: Pack up the bucks.

Beanie: Musical oranges!

Stock: You may not write on the cliffs.

Beanie: Mix styles and go aircraft carrier!

Stock: Bombay, Uruguay, Peru today.

Beanie: And then Lake Strassburg!

Stock: Stock Offenbach.

Beanie: Beanie Puccini.

Clint: Ge—ge—ge

Beanie: He's stuck.

Stock: He's obviously out of text. Dissipation makes me sick.

Beanie: Hoot man, it's no problem, imitation life.

Stock: Steal or be stolen!

Beanie & Stock draw a hand of cards.

Beanie: When

Stock: He

Beanie: Comes

Stock: Back

Beanie: You

Stock: Have

Beanie: Shit

Stock: To

Stock & Beanie: Pay.

Stock and Beanie exit.

Clint: Wake up. Calm down. Clint. Clint's all alone. It's nothing new. I went out the door. That's all I did. I despised that door. Well, that's not all I did. I should have torn it off its frame and thrown it . . . boring bed and bottles . . . my bed! I wanted the outside to fix me but it's broken. Here I am in some scheme that yesterday was a night out at the movies. I'm no help here. I need help! No! I need a door. That door I . . . I have to cry sometime.

Clint sees binoculars, picks them up. Searches for a way out.

Clint: A window! A . . . window. Now I stand to gain a point and estimate my exuent. House and a street. Simplicity to no end. Nothing in neon or with a big name on it? But I recognize that sloppy pavement and need to feel just tired. Partygoers!

Clint jots help-note. Wilson, Stock and Beanie enter.

Wilson: Grab him! The only ones who use that hole are the paid rats. When people look at my house they don't need to imagine conversations.

Stock and Beanie smother Clint. Wilson motions the two offstage. Blackout.

Peignoir and Pretty Girl appear in brightly colored costumes. Peignoir is eight feet tall.

Peignoir: The secret word is Hungary. This watch has stopped. I'm hungry.

Pretty Girl: How can you eat knowing your fate?

Peignoir: Stop now? Head back in the swarm? I might actually come face to point.

Pretty Girl: Wheels on all things. Ride push/pull. Filled up and happy.

Peignoir: A vacuum permits no noise. Still, I listen, look pitiable in blue cardigan bandage. Heat escapes colorless in the sun.

Pretty Girl: I could tan 24 hours a day. Tomato skin cool and alluring. My neck spouting dew like divinity.

Peignoir: Horizon made of knife. Creased gray lottery stubs eclipse my heart. I can't see it, apply postage.

Pretty Girl: Dashing boys and girls on made-up pond. Fish swimming, fishing.

Peignoir: Nothing written over the villain's picture. His mouth is open. A spoon must be behind us.

Pretty Girl: Sugar pinwheels and silver polkas forever pass smoothly over that hill. Noontimes are easily strung together.

Peignoir: With strings attached an endless number of puppets can be made to march in one direction. Excite the viewers with music and their heads seem to sway naturally.

Pretty Girl: Palms are customary, also decanters. White silhouetted horses, too. One tent is completely filled with hors d'oeuvres.

Peignoir: Brain persuasion in one camp/dutiful army in another. Clash, clash. A playgame to outsiders ten billion paces away.

Pretty Girl: Government a pea in every stomach. Worry? It's in my stomach.

Peignoir: Costly steel smashes berserk particles improving only its own potential. Paper stands divert attention from head-on mistakes.

Pretty Girl: I'm all eyes now. I have a few beautiful rings I don't . . . I don't need. They're yours for a moment.

Peignoir: It's passing so fast . . .

Pretty Girl: Twinkle.

Peignoir: My ideas are thought spoiled.

Pretty Girl: Twinkle.

Peignoir: Toxic.

Pretty Girl: Here.

Peignoir: My fate is I may not . . . so, yes.

Peignoir takes rings from Pretty Girl.

Pretty Girl: I'm so preoccupied with the scenery. You must repeat everything.

Peignoir: It's no work at all. I dance around with glasses on my head and sing: This percent and this percent. At three I jump into a barrel. My boss was taught mean look.

Pretty Girl: Mine has "Viva la Sinatra" printed all over her underpants. And instead of vocabulary she uses an accent. Oh the stories she's translated about me. New Dehli—9 million. The living—they know. The dead—not anything. She couldn't kill a joke.

Peignoir: I smell a jackknifed truck. Speak quickly and maybe they'll think we're a mob organizing.

Pretty Girl: I'm not at work but I know my job.

Peignoir: You're as innocent as your blouse with chocolate syrup running down it.

Pretty Girl: I was taught to think about my neighbor when I eat.

Peignoir: Or the baby backstage whose role is about to be cut. Whooooooooooooooooo?

Pretty Girl: Whooooooooooooooooo?

Peignoir: Look! That mud has a guy stuck in it.

Pretty Girl: We need some swirling lights.

Peignoir: Oh please. My stomach's full of hardware.

Pretty Girl: But I . . .

Peignoir: I take a rope to a belief and tell it straight to its throat.

Pretty Girl: This intermission is supposed to be as fake as the show.

Peignoir: Isn't it? †

Pretty Girl: Lonely?

Blackout.

Stock and Beanie enter.

Stock & Beanie: Waa, waa, baby go waa, waa, waa, baby go waa . . .

Beanie: I drop this hot iron into your bed of tulips.

Stock: I cut the wire that makes this iron hot that you drop.

Beanie: I buy an old wood stove on a big wooded estate.

Stock: I promise the Dutch a job.

Beanie: I drill for Homo Economicus.

Stock: I take the job myself.

Beanie: I have a fit outdoors in August.

Stock: I screw in too many colored bulbs.

Beanie: I feel around for light.

Stock: I choke on Java.

Beanie: Years resemble notches.

Stock: On the poison table sits Teresa.

Beanie: No! The comtesse.

Stock: I know he said Teresa.

Beanie: There were no Teresas in it.

Stock: That was my mother—Teresa!

Beanie: Your mom! Oh dern (stripey goatee, ha, ha . . .) How about the Rastignac fellow?

Stock: Stop it! It's ruined. And you kicked me in the head back there when we were leaving.

Beanie: Just give me my fruit salad and I'll clear out.

Stock: Going to Kisseem and Cashem?

Beanie: I'm going to conga if I have to.

Stock: But Beanie, we're . . .

Beanie: I'll be easier to tame. Lone cat. Ingenue. Smother me with fluff. Splash splash splash goes the hero boy.

Stock: Sit down and play the game.

Beanie: Let's sit in the shade.

Stock: No I don't like the shade.

Beanie: I don't like the sun.

Stock: Sit with mommy!

Beanie: No! I'm going to sit right here. Where do you like to live? Where do you most want to live?

Stock: California, uh, uh . . .

Beanie: I want to live in Massachusetts. That's just where I want to live.

Stock: This year or next year?

Beanie: And sometimes they'd say: "More years."

Stock: I used to wish I could see them when they came around again.

Beanie notices Clint's body.

Beanie: Rubber seven!

Stock: Don't start burning.

Beanie: Nobody told that he-mammal it's all over.

Stock: Maybe he's a was. If you don't know the answer then it's cancer.

Beanie: Kokomo has beautiful homes and buildings, schools and churches and excellent streets and parks.

Stock: Why not. Think he'll come to for a sob?

Beanie: I don't think nothing.

Stock: Aw. Poochie—poochie.

Beanie: I've got an information bite that won't itch.

Stock: Have you tried?

Beanie: I'm handcuffed to a happy life.

Stock: Real life drama just stops when it bombs. Dark blue—you lose. And the cinema picks up a few bums.

Beanie gestures limply.

Stock: Let's just mill around and maybe we'll find something the size of your wallet.

Stock and Beanie exit.

Clint: Where am I? I already said that. Normally in the morning. Damn! That nearly wiped ambition right off my ass. Squeeze highflyer. Carry spare hate in hip pocket. Take a laugh behind those old long dirty icicles. Yes: piss on go piss on go piss. Don't think she yelled: "He's dead." I won't go down and make sure. My basic delight—delayed hell. I'm coming out of this angled. I'm coming back to no girl. No money is a less entertaining tragedy. I'm losing my mind trying to explain the swag of this household-ha-ha-ha . . .

Wilson and Brenda enter. Clint quickly imitates South Pacific fetish standing in rear of stage.

Wilson: Henley?

Brenda: Donkey swap.

Wilson: McIntosh?

Brenda: Immigrant orchestra number.

Wilson: Pietroni?

Brenda: Look-a-like bet.

Wilson: Meyer?

Brenda: Deed scene.

Wilson: Lautenslager?

Brenda: When the film broke.

Wilson: Broke. So they all slipped out to more pressing investments.

Brenda sits and intermittently types.

Brenda: Well . . . I. What? Certainly! Who could outstay Lautenslager? He sits around till the facts flush themselves down the toilet. Then he's off with our other bosomy pals to change plans/relocate million and only. Yeah. All out for Mohair Hill. Dig in, open up a sore and charge the patients for the cure that kills. And us thinking we're safe, inside the wall of Gibraltar. I looked down and saw these things you call stilts dissolving. Excuse me. I explode. Whop! Worklights, Brenda. Remember how you look? Sweet-heart roses end up in the trash. I sit here in the dark, turn myself into a getaway car. The tunnel's endless. Rat! Rat! For no future at all. Do what you want, Brenda, I got a gun.

Brenda pulls gun from her garter.

Brenda: Pistol-whip every tooled leather seat. Why not . . . Ah! Old Man Rourke, you stayed a little too long, Sir. Ready to face it? And him all white like a sick poodle wandered off. "I'm honestly rich! You can't splatter me on the Times. I own it just to keep myself out of it." Watch out Rourke. Here goes your brand new face. Hey! Where'd he go? He's ten feet and rising, his white fangs coming out like a kid demanding supervised independence. Bang-bang! But he got away. And I'm too dumb to care. I'm done. I'll get away too, Senor. A woman isn't missed when she's unemployed.

Wilson: Brenda! The film's a flop but your name isn't on it.

Wilson snatches gun from Brenda.

Wilson: Neither is mine. Let the director pay the damages. In a couple of years the courts won't want to look for funds to look for us. We might be on Mars next. How old are you?

Brenda: 35.

Wilson: Oh really? I'm forty but I look much younger. I don't believe in

flattering the special people in my life, but you're headed for the stairs. By the time you reach my place we'll be sitting pretty on a big pudding with a hundred little dippers doing the work. That's a butte! Do you have any dental . . . any physical matters that need attention?

Brenda: I have two wooden nickels.

Wilson: Midgets and nidgets require little to no cash for storage. Put best item outside. It's only a hook. The real thing exists in positive thinking. Anything in a cage is great. Would you like a pet? A capuchin jockey leading stiff whippet to purse. But dogs are unpredictable when they start taking drugs. What school are you from?

Brenda: Backwater State.

Wilson: Funny, I didn't see you there. My classes were all pre-dawn. Limp-mode. We pinned the tale on the reporters. There's something you can't remember. Arrest me!

Brenda: With what?

Wilson: There are outfits and jewelry in a room that go with your position. It's just been reopened or I would have mentioned it before. What's your size?

Brenda: 20,000.

Wilson: So small? Coffee can't be that thin. You should relax. There's still some time to kill time. There's a fly on me!

Brenda: I have to go.

Wilson: Where to? Outer Antarctica!

Brenda: My check please.

Wilson: Your check! Honey, your check like mine waves down in the middle of nowhere. You either enjoy your scrip here or starve to death getting back.

Brenda: I heard you say my home was just outside.

Wilson: Brenda! Brenda doesn't see the luck I'm bringing her. I've got all the hard work done and hidden away. I even thought to add your name, all fancy like you do it. I'm so excited I could murder Willie-boy myself, but since you've already hired two juice lovers I'll let them flash the sign. You see—we have his last film and a right to celebrate. Tonight! If I were you I wouldn't move. After you.

Wilson and Brenda exit.

Clint: I love to eavesdrop, get a tip on a cheap chop. But their meat counter is lit by friction. I'd better donate my ears before they make a sloppy cut here. What a party! My Idahodian idol is being served up. Me? I'm being called up for some ridiculous militia. Where's the girls to kiss me goodbye? Fun on a boat? Cognac underground? Can I say die for someone I've seen on the screen? Nix on that. I like my blood running uphill. Where's my flotation device?

Offstage noise sends Clint back into fetish pose.

Clint: Settle down, old boy, and welcome the life of a napkin dispenser. These people are dirty but they wipe it off on each other.

Shirley: (Offstage) Clint! Clint. Clint, where are you!

Clint breaks pose, dusts clothes. Idea! he plays dead. Shirley enters with hands tied behind back.

Shirley: Clint. Clint! Finally it's all over. Oooo, I'm raw. Could you untie me? Nasty of me making you wait so long but I had to visit a little. Sweetie, untie me. Rub my nose I've got a tickle. Clint! Clint, you're not dead are you? I'll pretend you're not! No. I'll pretend you are. Thanks for the first memories I've had this year. The little blue lean-to with beetles playing shuffleboard. Play torches that really glow. Shiny pie pans arranged in swirls reminiscent of the sea. Three sidewalks drawn on the wall. A commode. Itsy-bitsy plates and cups with food painted right on them. Terribly cute benches handcarved out of the cement structure. All the very touches. I dreamt a portrait photographer was stopping by. New clothes, new goals, two lives on a tandem. It's five o'clock home movie hour. We're in Mexico and the cop is gone. Uncle Othal is way, no way behind the dancing amigo. What's he doing? Betty is aunt-age, says the moves are semaphore. O—T—H—A—L—D—R—E—A—M—S. He puts projector in reverse and: "Here Sven pull filmic mess into goofy shape. Take red nail paint draw half bottle on lens make great tropical pass out." But of course Amigo turns to Othal and the sheet turns white. Anita gets up for the third time and . . . I feel so sorry for her. She laughs with her upper lip. She wants to make a joke and somehow the movie grabs us as being over.

Clint: Hey, I'm dead.

Shirley: No you're not. When Betty, Sven and Anita caught me . . .

they're my new friends, the ones I was telling you about . . . they said: "Girl, you're dead!" I said no. See, I can wink. But everything has changed. No more third floor apartment. Eyes get winked and eyes get winked! They were sure swell.

Clint: They tie you up so swell?

Shirley: Can you get it off?

Clint: Shirley.

Shirley: Honey, I've lost all feeling.

Clint: That's the haute couture.

Shirley: Clint!

Clint unties Shirley.

Clint: While you were off fighting seasickness I was treated to home-made ballistics in the Casbah. What's tied in me are nerve fibers.

Shirley: OW!

Clint: I'm not done. Everything is on the screen except what happens. No one sees the murder weapon and it gets no credit. It's over after we pay our money. Tonight one more star blows his own head off with four guns.

Shirley: Male or female?

Clint: William Sample, the cowboy we toasted one Tuesday night.

Shirley: Willie Sample! He's in Newtown playing live at the La Rue.

Clint: Live, the last night alive. If the owners only knew they could make a killing.

Shirley: Can we go? I'll save him. My horoscope today read: If you can shake the worries bound behind your back, give your lucky star another chape.

Shirley is untied.

Clint: You got a paper out there?

Shirley: Come on. You'd think the world had run out of things to do.

Clint and Shirley exit. Blackout.

The Scene: The La Rue Dinner Theater, Newtown. Sitting under front row table Beanie installs device for Plan B. Stock stands lookout.

Beanie: The crowd! They're knocking themselves out to get in. Fanatics lead the way toting solid gold two by fours. Please! Which of my names are they screaming now?

Stock: He's holding a big sign: SCABS DRINK HENCH.

Beanie: Yuuuh! Don't the people realize there aren't unions for workers like us.

Stock: It's referring to the show here tonight. Wake up!

Beanie: What were we supposed to do? Act sorry! This is the lowest our boy would go and the highest our man would pay. Let them whine. This wingding will be a sellout. No less than the King and Queen of Nigard get passed in. Powder my ass!

Stock: But why the ritual? Crap! Reminds me of the sixties. I might as well take a pig aside and explain chile verde.

Beanie: Oh? I think it's my big chance at the history books. They love to see events all neat-like, with a story. We can hand them the script a la mode, our parts glopped on every page. The State will have to install sofas for the interviewers.

Stock: I like to open my envelope whenever I please. Is our William Sample ready?

Beanie: Yeah. I didn't have to say nothing. He was into his Okie-suit before I could turn a Mickey Finn. I just gave him a lecture on stage presence and he drank right from the bottle. Now he's rehearsing big church scene.

Stock: Like the tie? My greatuncle first wore it when he gave a speech to the Senate. He'd come over to the house with it on and throw half-dollars at us kids when we brought him scrap paper from the post office. His fascination with . . .

Peignoir and Pretty Girl enter dressed as theme waitresses in squaw costumes.

Stock: Look refined! Here comes dessert.

Peignoir: This is where he wants it!

Peignoir places reserved sign on front row table.

Pretty Girl: I heard the guy has a wife in Straw.

Stock: Here we are girls! The ones leaning up outside.

Beanie: Fondue your eyes on the silkenware.

Pretty Girl: Who are these guys?

Peignoir: Escaped vicars?

Beanie: Cigarette?

Peignoir: We shouldn't have crossed the great picket line.

Pretty Girl: Oh, I get it. Local two-bits lose stage to out-of-town has-been. It's a crying shame but my lines only include food. If I go out there, play street games, pretty soon I'll be back on the bottle spilling all my secrets. And with actors you can never tell just what their interest is.

Peignoir: Pooh! I was a good actor for forty years. Now I play an American stereotype and bring home half our income. Don't tell me you didn't dream up fancy cars that could drive through pop diseases like they were one light towns.

Stock: Say, let us in on the chick-chat.

Pretty Girl: What now?

Peignoir: I memorized many reasons for despair. Watch!

Beanie: Come on! No more of the super-duper silliness. We're serious . . . men.

Peignoir: Sir, are you a gentleman? A gentleman who would make me and my sister, my baby sister who cries nightly over her five ounce can of tuna, even the tuna, Sir, who once was proud of tuna babies just like herself, just as eager and wantin' to please . . .

Stock: Tuna line!

Peignoir: . . . wantin' to make all tuna children free from tuna-like misery, free from the sorry-charley conception so many drownin' souls eat up like it were a sugary-coated pill, a pill steeped in . . .

Beanie: Where's the pills?

Peignoir: . . . a black, black, black licorice tea consumed with daddyism . . .

Wilson: (*Offstage*) I'm right behind you, Brenda.

Stock: Mr. and Mrs. Pay Dirt! Hup! Hup!

Stock and Beanie exit.

Pretty Girl: All the parts about me I loved.

Pretty Girl and Peignoir exit. Enter Brenda, very drunk with dark glasses, followed by Wilson. Wilson sits her down at reserved table.

Wilson: Front row table—prepared (for the worst). Whatever happens, you just want another gin fizz.

Waitress enters.

Brenda: Another gin fizz!

Waitress exits.

Wilson: You'll be just fine, Brenda. And try to keep in mind the fun we had all the way to the theater.

Wilson exits. Shirley and Clint enter with beer crate and tablecloth.

Shirley: Over here, honey. I want to give the full effect.

They set their "table" opposite Wilson's. Clint wears a sarong.

Clint: Any closer and we'll be in the line of fire.

Waitress enters with gin fizz.

Shirley: Works! Do you still have that camera?

Waitress approaches Clint and Shirley.

Shirley: Ten pounds of steak meat.

Waitress exits.

Shirley: Perhaps she'll bring us a souvenir noose.

Clint: If that lady weren't falling off her seat I'd swear she was standing over my nightmare.

Shirley: Sh!

Wilson enters. Show-lights go up.

Clint: It's the bogeyman!

Shirley: Act foreign!

Clint: Bodoh Wartiwan!

Wilson: May I . . . folks, may I have your attention please. The night is running wild out west. The detours take us one more step. Give a big hoot for Willie Sample and his pardners in JUDGE TROUBLE.

Wilson sits with Brenda. Beanie and Stock enter.

Beanie: OK. Court is open. Make it quick I've taken up handball.

Stock: Hi Bill.

Beanie: Coyne! Game still on?

Stock: Soon as we get through with this one.

Beanie: How's the country?

Stock: Bill, it's a ranch. We all call it a ranch.

Beanie: Stand still! Is there something in your pants!

Stock: Heartbeat's up 55% since the unfortunate event.

Beanie: Don't tell me you and the old man finally blew up the Brent Spence Bridge!

Stock: That's right. And both insurance companies are on my tail.

Beanie: Went for two!

Stock: Quite an accident. You see, Coyne Senior was out to settle a grudge . . . and, pick up a few . . . thousand. Him and his amateur photography! Just got too close to a beautiful explosion. Now he's back at the bottom dealing used scuba masks.

Beanie: That's too bad. He was a dead look-a-like for me. Vacation time?

Stock: Hell no! I not only took over the business, I took on two more law degrees. All of this has to do with why I'm here.

Beanie: You're suing T and T and T and . . .

Stock: Whoaaaaa! First thing is I told some Harold Fickman I'd build a straight white line to his Retirement Home on the Range. I don't come through, the creditors are at his door and he sues me for everything. That's OK. I'm insured for the moon. (I really am!) But the night he gets his cash we sneak up the old dirt road and . . . kkkkkkkT!

William enters dressed in loud suit jacket, tights and renaissance hat, holding a missal.

Beanie: Bring on the prisoner . . . I mean the accused . . . I, good morning Mr. Fickman.

Wilson: Where's his pants!

Shirley: The victim! I mean, Harold Fickman!

Clint: Tepi! Tepi! Serdadu Prangko!

Stock: I thought you had him dressed!

Shirley: The show was two stink bombs up till now.

Clint: Dekaliling William Sample.

William: I am what is left. The other mother.

Clint: Keminangan.

Wilson: What's he talking about!

William: I think it was a carhorn.

Beanie: Mr. Fickman!

Shirley: More! More!

William: We looked up expecting to see another fated individual talking business.

Clint: Hiss!

William: No! The plains were making little dips and strokes in the wet concrete.

Stock: Look pardner, you're squandering government bucks.

William: Passing time with sand and rain weakened that part of our heads fashioned from news copters.

Wilson: Get him off!

Beanie: I call a private, just you and me conference, Fickman.

Brenda: (To Stock) Hi. How are you.

William: Passing time weakened our ability to react.

Shirley: They're taking him away!

Clint: Yeah. This might be his last . . . Alasyik! Alasyik!

Wilson: Who are those loudmouths!

Wilson crosses to Shirley and Clint.

Stock: Come on Willie!

William: It was our responsibility to be interested.

Brenda: (To William) I want to collect some information from your pocket.

Shirley: Let him go!

Wilson: It's time to go home folks!

William: Maybe a change of activity or an alteration . . .

Shirley: You lay one canine on me . . . !

William: . . . of style might relieve us of becoming involved.

Shirley: Clint!

Brenda: Oh! It's Sissy Puss!

William: It was Uncle Sam who finally drew a circle.

William kneels and draws a circle around his face.

Wilson: I thought I stamped you cancelled!

Clint: You hit me with the wrong color ink and I got a free ride through the tunnel of blood. But the final machine kicked me back because you left unlicked postage in the paws of pack rats.

William: My back hurts from that political idea.

William puts gun to his head.

Shirley: Harry!

Shirley runs to William and tries to wrestle gun from him.

Clint: Please watch with sorry eye aftereffect of drug torture.

Clint gives samurai scream and kicks gun from Shirley/William. Wilson clutches Brenda as a shield. Stock catches gun. Clint kicks gun from Stock and karate chops him. Beanie and Clint scuffle for gun behind backdrop. Clint gives one more scream and Beanie flies out unconscious. Clint returns to stage with gun and holds it on Wilson while helping William and Shirley to exit. He speaks with accent.

Clint: Mr. Fickman. I come very long way off, give you kiss and hug. Home on Range big, big movement in land that foreign. Great fun this stage riot. Laugh three time for comedy in aisle. Tomorrow boat like monster take you, me, girl and piece America beautiful off for pre-paid publicity hyper. Then be back full many, many story my group with dynamite want to show for modest profit. Please lead way little cowboy. Let us ride to photographicable sunset, do contract ritual. Girl-girl, you come say Hail Taxicar. Good night. Good night.

Clint, William and Shirley exit. Wilson drops Brenda who has passed out. Waitress enters, sits at Wilson's table and adds up her checks. Stock and Beanie moan.

Wilson: We're a picture of health advertisements unable to burn from wetness. We can be used as an example because we are on stage. Off it we steal cars for privacy. Our eyeballs wear lead boots to keep from bobbing. Good evening. What a coincidence you're all alive. I won't feed you the ordinary line. Let's forget your mother works for my aunt. Get it now? A lot of people are trying to get away. They come in and say: "Where is it warm? We want to go there. It's Wyoming outside." Be a little more quiet. We're stopping. Just forget what I just said.

Blackout.

A & C
an idyl in one act

C and A are in bed, asleep. C wakes up first, but not for at least 19 or 25 seconds after curtainup.

C: (Turning toward A) Did you know Schoenberg and Puccini (stretching) were in the same theater in 1925? (Yawning) Following same score?

A: (Half asleep) Play flute. Play flute.

C: No you dope, a piccolo, a piccolo!

A: I was dreaming.

C: What was your dream?

A: The exasperated sadness in the farmer's drawn face (looking up with a grin). When with his hunting dog he saw a cloud.

C: (Jumping out of bed) Good morning. Good morning.

A: Come back to bed.

C: I've gotta go cart the soldiers. The trillicate. The clinal. I've got to plant the live-forever.

A: All they can do is inflict and alleviate. Come back to bed. I've seen it all. I can't bear too much alternation. I've heard it all.

C: The old Spiegel and Echo routine? I know you. Such heaviness will halve the DuPont's name.

A: General Crudup never worried about it. (C turns on KALX) Listening to the radio will wrinkle your body. (Meditative and to himself) Burn all bridges immediately on arrival.

C: (Looking out the window) O look! The animals stray, riveted in place.

A: Forget the errands. If your work is cultural, what good are you to the culture if basically what you want to do is stick your head out the window and give a name to your eyesight. Come sift your act back down to this bed. Here's space. State service is obsolete.

C: I love it when you speak with the almond-like poise (*long pause*), but experience spills down the line like a domino and it's me.

A: Don't act so naturally. It destroys the illusion.

C: Everytime there's a rent in the veil you become voluptuous.

A: Beats nerves. Avoids too much currency. Makes warmth.

C: It's morning, Jack! In the face of phenomena that would argue other, you generate multiples. Besides, *I'm* beat.

A: Sunup. Sunset. Pour it on. Ancient cake.

C: I'll eat my own orchids thanks. Don't you try to be my man.

A: Night's flowering desert plants have torn the spines of your riding boots.

C: C'mon, A, get up! We can't afford to disappoint the horses.

A: You're no good to me if Flick-Rogers tumbled for any of it.

C: (*Smiling*) Get up, Atlas. Sleeping is for squeakers. (*Going toward the cradle*) Besides, waking technique is a child-bearing necessity (*looks into it*).

A: Ach, art's tomb outstrips conception, or up we swing in mere man's progeny (*swings one leg out of bed, starts to move the second, thinks again, returns the moved leg back*).

C: (*Singing at the cradle*)

Move and wish,
Dish and bath,
Eye's mind
On bassinet.

Winds move
On grass bow.
Calves cower
In the rain.

A: (*Singing along mockingly*)

Oh what is to be found
In the era's post bag?
Through which we'll leave
And rule tomorrow.

C: What time you show. (*C goes out and gets the mail. Still in bed, A lights a cigarette and proceeds to do some situps.*)

C: (*Returning, handing A some mail*) Beside my pen, a table napkin and a fork, obstructing a delivery.

A: Say can I see? The river flows to shore rhetorically.

Fame is just a junk mail list, putting history

Together with its ode.

(*More situps*)

I look toward invisible combustion in the air

Of future refuge. All mountains a form of mine

Leading into another, howling against

Old emptiness in its inroad ore . . .

(*Smoking*)

C: (*As though quoting, going thru mail*)

Swashbuckling sleep, attending to its voice,

Tripling the number of wet nurses,

Avoiding murder and levity like a hospital

Moving in a European forest. The opera

Of the Hague, defining the week.

A: You bandy me. Where there is gain, there

Is slavery, bewildered, animated, and fucked.

The mountebank's staple is the public's utility.

Bring your note here! Did you say Haig, or Hague?

C: You drink my whiskey. I see before me

Nothing but the leader between sinking

And baiting.

A: Brotherly love is proven on foreign soil. With a lot of e's thrown in.

For the ocean. For good measure. To prove there is a tear.

C: The aqueous vector again. You little fool.

Without completion you are lost.

A: What did you think I was talking about, you little pheasant?

C: You were making mountainous the blind mole's hill, the trip,

Burrowing away at history. (*Yawning*) V's mother's wall

Of demure paradise. You have stolen speech's credit card . . . my pet.

A: You know me, cutie. You set the corpus banqueting

On the art of poetry, which knows no demolition.

C: Yeah, it goes into its house and leaves the work outside.

You test the fact.

A: But agriculture grows

Into an art, praising seeds!

C: Silo is more

What I had in mind, genius.

A: We were all born in our mother's arms,
 And then we swarm into oblivion,
 Adding to the disappointment of Ham
 And Britain—or Adam's sham in Ceres' bosom,
 I've forgotten which story. (*Looking toward the cradle*)
 Eat bread, kid. A hot wind's in the train station.
 A libretto of wheels. And what is well loved's
 Still-born tradition, making difference
 Into error and vanity.

(*Meditative*) The luxurious accidents
 Of your conception are long forgot,
 All pumiced up in mode and operation.
 Like all hey-go-mad pact's humidior will out.

C: (*Looking into the crib through the latter part of A's speech*)
 The battery is charged with light.
 Paris and hilarity of toy horses.
 Enormously drawn, equities gathered
 And dispersed in corny futures,
 Rocking the citizens of the District of Columbia.

A: (*Fixing the covers*)
 Don't think chops change in the mark-up.
 See glass play fusion. After dinner
 Evening's dementia, shored against eloquence,
 Is nothing but senor's struggle against chronometrics.
 (*Seethingly*) I wring these days' horoscope
 Out of proven cells. I pitch my tent against the pimps.
 I despise all repetition as mind control.

C: I wonder what is really thought and what is not.
 Astor's dinner is over. I wonder, walls, (*watering the plants*)
 What price you paid to get in this joke.

A: European peace waters festering history,
 And exports it in a column to the south.
 Love thickens like arthritis. Time's flight
 Everywhere tarnishes love's gold. Man, these walls
 Are curtains.

C: Grow up, ant. Knowledge is
 The store. It's an all-night light among the twerps
 And sponges of the earth. Of abhorrent frictions
 We make an atoll. It is all we can do.

A: (*Picking up the challenge*)
 The past is a rat-like seagull dripping guano
 On Eniwetok. The volcano is organized with the wave
 For biology's indigestion.

C: (*Looking into the cradle*) Oft spring lies,
 As it should, sacrificed on our roommates.
 We dress them in folderol because we know
 We have abandoned them to the horrid slopes
 Our civil gestures make. The future falls out
 Of our address to ignorant safety (*affectionately*), and it turns in.

A: I suppose their bodies weep taxes for our states. Women like more
 living. Death is the surname of all fictive work, which dampens in its
 origin.

C: High class gibberish has always sounded like love. The world wants
 computer language.

A: The plan, though Byzantine, was generous enough in custom, now
 violently obsessed.

C: (*Imagining the child again*)
 Get up, knee! We can't let this prodigious opportunity
 Be just another well-turned epithet.

A: So how can we sort this change to corrective charter,
 That was all so feminine and immaculate? I am diseased.

C: Nonsense! Nothing's feminine but maleness makes it so.

A: Illness becomes the source.
 Famine is feminine by definition.
 The grammar is sworn. The swinish corn
 Reads waste. We burn the past like wood.
 No allegory was accustomed to such fire we damn it to.
 Our books keep pennies which our projects squander.
 Why, the overt grosbeak sallies to disarm our interest,
 In fact converts it to national color. In back rooms
 The cottage feldspar falsifies the wicket. Our flag is blue.
 The scientists err knowingly, making not
 Knowledge but money. And so the ocean
 Comes leaping back, reversing endless trends
 To make the cosmos over, wiping out the record.

C: The difference between us is that I want to *become* my surroundings
 and you want to eat them.

A: I only want to hear love, C.
 We have levelled the great ball of night,
 Some climbing before take-off, to see
 The zero again. The heat is gone, the light
 Wanes, leaving a horrid glimmer in the Ashley.
 Come to bed, so we can build
 A night construction the state fails
 To complete each day. We'll be post-modern.

C: Oh A! As I love the poetics, I kiss you across the Atlantic.

A: Really? You mean you can distinguish the matter in this material?

C: (*Getting into bed*) My mother! hallowed be that thing.

A: (*Childishly happy*) Am I to be the bridegroom or the bride?

C: My arimathean has a bird in its tomb, and no Tom or Dick
 Has sung so sweet as did your Harriet always.

A: Did you know that they think Richard the Lion-Hearted spoke no
 English?

C: (*Getting comfortable*) He was too busy killing Arabs to read Chaucer.

A: I sing this minstrel at every castle wall,
 Till song itself flings me return of it.
 (*They kiss*)

A: (*Emphatically*) I will not rotor again after black-out.

C: If you don't, I'll eat rope and drink gasoline.

A: Did I tell you Leo was a pedant, and a pedant besides?
 (*They are falling asleep, moving in each other's arms.*)

C: No, I know. He hates only two subjects: hats and perfume.
 Did you see him at the department thing?

A: So I told Napoleon at the meeting, you're full of a highly unbelievable
 cream.

C: Fat chance. Disillusionment in life is realizing no one's
 Going to be able to go with you the whole way, so you . . .
 So you come to notice everything is strange and you run
 To the future alone. You never know.

A: I'll tell you something. I realized long ago my particular fate.
 No one would be prepared to think that this was me . . .

C: Me . . .

A: So it frees me to express the rhythm of invisible worlds
 And become them. Nor does anyone understand equally that this is it.

C: That's why we go so well together. Because I'm trying
 To make all my objects faster than anyone can name them.

A: You look like a painting. Sculpture has one dimension too many,
 But in this light you're like a painting, a Bronzino or a Tintoretto.

C: My period is late. If you have an audience it's not art.
 If anyone hears you, it's later. All composts . . .

A: Should we suckle a little on Euclid's beautiful bare ass now?

C: (*Going to sleep, as A is*) Excellent . . . but if you're not, not.

A: Tut . . . tut.

C: A rose is not an onion always.
 Messages are received all the time.
 We have become very intimate with the lives
 Of the saints by variance (*tickles him weakly*).

A: (*Faint laugh*) I opine. I opine.
 See the pyramids along the Nile.
 This is feels sure like the top of the world.

C: Your arm is early.

A: (*Faint laugh*) See the pyramids along the Nile.
 So the day is deep, and sleep.
 We must . . . go the fine . . .

C: . . . Caught from the penetralium.

A: What question did you mean?

C: O dear, the subject is obliterated.
Black out.

Talking Leaves Reading

Never mind that. I'm going to start all over again, I'm going to do it all practically. There's no sense in making a movie. Do you feel you're talking to a brick wall, or the occasion? Metaphors abound in personal history, but I don't want to refer to the past.

I think that is
not exactly what you meant to say,
but you can't control the impact of your words
against the stream of consciousness of the listener—
how can you intend the listener?

This makes it all serious. Besides, we see the rhymes from phrase to phrase. Now, let's change the subject. Like reading something *written* in France—

At this point I interrupt, very demonstratively.
There's a huge catalogue of events
draped across the sky from point to point,
crying out to be recognized
to no purpose. Well,
don't imitate speech!

Suddenly I am alarmed by having to respond to you. What are other people going to say, who overheard? In deference, I feel obliged to find plenty to say, so you won't have to. Strange to have such difficulty with what I want to do.

The core of the symbolism was
a little child, playing in the fields,
lots of hollyhocks and goldenrods,
crows flying overhead, precluding doom,
and the ferocious sloth, just below the level of the grass.

Look, the forecast is heavy and leathery. How am I supposed to show responsibility for anything I say? There's some change, some urgency, swatting things away. Which one of us is going to talk about El Salvador?

Well if I left it up to you
I'm not sure you would really handle the subject
as well as I *will*,
if I immediately decide that I am going to address the subject
with the expertise that the moment's opinion authorizes me to do.

There's a fundamental fallacy in the staging here. What is it? You have to respond to me, I don't have to respond to you . . . Get one more thing out of the way: when you read me, be the reader, if possible, don't be the person talking back to me.

This book is very obnoxious.
It keeps making demands on me.
And it's, like, calling from me this reaction,
which I had promised myself that I would refuse to give it,
wrapping me in these cords of, like, hmm!
How to— hmm! Reverberation without redundancy.
Does— and the— the same situation happening over and over again.

Everything I say should be something I initiate, anticipating you— but I don't want to take the words out of your mouth. (I was about to throw a fit, I forget at what, something was acting through me: 'I'm so sick of——!!')
What can I do that would support you, other than making a harlot of myself?

Angels retiring into the far corners of the room
back there out where the traffic is passing by
halting and stopping
there's an anarchic pressure, here, inside
the space in between the other things which are
casually disorganized.

It was a simple matters of layers and lying. What was on his mind, turning over in a half-sleep, crushing something under it. The amulets jumbled together in a lump, against a chest. What's not said may have stood in his mind for everything else appeared to fall over.

It's funny because I don't want to attack what you say,
you know I certainly don't want to inhibit what you would say,
if— I— Say I gave a whole-hearted endorsement to your opinions,

but I would have to do that one by one,
and very specifically returning to you what you had conveyed to me,
in terms that you would recognize as not your own.

It's strange to think we've spent all these years in close proximity without really getting to know each other. (This is your mother speaking.) The authentic is ineffectual. Oh don't mind me. What a rhythm I introduce myself— I'm not trying to discount anything! I'm just quietly eclipsing myself— A really good skiing accident.

The pronouncement you made about
how to behave when you're on the subway:
you thought it would be good, you said, to stand
as close as you could get towards the wall, but not to sit down,
and let people pass, and give eye contact very fleetingly
to every person that you could possibly interact with
and keep your feet light on the floor if you can,
perhaps by moving from side to side.

I'm interested in doing a conceptual fast. Boiling everything down to routine. Sleepwalking through the movies. The border patrol always wears reflective glasses. Beyond the flip side of the coin. The triumphant Marguerite Pappas.

It's ignoble to see
your heart reflected there on the screen,
where white noises seem
to echo and bombard against it.
Cable television, remote control.
Why do we have to exhume all this paraphernalia
when we could just walk forthrightly into a dark closet
and *read* something.

I overtake myself in a crowded subway. I am a big man, with rounded stomach and big feet. At least my shoes are big and they seem solid. The earth is concrete under my feet. The sky over my head is concrete too. I have opinions on everything. Some of them laugh at me from the signs on the wall. Most of them leak down the tube.

A personal corner where
you can inhabit quietly
the sound of your own voice

leaking through the cracks in the wall
or leaking out of the pores of your body
where you can anticipate a listening
without a listening happening
at least not yet.

I will adapt a short passage from Rabelais. Wait a minute, till I find my Rabelais. I have an *idée fixe*, don't you think, a little obsession, but I don't know what it is. Ah, there it is— a fake! A fraying black surface, barely reflective, falling from a gunshot. Underlinings and marginal notes hold up the flow. The declarative sentence is so oppressive, our only hope is that it gets totally carried away.

That kind of inertia where
one thing comes after another thing and
they just inevitably build up into some kind of a
shape that has its own contours and
if it has a necessity it obviously is responding to
the occasion, to the given circumstances that are
putting a resistance against it, whether it has
a concept, phrased in its own articulation of that, or not.

You stop in a bar and you know it's not right. It's not you there in the mirror. But what is you? Are you somewhere else? Are these real questions or are they just set-ups for awkwardness? . . . The bar scene— a heavy line, seen. A direct line, a hard dotted line from some eyes to the line, everything tied up in knots, not really there.

I was writing in my journal, and I was
anticipating, in some way— I was very
excited, and I'd been smoking, and I wrote
about being happy or not, and the
excitement— I tried to keep deflecting it, into
images that were not really there.

I was writing him a letter, after a long time, of *not* writing to him, and I was trying to break the ice, as it were, and I found I was telling him how I felt, and I felt *terrible*, bored and sick of myself and restless and stunted— as though there was nobody else I could tell this to— but I realized it was also manipulative, like I was telling him how much I needed him, but overwhelming him with it— Why had he never spoken so frankly to me?

It's quite transparent,
the way you're laying yourself out there
as though you were a naked body but you're not a naked body,
and you have this pretense of listening to yourself,
when you could, I think, be answering more interestedly
the situation itself, just keep coming forward
to it, into it, really.

These are themes. Being alone, for instance, reading, I am—

Another interruption, they're like intermissions
in some show that keeps breaking down.
Folding tires.

"After all, we're here, and we're there," I remember him saying, and how
do I labor to mean the same thing saying it again? A series of words spells a
syntactical act we confuse with meaning, for some good reason. "It doesn't
mean that you know what it means." It makes particular demands on the
reader, they sometimes say of a text it's a struggle to make sense of.

There's a period in history
that must correspond with what you're talking about
and the word that comes first to mind is
carboniferous. I can't justify that but I do see
these very tall trees with bark and the leaves
loop out a little bit as they fall.
They're not really needles.

Do you draw from life in your writing? Things happen to other people,
making you feel things. They're gone. This is me speaking. The more
inclusive and realistic my sense of the medium is, the more I see it corrupts.

I feel that I am calling upon myself
to discharge some function which,
again, is not right. I want to
just break out of the preconditions that
time settles on me.

An analytic self-consciousness radiates out onto everything it cares for,
breaking it down into— trying to assay what is pure. One step at a time
indicates a market-place, when you *want* to *know* what *stands*, in the
moment, irretrievable, of no fixed value. Purity is not what you say it is.

So that actually, what's not here
is formidable, and cares
for the tack that I take with it,
and having made, actually, an irreconciliation
with my wishes, I have cornered a
whole dearth of possibilities.

A restless reaching for pronouns— how to distinguish "I" from somebody
else, especially someone I love. I would never have the disrespect to cast
anyone else in the first person, yet— my own identity decomposes. Shaking
my fist in the midst of— what distinguishes feeling closest to you
sometimes?

I was interested in the ways that
language appears to be turning on itself,
and I don't think that this is particular to any
subgroup, but the focus on purpose
and on making a difference is experienced in the language
as a frustration and an impulse
to stop and start over again.

Brain storms. You wake up at night, like everything, shaking, and get up
and stand in a door. Why don't other people stand in the other doors?
Sensory overload versus information overload. Get the fuck out of El
Salvador!

The process is
envisaged as a line, being
combed out, and
because the comb is made up
of a configuration of perpendicular lines,
there's a displacement that takes place,
leaving the stratification
up in the air.

Amorphous, feinting to avoid attack—I've got my number. I'll just spread
out here in a goo. That's not who I am. We bombed the castle at night with
lighted candles.

In an intoxicated state,
I can remember everything that I'm about to say
but when I place myself in a projected solitude,

a trigger between words arranges rhymes
in a stumbling fashion, carrying sensations away.

It's not what you did, it's what you didn't do. Following rules all the time.
As though it were something beautiful, this— beautiful I mean because it
has been traditionally considered as beautiful. But what is it really? A lot of
prohibitions and tease. Wrapped up for convenience in the guise of the thing
in itself.

I have considered what noise is to talk, when
when bringing alone this figure,
that language is constantly stumbling over.
It is a large shapeless thing,
that you want to know because you already *do* know it,
but aren't on speaking terms, and realize,
it's a careless, cavalier kind of treatment,
with which you labor to acknowledge it. It strikes—

Issues are in the air, like the colors of confetti, you can grab one and look at
it real close. Am I disturbing you?, or, I hope I'm not disturbing you, I must
mean, would you like to beat me up? Only "beat me up" doesn't mean
anything like it says it does, or how we understand it. It's just making its
way somewhere else.

Sort of like, I guess, a code has being,
in as much as it takes in the experience between
what's known and what isn't there. It's hard to see,
if those figures line up, and what they're staring at.

In medias res. Pass the nickel, let me have it for a minute.

A set of icons frozen solid in the ground,
basking because it's about to break up,
given the scientists change.

Beginning to End

for John Harryman

I used to be sure but I've forgotten how to count. Would you like
something warm to drink?

Daisy mopped her brow.

Why won't you talk?

I will, later.

Sometimes I know I'm just part of a procedure. A moon moves over
my head that no one else can see.

Bunchy shrubs on the roadside applauded. Ravens spread their wings
while her animals fled from rain. Army jeeps flew down the road grinding
their gears, their headlights burning into the dawn.

Daisy finished her nap but didn't wake up her friend because she
didn't feel like talking. She stood in the center of the room holding her
suitcase, deciding not to control her style because she didn't know if she
would like the children. Someone asked if she were comfortable as if she
had just woken up in the hospital.

I'm fine. I'm fine. She wanted to fix the upholstery in her car which
was tearing steadily, daily.

Would you mind looking up car upholsterer in the yellow pages? I
hate the condition my things fall into. Nothing is precious these days. I mean
in the sense of precious things having stamina and an inconceivably long
life.

She felt guilty asking someone to do something for her. If I were not
young, she thought, I would be happier. The future was looking a little
blank. If I had something to back me up I'd be wiser. This she knew was
truer than she had understanding for, so she put it on hold. Already maturity
was taking up some slack.

Her friend woke up. It looked like she had been sleeping in a hole. She
rubbed her shoulder. Ouch, she said. Tomorrow I'm going to sleep some-
place else.

Daisy smiled, but her friend didn't see her. You'll have to leave
without me, I'm waiting for the car.

You know, I hate cars.

Yes, I do.

I'll probably miss you.

I'll probably miss you too.

A comfortable silence grew between them while they were listening to the Pacific Ocean.

Daisy, you don't have something you want.

I have everything that I want but that doesn't seem to matter. When I see something I have never seen before, I often regret being who I am, but not because of envy. I want what I'm seeing to recognize me first.

This is very complicated.

You are a dreamer, said Daisy.

You're talking to me? You make me feel plain, even when I'm wearing something fancy, if not particularly practical or dynamic. Sometimes I believe I will be real if I let go of these oddities. Well, you don't have to listen to me now, now that I have a track and a scent. It feels good just to talk.

You don't think about things very much.

You mean thing things?

Yes, those are what I mean.

I do but you weren't listening completely to me. But to the part that interests only you.

I won't take that as an attack but will continue, said Daisy. She was trying out brave determination with a bit of subtle oppression, on the one hand. She had a superstition that it was something else mysterious that would help her to really be what she was acting out. That way I see it is this. She stopped, frightened.

Her friend was thinking about how two-year-olds will speak simultaneously. She desired such ecstasy, but was critical of the arrangement among adults. She listened against her will.

I don't have a private moon, said Daisy, I have the same moon everyone has. And that is what I mean by thing. Had she not been inside, she would have gone inside, but she went outside for the same reason.

Her friend watched the flies on the other side of the screen door. Sometimes a foot would stick through.

I suppose it's better not to stand here.

What did you say? asked Daisy, opening a beer on the porch.

Nothing.

Come here.

Why?

It's hot, said Daisy, and I have spoiled everything.

Not everything.

She stopped her car in front of the ticket booth, feeling for her hat before giving a woman money for the show, then parked in the middle of the lot and waited for the sun to go down.

Expectations, the ones that were actually sickening, had the character of someone observing you doing one thing many times. A room turning into a sack of potatoes faced with the prospect of endless maintenance.

The Guests are scatter'd thro' the land,
For the Eye altering alters all;
The Senses roll themselves in fear,
And the Flat Earth becomes a Ball.

I'm not comfortable here.

I'm not either I don't think.

Sit still.

Daisy sat there trying to make sense of it. It was green at the base, as elsewhere. When they arrived at the rodeo, the thing she noticed most was the volcano above them. It had been the first thing she noticed in the rearview mirror backing out the driveway. A drove of cows stumbled into the arena. Cowboys on horseback and cowgirls on foot followed. Cowboys roped the cows and cowgirls milked them. A cow broke a leg. The drunken audience restrained its tears. Then the storm broke and people went to their cars.

This, said Daisy, is some fate. In fact, it could be just like any fate and that is exactly the problem with it.

The best story, said Walt, is about someone's life from the beginning to the end.

What are you talking about?

Biography.

Only, I think, said Daisy, if the life is long. Let's go someplace where I can hear what you're saying.

Do you have something in mind?

That is not the point, said Daisy. There is always the possibility of inventing a new system of education.

If, said Walt, something gets too large, one stops seeing the details, and I believe now is a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

Oh?

Then again, I am often hungrier than I look.

Everybody I know, said Daisy, is hungrier than they look.

But I am not talking about everybody.

Yes, you are talking about yourself.

And that is the point on which we differ.

When Daisy was with Walt she saw herself as other people. Other people with him too. This was confusing but she understood its *raison d'être*. She loved to be around an intelligent person and say the same thing to him that she could imagine someone else would say. She tried to make herself someone else because she thought it would amuse him.

All this was together in one place. She was standing on top of a weakling, a little jelly earth.

Am I standing on another tier, or is this where I was born?

Not here son, said an ecclesiastical looking man.

Are you religious?

Not too, are you?

Am I what?

We were talking about this place, these flatlands, said the man. Pebbly paths leading through a treeless habitation, then beyond the town of shacks and stores in the opposite direction where everything feels the same but slowly turns into a cemetery. Out here men and women stand shoulder to shoulder in a state of grace. This society might be characterized as a standing ovation simultaneously in mourning.

We came from a small outpost in Chile (the people in the world you're in now are so familiar with all the countries they could own them but instead display them like a pack of cards). Everything there was brown except the dyed garments, drapes, rugs, etc., of the population who hated drabness and believed they lived in a society coated in brown because of a curse. Their way of cooking became convoluted. Who knows if it worked? They also believed they were cursed by a second spirit, because the demon who made them dwell in drabness was completely characterless, and if there was anything else they hated it was characterlessness. They were being falsely represented at any rate and there was basically nothing to be done. If you want to know *why* I'm telling you this you'll have to ask my father.

So, they went to the mountains made out of white granite. They laid down on some rocks, glowed in the blue sky and died. But they didn't really die, they came here. And I am one of them and we are detached from strife. We'll tell you all about it if you will bear us some children. Our only problem is we are childless because our seeds will grow only in foreign ground to speak euphemistically, all things being equal as I see it. Here comes father.

Hello father.

Hello boy. Hello woman.

Hello, said Daisy, I'm sure I've gone too far.

Not at all. There is nothing to separate us.

Would you please take me to the nursery?

What for?

I want plants to move to the country.

I lived in the country once and that's enough, said Walt.

I was just making an excuse, said Daisy. Let's go home. Oh it is sad to be in one place all the time. But that's not why I'm compulsive. It is the possibility of transformation.

I've been reading theories on kinship, Walt said to change the conversation. Then he stopped the car to take a picture of an old church.

Force

for Bob Perelman

The audients of politics
in the -torium sounds
eye is for fours
is thus tragedy first
then farce, majestic speech
muttered under morning's breath
while brushing. Against news, noise. Against toys, few respectable
chariots, blue as cribbage, ocker as in Rx, Delaware's a warning. No-load,
after a long illness or preventive strike, thunder allegro in the woodwinds
converts the spare, hiring from within, primer coat. Inservice flea-flicker
absent de-icing refunds the smoking entitlement. How teacher
taught himself unthoughtfully spoken
toward the sake of
particulars, few nouns breaking
predawn stillness but songs
from red garbagetruck's hydraulics
haul history into landfill
(moist pulp become book). Aftertaste of bauhaus warms a canvas at the
tollgate. Stet fish. Up against the whiteout, a woman on a porch curses her
daughters' sluggishness as they drag cartons of pampers up the stairs in the
rain, registered trademark (LVN). You roll a finger around in all that
wetness.
I rose at 5
to type these words
swords heard in dream
clashing long after strong
seams sighted the writing
as scaffold to building
reveals little within, tents
to attentive eyes, child's
circus peek yields pitch

of memory years after. Prime rate or chuck, dehydrated syntax in the
garden of arrows, thoroughly misgiven, perfects a hub within. Next scene
the cabinet is on the telephone, but the key grip offers a line of blow to Best
Boy, not what they mean by Greek. Thus to the pipeline of steaming prunes
the resin of critique is so much KY if the budgie's lost in a chandelier, our
deficit climbing. At Smith-Barney we make money the old-fashioned way,
we steal it. Sirens
throb in troubled sleep
nightsweat curdling twisted sheet
before dawn's quiet rescue
repeats robin's elm admonition
'seek only immediate necessity
worm/twig/wind/sun'
warm in breezy solitude
book's leaves, deckled, turning
(unnoticed) over in lap
first desk, best desk
who in silence sat
writing on back deck
in black ink set
ideas to motion, frozen
as white line rising
above cumulus is wrapped
by seatbelt's strap down. Federalism of the bulldozer's yawn into the street,
curling and marketed, recursive and choking, gathers venom of the asphalt
(San Andreas), aired out with a touch of sugar, but slimy to the kiss. Small
curd nickel defense fidgets with the lilies. Axiomatic, but with its pulse
stable, the paper glider swoons by, so unlike the Heimlich mode of rapture.
Uno! This fix not visible
nonetheless real has chosen
or not such fate
as was available words
to you. Interim autumn ate 'em. The width of the week is white at the knees.
This is completely serious. Greens gouge into the daylight's grayness, but
the lone tree is a fine
pine. Plate burning images
positive cannot imagine not
turning reverse & back
to verse as farce
making phases what lack
phrasing's strict consonant cluster

chattering thought's distraction retracting
 tongue's audible actuality brought
 or bought off on
 bay bobbing boat cough
 phlegm to geyser up
 chuck the sought clear
 clean salt water seen
 solving drought. Get this: mood of undress, each book left in its cage
 (always with the front cover missing) against the trill of a distant clarinet in
 a nation of small lakes and even smaller cars. Let's wax, then wane. Dad's
 name (is) (is not) Floyd. The Prosoids hang out at the corner. Blue raft is
 my sail red soil
 speechless to spring sings
 caught in the throat
 out loud, rings rock
 of moon below glass
 * to Nasa masks
 MX to Exxon an
 essential connection, can act
 flat onto forklift fits
 death to its market. Intestinal shrinkwrap holds lunch, actual victuals, while
 swirls of grease design the coffee, designate awareness, ignite the mind,
 Juan Valdez. The medical abstracts start to flower, an I.V. in every trunk,
 the redcap in the plum tree. Thus perceived as Bambi's fear of Soviet
 aggression, golf is the appropriate monument. Drain the pool to the very
 last drop. Yet clouds
 on my title yield
 capital punishment by taxes
 deferred as a field
 harbors mole & worm
 warm in earth's night
 seeking food below graze
 of roan bull alone
 amid domestic herd bred
 to die wrapped red fluorescing
 cellophane glare, universal product code
 sings light line by weight-
 shaded theory. The carnage erupted at about 3:45 p.m. in the offices of
 Mission Insurance Co. on the 18th floor of the 43-story officer tower on the
 waterfront at the foot of Market Street. Tinker's palace defoliated cupped in
 the palm or paw of a more difficult muzak, aftertaste of gasoline, siphons

the people's will to itemize deductions. Borderlines sit on the fountains,
 passing the joint. A career of thought disorders stretches the canvas, what
 any cop thinks to see a young man in blue jeans and a Levi shirt. Participles
 of the coleus need to be stripped, hot phlox, corrugating the wind tunnel's
 sun roof to the tinkle of ice melting in a glass. Sun
 centered speaker sets own demand
 known to any, one gets
 to be taken, bets cloud
 against heat to seed's future
 hedged by irrigation. The attache's pit-bull rhetoric in the vocabulary of
 cowboys echoes in newsprint half the week. The waxer, the wainscot,
 intravenous as the IRA (IRS), number 2 pencil, blisters in the museum
 alcove: the messenger's bicycle's yellow. Tubed blueprints roll on the
 sidewalk. Feed, seed and farm needs. Imperial rosebush clad in seersucker
 sips
 Cinzano, disproves the surreal. Convey
 bitter young jobless to rasta
 (no punk dreams future) OJTs
 no say he learn trade
 who mock time in class
 but earn against teaching's struggle
 to be not laid off
 leads a cynic logic asking
 zero sum morning lesson over
 tea or wrought he who
 in the street fields bullets
 slumps into feeling's last dissolve
 (grim stat) rotting fame's swell
 corpse blue in Guyana sun
 amid many one & one
 composts memory, friends (are none
 when gone), facts *stun*, faces
 at the newstand stare, block
 letters **SLAIN BY WACKO** con
 whosoever listens, sell fear, sex
 image of the body, blown
 thru videology's dotted line down
 to new proportion. Wordless as the pun of a green stain on dry grass, mighty
 stalks of hair start to bloom as the shade of an eye is drawn. Along the phone
 banks, by a new clump of commercial paper, multiples regurgitate in the
 palm and dogs paddle listlessly amid the carrots of the soup. Lenin was

wrong. Modals do twitch at the seams, causing geometry or red, an
 ultrasound waterpik, but the yeast of judgment demands each primary color
 accept the monosyllabic. Against the rigid frame of the boxspring, set the
 curling mattress down. Fiduciary conduit phase
 projects shortfall back
 seedtime & startup
 vs. train's leadtime
 hard to predict
 erosion by profit
 provides cash transit
 against static worth's
 D line rumble
 anticipating light's onset
 deep in tunnel
 announcing arrival — yours
 (to so write
 in The Ramble
 of Olmsted's sight,
 snow-covered brambles bend
 to precipitation's weight
 while artifice forest
 cast against height
 midtown Manhattan) rate
 ambition to anger
 possible motives, make
 of sense statements
 meant to change
 states. Death and Texas, prepositional to the wall, blitz neomodern cafe:
 check. Can you curl your tongue? Ear's goblet (draining) (driving),
 auslandish, calls a halt.

the wings of a waitress. not made for opening but imagining. Open yore
 leg.

His voice fumbled around in my hair, the undergrowth pushing up, putting
 me to rest. Double lamplight, stealing the lake.

Commenting on every little thing in a pleasant way. Entrance is gained
 through severance. Good food and exaggeration don't mix.

speckled trout. gas blue with purple beads. The preservation of fragility at
 any cost. memory in materials.

On the sheets a perfect print of your body. I love you madly. To be at the
 heart of someone's fantasy, anyone's. Wringing wet.

She fell down and scraped her knee and lost twenty years. Stamina travels
 in all directions. The people on the bus go round and round. A green
 envelope at the bottom of my stairs!

Substitute human for crazy.
 This will create a space for pleasure,
 blooming barnacles, vertebrae, colors
 from a packet, instant sea creatures appear in
 a glass bowl. Reasoned proliferation. Disciplined
 musculature, sailors exercised to death learned to die for
 disobedience. Playgrounds with search lights glitter hideous
 postage stamp fun here. Swimming in the ocean raised bloodsuckers,
 walking alone at night raises rapists, saving your money raises inflation,
 combing your hair raises static, reckless driving raises the death
 toll, voicing your opinions raises opposition. Opposition raises voices
 are made to be spoken. Attaching my body, I got out and stood at the shore.
 Drunken sea horses. Pink trying to be. Pink. Saw horses shaped in the form
 of a coffin. I want to allow a stranger to enter my room today. Equivocation is
 the teeter-totter of sanity. Checks and balances ensure the people of a fair system.
 Helmeted policemen sneer clean cut hatred. Arrested development shrieks devotion
 to sadness. The park loses, nature goes back inside. The good are too sensual
 to try. The evil are evil. Swept, dusted, decorated, perfumed, finished. If
 there was someone who wished to get wet, they may get cold. X-ray vision extends only
 to the tips of the x-ray visionary. Children are faulted by their parents. Art is
 criticized by the artist. Faces are rejected by the bearer. Rooms are unliveable to
 the roomer. Regrettable for amebas and holy men, insulation for the rest. Other conditions
 are despised by other people which creates variety. Substitute human for crazy.
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 horses shaped in the form of a coffin. I
 Pink trying to be. Pink. Saw
 Drunken sea horses.

Foreign Body Sensation

Such hills as hive me waste away
 in the refulgent concatenations of failed
 display. Most marvelous
 of all, contraptions
 the hand, of mind, makes pace
 in sensory profusion
 to trace the gates. Entering more
 slowly than auction might allow, a brim
 of distal craves avenue to mutter
 on. The clutter
 of this solemnity induces
 for a pretense what hearers mask
 anew. Sarcastic
 chirps, refined alarm, will favor
 for its suasion darts and
 balm. Aviators
 know the price of calm.

Yet land-locked coteries
 defer from what
 they want, unmitigated
 handouts, unerring
 bumps. Toys
 to hunger for
 a hankering, systematic

seals of aquamarine,
sleds portrayed (weighlayed)
against whose barn?

So there becomes a boating solid
retained quite anappropriately 2 points
off true Mercury. The of token
as intended, remanded to a building
block subtended, cowering
in grass of glass (the
meadow of the undivided
dividend) or yokes its yank
to curvilinear harbinger.

Her in played other the while
him into spread & opened
his thrust. Himself as other
the & around turned later.

The unfamiliar necessities of familiar
places. "But I do feel myself bumping . . ."
Three-quarters of a dozen of us
massed—hideous sentence. Camptown
Races, colithiasis cases.

"Why do you say that?"
"Because it annoys you."

A heart as big
as a sewer and a
brain as big as—
but comparisons
are innocuous &
the first lie

replicates itself
in an isolated
word. *Judge*
less you not be judged
& the world slip
by unknown
you to it
it to you.

"I come here & I see
all these people from my hometown
give me a warm welcome. It
make me feel good, it give
me strength."

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT YOUR RATES

You put your whole self in
You put your whole self out
You put your whole self in
& shake it all about

move to later

The spire of this
irrevocable rending
wets the path
just enough for
the treachery of
a slant grammar.
Syncopation against
the borderline.

"Forget the blue. Nobody's
ever advocated blue."

“She could’ve been
the champion, but she wasn’t
exposed to the right opponents,
no one who would extend
her.”

Charmed
by his own regard

death is the Pall
that skewers All

“I am especially interested in the treatment of depression. With my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at the center of my life, I have found real Joy and Purpose in dedicating myself to the Truth of His Teaching as Written in the Bible. What gives the job its excitement is working with Stan Richards, a nationally recognized creative wizard: *Adweek* recently named our agency among the eight most creative in the U.S. I moved into this area after six years in the aerospace industry, which I entered after early retirement from a career as a venture capitalist and real estate developer. This has been a stimulating opportunity for my work on late Pleistocene and early Holocene environmental changes. Pat is currently in Sri Lanka helping organize sera collection for leprosy patients. Nowadays, being a husband, father, homeowner, and Jew keeps me both busy and satisfied. I find myself immersed in a foreign but also satisfyingly tangible world of container shipping. I still find the labor movement to be the (imperfect) representative of worker’s interests, and the necessary base from which the realization of class structure in economic and social life is explained and organized into coherent worker-oriented politics. It wasn’t long before I found myself in the company of a spiritual adept who teaches the most profound way of transcendence of every kind of self-possession. Left the firm and freelanced in stained glass. I studied hula seriously in Hawaii and taught Hawaiian dance locally, forming a group to hire out for bar mitzvahs and luas. To my knowledge this is a unique occurrence, of great spiritual and cultural significance. My work has taken me into the area of robotics and industrial automation. For several years I worked in insurance, specializing in kidnap and expropriation coverage. A professional interest has been in the area of domestic violence; I love the work and feel strongly about violent crime. For a while, I served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala as a nurse working

with cancer patients. After two years in Met State, I became increasingly eager to return to work with severely disturbed children. I am beginning to dabble in writing screenplays, humor, and poetry. What time is left I devote to course work at the Divinity School, where I am studying for the priesthood. It seems I have done other things also, but maybe not. I guess I. In the future, I look forward to the private practice of pathology. Just when that will occur is uncertain. I am now administering substances to others to alter or obliterate their consciousness. The break is wonderful. Though nothing has educated me as well as watching my father walk the picket line in a strike that was eventually broken.”

was then on top of
without the benefit of elegance
almost in

over into transparency
I rode all night
my wetness fogging the path

thing
has a material existence?
2 combs
not the same?
a word in different places
not the same?
well, that's the same thing!
"emotions are making me long for your kiss"
Bull some
corner fertig
atlas soar
orlon quiet
Whenever jerks come in, I just try
to work around them.

Mat Stove

So Hallbrun wrote a poem that went:
 Lazy spider, black dot
 on the ceiling
 moves a little every day.
 If I were to look really hard
 maybe there's a web.
and took it to Kolrud, who said, "I like it,
but Hallbrun, they will never like it at the Thing."
And he took it to Rudleg who said,
 "Are you really this lazy, Hallbrun?
You don't even take time to complete your sentences
in the proper tense. You don't stretch your
imagination. Still I like the concrete sense,
like you're really talking. You will be much
admired for this. You should take it to the Thing."

Halves of the Seat-belt

No, you have to have one on each side, right?
Oh, yeah.

We draw Edward
Rosa in the Azores
Bull, some
corner, fertig
atlas, soar
orlon, quiet.

Launderette underbite
an old green mercury
with holes in its hood
where the chrome used to be

Kiss me in the morning
Tomorrow

"if you confess, I bet you'll have Emotions too"

Feeding Time

relationship of rhythm to meaning
"i threw him back in the *water* again"
instead of
"then i threw him *back* again"
so baby can understand it

One sail to the north, one to the south — but is the latter a sail or an island,
faint as it is? Now I can't find it.

As I'm humming in Safeway "Sparkling Blue Eyes," a woman starts doing
a shuffle-step — no, she's wiping something off her shoe.

Where is fancy bread? Aisle 9.

My tea is too strong so I stop to catch some water from a roof — No! — too
dirty, so I stop to catch some water from the dirty atmosphere.

As I stand peeling my orange over a public waste can, I have a sudden — I
think, say I know you — no, you're just a kit-kat wrapper.

8:00 A.M. The principal speaks into his microphone to the students assem-
bled in the grade-school playground. "Boys and girls, our word for today is
'blood.' Now can anyone tell me what 'blut' means?" "Blunt."

I dropped my orange center stem in a tree vase in front of a house. You couldn't cool me for that, could you?

I'm wrestling with my brother, & he is saying "Eat your meat & potatoes" and trying to force me with a fork. "B-but you're a vegetarian!" I protest. "To each his own!" he exclaims, prying at my jaws.

Shadow of the Tick-tock falls across the street, over the manhole cover.

No one knows who invented chin-TVs, probably a jogger.

Some more Most.

Would you take a left there? It depends on the length of the line, base. If the line is too long, you can go around and come in a different way.

Pole shadow creeps up building into a window.

"Time is one thing you can't take with you. 59 minutes on your meter, and you might have to move your car."

One day you're patting yourself on the back because you don't drink any soda pop. The next day you're drinking coke all the time because your stomach can handle it.

I feel so slow beside a roller-skater.

Mission St. a mistake.
Popcorn a mistake.

Shade

Asked to explain his suicide after a brief creative flurry, the shade replied, "only pretending to be silent, just pretending. Too many fleas in San Francisco; the sense of an order is its effect on an obedient man, give me something else." You and I, we are like two eyes in a profile. It is my supposed property to be naturally crude and effective. Allow me to point you toward some trees which are too well-bred to talk. Instead of our *complex* of flesh tongue time, they have been provided with limbs pointing in every direction, at whosoever may pass, including birds passing thru nearby air, though if such a bird settles in your branches it may be too much like a scratch you cannot itch to be perfect. What do you think? Myself, I feel more like one of those natives in Wittgenstein's many examples, holding up a red slab of blue cloth with a sign on it that reads, "wrong way, turn back, you're already there." Pretty lush for a wrong turn. Although I don't remember all the details of my past, my life has occurred recently, and I'm not going to grab that lovely red-hot coal; the past in which I burned myself is real. The dark is a colorless object. What I say to myself in it is set over me in the same way as the past. It was then that I changed, now I'm only getting ready to. Most of what's around has actually never been anything but context, always a background never a fore. The Greeks didn't separate words as they wrote, so the only crucial thing is to arrange the letters in a way that sets up camp with what you know. I know myself so well that if I relax for even a moment I realize I am waiting to change, and I do change — immediately. I don't have to look up dust in a dictionary of dirt. People say a verb involves action: let them talk. The next change is actually to enter the picture so that the objects I depict will surround me and they and I look back out at you. A frame appears around your head, a wonderful patchy luminosity I dub intention. But really when I describe something it's just that I wish it were that way, and this I share with Wittgenstein, a fellow Viennese. The earth was once a ball of excellent gas; now the Danube flows, etcetera. And if reality is declaring itself via language it certainly is taking the long way around. In the poet's tool chest:

indications of use and wear. Favorite tools may be poorly maintained, spotted with grease. A very few spotless items also, untouched. Naturally these look the best, catch the commentator's primitive eye for brightness. So now I'm in the picture as I was saying I wished to be. Interestingly enough there are no laws in this domain despite the magnetism of ideas, so nothing really happens in the room (it is a picture of a room). Our role is merely to maintain its state. Whenever the paint fades we repaint it, a different shade of course, and this necessitates rearranging recovering or replacing the chairs sofas tables rugs lamps and hangings. Because so many visitors are eager to observe a room where nothing happens, we hold our meetings here and set up chairs in the corners for observers, who may spend most of their attention in distraction, for the view out the windows of the room where the picture hangs in which nothing happens is most attractive, and a line develops daily as people wait to pass before the picture and before the windows. If someone in the crowd stands still to linger — tarrying too long and not wanting to make way for the next in line — well, I've even seen shoving and wrestling, real violence. Sometimes the room has to be kept empty for a while, except for private services, memorials and the like. But let us take up these matters again whenever the ray of light bounces back from the mirror. A scream is a pretty dense formula. Tomorrow zero, the shade had just vanished from a place that can only be reached by means of a word, and I have given up forcing myself into the place I am now. The further ahead our destiny lies, the more we can know of it. I imagine myself on the death-bed. I imagine you all looking at the air above me. You say, "you have an idea."

Jews in Hell

A curious assembly before a door: a large door is always ajar. It only leads to a curtain, a thin curtain which must be pushed aside to reach our street.

Facades loop the miasma of antique or foreign attractions. Already diminished, all spectacles beyond a rich career vanish into virtual glass. The plan — now as ever — outlines a forehead that lasts forever.

Pulsation, tempo, collapse: these are the active parts of a mirror image and extend its vanishing point, abolishing direct contact from within its message. Apparently disarmed, it belongs to language — indicates the sender's silence.

Walled up: two walled-up worlds can never meet nor agree. An alarmed eye is a random consequence, a stand-off of tender forces under pressure, heat. Century of base daydreams, a chest must expand to vanquish itself. Inner life of pebbles a storefront organizes out of dots.

Just as in nature, the point is a self-contained thing, full of possibilities. Their tension is no more fact than unity of motion toward you, coursing between twin peripheries and through a curious door, always open.

The spiritual in art accesses its momentum of dimensions, reaches out from the mirror to find the door closed tight inside, and so freezes where it can. Din in the sky of truth that will not in, while facing out from the door a mountain of beautiful testimony trues society: a beautiful mountain serves up melody.

Shut

Sanitainer. No one can doubt sunlight's beneficence. A cozy press on the solar plexus. The yard is fenced so I can have parties. Prefer an unnamed ensemble. Magic, or the image of attenuated fairies, was constantly presented though captioned unreal.

The smell of perfume reminds me of department stores. A perfect fit may count as an embrace. An arm of daisies naturally juts into the lawn. Double meaning gets us off the dead level. Wedgies are high heels pretending not to be. The pink cloud and the purple one are beautiful for having the same curlicue, while two alyssiums, drooping from the bouquet, one above the other, take a pretty pose.

Elastic folk follow content in cartoons. Car lots flirtatiously twinkle. Shaky intent creeping toward the store: whatever that was Mother once offered. Old-fashioned pumps market a nod at ingenious constraint. On the ledge behind our fences we play outlaw. A babyish interest in minor characters could disrupt the tale.

A web of "issues" connects an imaginary citizenry. Chocolates are described as "home-fashioned." Tidy outfits to offset a growing slackness of feature. Who will argue things speak in the act of bursting? Gradually the street lapses into nightmare's non-embrace. At the crook a snarl pulses.

The lively resent unwary approaches. Emphasis is all. Aaron exclaims, "Truck in the tree." The jealous God expands to obliterate locale. Sunlight drums on closed eyelids. Weeds bristle.

"Paint?" "No!" "Trigger?" "No!" The mad detest familiar phantoms. Chief Gates plans to demonstrate controversial chokehold. Mother chose a blue box labeled "Commodore." Bumper cars jerk giddily on a tour of the replica. The uninvited will ring after symmetry clangs shut.

The Music

Great preponderance waddles. Naked buzz composed of what?

If background noise becomes clear speech?
Half-sensical, mocking: a parent's voice
we won't be able to discount

I want to leave someplace out!

To know the world must mean to know how
to get through.

On every bar the music shifts.
"I can't seem to get comfortable."

E

There are children in this province who have never seen a louse.

Fulfill, happy prevention! No world. Here we are with you, Jimmy Tomorrow and the binge has been going on for days. I was dutch-courageous enough to clash in the bed of the new mother. Where was mine and she who would stroke my back as it came out? Hunched in oldies. Who is that who says who's that when I say who's that?

Cool jerk. She wouldn't tell you if she was hungry but she ate. Uncomfortable silence turns to loud thought. Blat. Bring sandbags.

The brother and sister rushed out to the tree on Christmas morning to grab the anatomically correct Tiny Tears. He had been reading *The Catcher in the Rye*, though long out of prep school. I told Big John to bring him a drink, not drunken tears this time. She wanted to show me the accoutrements of women so I shut your mouth. During that period she wore her hair in a bubble. The hours like static between the times the sister never came home.

We have people having messy houses, their movie counterparts. To overcome their fear of speaking, they eat lunch, feeling the division of the before from the after. First you buy one, then the other. After exposing myself for being something other than a woman, gross and culpable, she said I was a spoiled brat. Because after years of butch I was now interested in skirts?

The animals fool themselves by sleeping upstairs. Become our uncle; be interesting and weak, like us.

L

It comes out. Things fall toward each other. Melodrama comes from education, that we take for our heart an imaginary landscape, deep image, arrow with a note. Feeling bad or good in the woods, receptive or dominant. And their horses are fresh while ours are almost exhausted. She slammed the door downstairs. It could just as well have been him in the cave.

On your maiden voyage drink Appolinaris water. There, the hills surround the house. Once the mind perceives the circle, drama. Doctors call it psychosoma but with a pincer in your gut and calipers to your head would you lie? PayLess. Your load is so heavy the bike won't move. Apparently they are not allowed to use the word "blood" on the package. Because the snow flattened the air? Sun, a dull prod. The machine-age is deserted, not virgin; we know someone's pissed nearby.

I think old. Look out the window: old boats, old mother, old lunch, store names. The dears. Impeding themselves with messages. To even things up I'll take the sacred manuscripts *and* the youngest son. The ascetic sees out all the windows at once, the high clouds, the bending wheat. Model thin. Not so often. Thick asleep, grandmother, let me be appropriate. She said it was her night now. So we don't own. Soon I'll look there and notice only the sandy underpainting, no more fruit and flowers, I swear!

Paper. A word from before drives by again on a truck back. Resigned to dead-end it reads movers and changes things down the road. "And Son" on the screen. Up against flat and light the embellished corpus comes home. You are there, produced and packed, New Orleans famous. Script riffing off tapes you know from then. Palpable sleep sees parts work.

He didn't ramble, he pined for the sea. Part and parcel up to 500 sheets. I slow down or speed up to contract. Time is running out on a dame. Get me some captain in my speech to include excellent machines of money. Then I will throw up my hands and weep to that appearance of our change. City buildings rising to collapse; you inside a future room in a cutaway coat, shaving. Laying for the mother. Many sparks going off are those I have known. Titans, tote 'em away.

I put you behind the wheel of a deuce and a quarter so I could call you plain regular and finished. But you squeeze the milk out of it and bring me a glass. This is dedicated to the beautiful intelligent thing over there getting bored. Incorporate! Keep in mind the automobile. We motor down Pleasant Street into the standard landscape and like it. You are a cloud looking for a job in gray pants. Magnificat, the mother, is the sea. Me, egoist, steaming on the roadster. It is not the needle or the haystack which points out, but Figueroa. Money can't change it.

Joy Cone

He went on. He was talking. Everything was somehow a surprise. He had been twenty-three. He actually saw. Values were upside-down. It was interesting. He had come. He was the owner of another. He could live in the habit of living.

These were items. The house within. These virtues. At present. It amused. If he knew the way, his old friend lived. They had communities. She had come. He had found himself. If he had. He was to remember.

It had begun. The quaint analogy quite hauntingly. They went in together. He had his reasons and was growingly aware. There was little. The fact that there was nothing. He laughed. There were divinations. There was happily enough. He had found the place. There were values. It was agreeable. He explained.

He spoke of the value of all. She listened to everything. She scattered abroad therefore. It rather indeed pulled him up. How could anyone? He had a positive sense. She might. She appeared to imply. But she passed. He closed the door. That represented.

It was a few days. He had arrived. He found all things. She was seated. "I shouldn't care—it's only a figure—from that day to this—I may say—I now feel—I say *must*—for my life and for my 'form'—I was too—I might have been—I admire him—I just took—I just transferred—and I imagine—I see."

He simply went on. "I've not been edifying—I've followed strange paths—I shouldn't have been waiting." He wondered at everything. She considered a little. He recognized it. He importantly qualified. This did somehow. She hesitated.

It was after this that there was most of. It was what in these. He sometimes came twice. Then he could. Later he watched. It was a practice. He let himself. Everything was easy. He circulated. It was all. He projected himself. This effect was the dim reverberating tinkle. They were shy. That was the essence. He knew what he meant. It had been the theory of many.

The terms, the comparisons. He found himself. He wasn't afraid. They fell for him into categories. With habit and repetition he gained. It made him feel. He liked. This was human actual social. He had support. The place was.

It had belonged. He had felt it. He was bringing it. This was the case more specifically with a phenomenon at last. It worried. He was kept in sight he wheeled about. It was indeed true. He had made, he made had: the baseless sense of a reprieve. the after-effect. chilled by his logic. his menaced interest. the acuteness of this certainty. a prodigious thrill. quaking for the form. duplication of consciousness. to hold on to, something. the nearest chairback. contiguous rooms.

the bottom. the top. the gauntlet. light. a parchment scroll. a drawn sword. the mantel. a common corridor. the chimney-piece. the brief chain. threshold. breath. the face. evening. a barrier. the essence. vistas clear. the brain. the house. the case. the native architecture. the opposite extreme. telescopically. a rest for the elbow.

It was with these. Another agent. It was so logical. It stared, it glared back. Not to have acted. There was presently nothing to measure. This slowly dawned. He wouldn't touch it. He listened as if there had been something. He retraced. He did here what he had not yet. half a casement.

the night. the air. the great lamplit vacancy.

The pretext that wouldn't, too compromising, the explanation that would, not definite, the thought of recording, a ladder, some such uncanny thing, in vain, the grim hush, he had made of it.

He looked again. This required an effort. There was the whole. He could hold to the idea. This conception held together. The risk was too great. It would mean. It would send him. The hideous chance. He had the whole. He stole back from where. Here was the top. His instinct was all for mildness, but his feet were harsh on the floors. He tried to think. They might come in. At the end of two. This was the bottom. By that. But what. Here was. Out of. It was.

It was as if. The indistinctness. The penumbra. It gloomed, it loomed. Rigid and conscious. "Saved." The hands began to open. The face. It was unknown, inconceivable, awful, disconnected. Such an identity. A thousand times. It came upon him. His head went round.

"I'm coming I'm coming," said puppet. "We're going far away."
Take it in to him and have him look at the face.
You don't have warm enough clothes on to be outside.
Jesse, why do you have on Aaron's jacket?
Jesse James was shot in the back while hanging a picture.
Don't eat garlic before coming to tea class.
Why does a man write?
Daddy's here!
These words at some point become tedious.
But if I had to talk that would be even more difficult.
Just a shift of one tenth of an inch.
The people who are easier to talk to
want more of
a piece of cloud isn't
His argument was anti-sensationalist.
How do you feel?
Remarkable.
Passable.
Nice.
Salads and vegetables.

It works better if you don't think about it, then the shape comes up. A mass of material wads up. Several annoying drips.

The question then becomes what is coherence and what makes coherence. Cartoons are easier to make out than ordinary cinema. Coherence may be just an effect, or, "coherence is an effect." Meaning is just rounding things off. There are 18 ways of asking a question. Each thing is presented then all hell breaks loose. I don't mean to dwell on how I feel. Yatta yatta.

Curtains blab sneaky deaths even though the record is turned backwards. My mother's minor surgery turned out to be rather awesome. His head was in full light but his hand was in partial shadow. As he spoke everyone went to sleep. It was a generation ago, an age of innocence. There's a greater incidence of lung cancer now.

"Late Bloomers" are born, not made.

There are many "modern twists," a sparseness (at least seeming poverty), to become a civilian merchant.

However, the Cubans frequented "the brain" as soon as they arrived.

Samuel Marsh has a "split" personality.

A "spring flower" is "in season," to wit, "a jonquil."

Think of yourself as "reincarnate blossoms" and, well, it's a beautiful morning again.

"Because" of 35 petals.

Three years later he adopted another sparrow named "Honored Forest."

What they are doing is methodically incorrect although their "criticism" is apt.

Do what you will, you will never make "such a difference" be the same as "really not the same thing at all."

I called him "Marxist" but you called him "Stalinist" hotly.

My "son" says so.

"How can John Soldist keep having affairs like that?" you sincerely want to know.

That one reminded me of the famous incident entitled "Guy de Maupassant and the Concierge."

One said "I want to know what you mean by 'attitude,'" but the other thought he'd said "altitude" and began discussing aerodynamics.

Admiral de la Vallee was a terrible sceptic: "I was 30 years of age in a surprising country. It would take me ten volumes on the back of imaginary elephants to describe the extraordinary ruins. Whilst wide awake, I was dreaming.

"Delicate, yet with pitiless ferocity, the City appeared in the distance as a white dot, growing ever larger, the spires slender and graceful.

"I was escorted into the palace past bronze soldiers in robes studded with jewels. There was the Raj gleaming with 15 million francs worth of diamonds!

"The boxers in the palace arena came on naked, slashing each other with steel claws, blood gushing forth and running down their dark skins. The Raj shouted 'Strike! Strike harder!' until one dropped.

"At the palace with its lofty towers, the whole building covered with sculpture and mosaic of onyx, lapis lazuli, and agate, the Raj greeted me breathless with questions and ushered me forth to visit the ruins.

"Later there were tiger hunts, lion hunts, leopard and panther hunts, seemingly half the animals in creation we slew and the flow of blood disgusted me so that I could scarcely bear the company of the Raj who however continued to shower me with elaborate gifts of food until at last one day he sent with all due ceremony a harem of girls, ages ranging from six to ten.

"What games we played! Hide and seek, puss-in-the-corner, London Bridge, they shouted with laughter, child-like gaiety, and life, and ate many sweetmeats and cakes, nearly until they were ill.

"At last my scientific work was completed. After a fortnight of new pleasures the Raj gave me liberty and I consoled my young wives with kisses, cakes, and a jewel box encrusted with shells.

"Two years later on returning to Bombay, I finally, after a few misleading questions, asked the whereabouts of Chali, my most cherished young wife.

"'She's dead, sir, for she committed a most serious crime,' the Raj told me.

"'What was it?'

"'She stole one of the gifts I gave you, sir, a jewel box encrusted with shells.'

"'But I myself gave her that box,' I shouted, shocked beyond words.

"'She was tied in a sack and thrown out this very window into the river below,' the Raj said. 'You should have mentioned this to me sooner.'"

March 23

Reading about nuclear issue variously. Yesterday Sarah's finger caught in swing bled profusely she rushed to hospital emergency room crushed fingertip nearly severed, today she's better and bandaged. The event and the nuke reading, my running down the road after the event to

do— what?— finally called ahead to emergency room at hospital— reminds me tenuousness human body, how one minute all sunny green and OK next minute shrieks tear the air and a finger or a life is gone, no way to get it back. Distinct feeling that comfortable sensation of home erased in these times, any specific settled place to be, any continuity or real sense of satisfied pleasure. Sudden dawning of sense of urgency, comic book on Hiroshima, splattered bodies and hair falls out, skin melts off, great fireball mounts to sky. The very personal problem. What to do.

Capable feeling of OK what to do next and doing it versus silly attitude and always making jokes and being inaccurate, fuzzy, as to which actions to take and how to take them. Looking around quizzically alert versus sinking backward from the book, sighing, unable to get up from one's chair.

Palm logs fibrous with a hard core.
It fills the mountainside, this urgent feeling,
At the root of all donations. A single word
Can be a donation too, this way
To find a voice and make it solid.
The organizer wore a blue down jacket:
Poetry has less to do with feeling
Than with being at the right place at the right time.
The pleasures of rhyme fade
Behind the facade of questions.
The rainstorm moves across the scenery as he
Stands before the shut door
On any day, the day he was born, let's say.

On the Toilet

When it snowed I cleared the walkway of drifts so I could get in and out with supplies. A loaded snow shovel is much heavier than you think. And the day might be bright— as it generally was after a storm that might dump a foot or two of snow on us— and I was quite hot working and had to take my coat off. The glare was very bright. All the shape in the trees was apparent, the branches outlined in snow. It was generally very cold. Water in the bucket froze overnight. Looking back on it now, I think I might

always have left the bucket empty at night. Why didn't I put it on the stove? The stove was difficult. It choked, backed up smoke, never burned hot enough, was hard to keep going, could never be stoked for the night without going out by morning. That's why it was so cold in the morning. Looking back on it now, I think if I'd've cleaned the flue . . . Possibly I should've gotten another stove. Strange . . . But now I remember I didn't have any money. (To be outdoors, the storm blowing snow around, splitting wood, the light leaking out of the day but coming on in concentrated doses in the houses across the pond) or I was sitting by the stove in the evening, very grateful for the warmth, reading a book or thinking, what was I thinking about, was I thinking in words, how many moods did I experience, was there a quality of circularity to the thoughts hovering around one or two main points that perhaps had not altered since childhood . . . Ponderous . . . I got up from my chair and went to the outhouse. While I was gone a bowl fell off a shelf and shattered to the floor: I heard the crash, came back inside with a tremendous feeling that the most significant event of my life had occurred, unfortunately I was on the toilet and had missed it . . .

You Already Know This

There was a young woman, very voluptuous, with swaying auburn hair, who, by contracting herself into an emanation of light, was able to run her presence up and down the bodies of the men who were bathing in the stream. The men noticed only the initial subtle tingle, then the sensation was so comforting it lulled them into a stupor. Floating under the sun, their skin glinted. Gradually their power of expansion, the power that enabled them to blast huge holes into mountainsides and build great concrete structures spanning abysses, condensed into small hard black balls that sank ever so slowly down into the depths of the water where the woman, by alchemy, transformed them into the blasts of white spray the sea makes on windy days when it breaks against rocks.

shut up inside on a beautiful day, bleary-eyed. She dreamed of me, and another woman. I am sick of dreams. "I" never dreams.

All that doing nothing ought to be good for something. The combinations of words go according to a secret system. Is anything at all useful? Stop rattling the telephone pole.

HILLS 6/7 TALKS

Shut up inside on a beautiful day, bleary-eyed. She is dreaming of sex but I never dream. What you dream you can just as easily make conscious, or rather, super-conscious. Then waking life is like a dream.

All that doing nothing ought to be good for something. Did you ever notice that animals, who seem, on the whole, tremendously active, spend long motionless hours? That's something I find tremendously beautiful, terribly useful.

Here's an accumulation of words that amounts to nothing. How can I help anyone? *Can* I help anyone? Does it matter? Some guys are tough guys.

Some guys are tough guys. Guys necking in a bar— to get out of the bar you have to thread through patterns of all those necking guys. There is an acknowledged relationship between smut and Naziism, between sex and brutality, between freedom and death, between mental laxity and digestion, between self-deluding words and slapping people's faces, between wearing tight clothes and eating rich meats, between cinema and murder, between dying cultures and rising birth rates, between not caring about anything and two-seater sports cars, between hot music and soft pillows, between not noticing the weather and killing off species, between indiscriminate fucking and cutting yourself while shaving, between gold chains and overheated rooms, between walls and megatonnage, between fear and the nascent conception of a new social order.

Here's an accumulation of words that amounts to nothing. How can I help anyone? *Can* I help anyone? If you let people alone, what will they do, what have they done?

Some guys are tough guys. What do you feel as the words come round? This guy on his ranch is a perfectly swell guy. You are a perfectly swell guy. All your friends and relatives are perfectly swell. We can all pretty much do what we want. We can afford it. No one will bother us. What's right is what feels right. We know what we feel.

Shut up inside on a beautiful day, bleary-eyed. She is dreaming of sex but I never dream. Here's an accumulation of words that amounts to nothing. That's something I find tremendously useful.

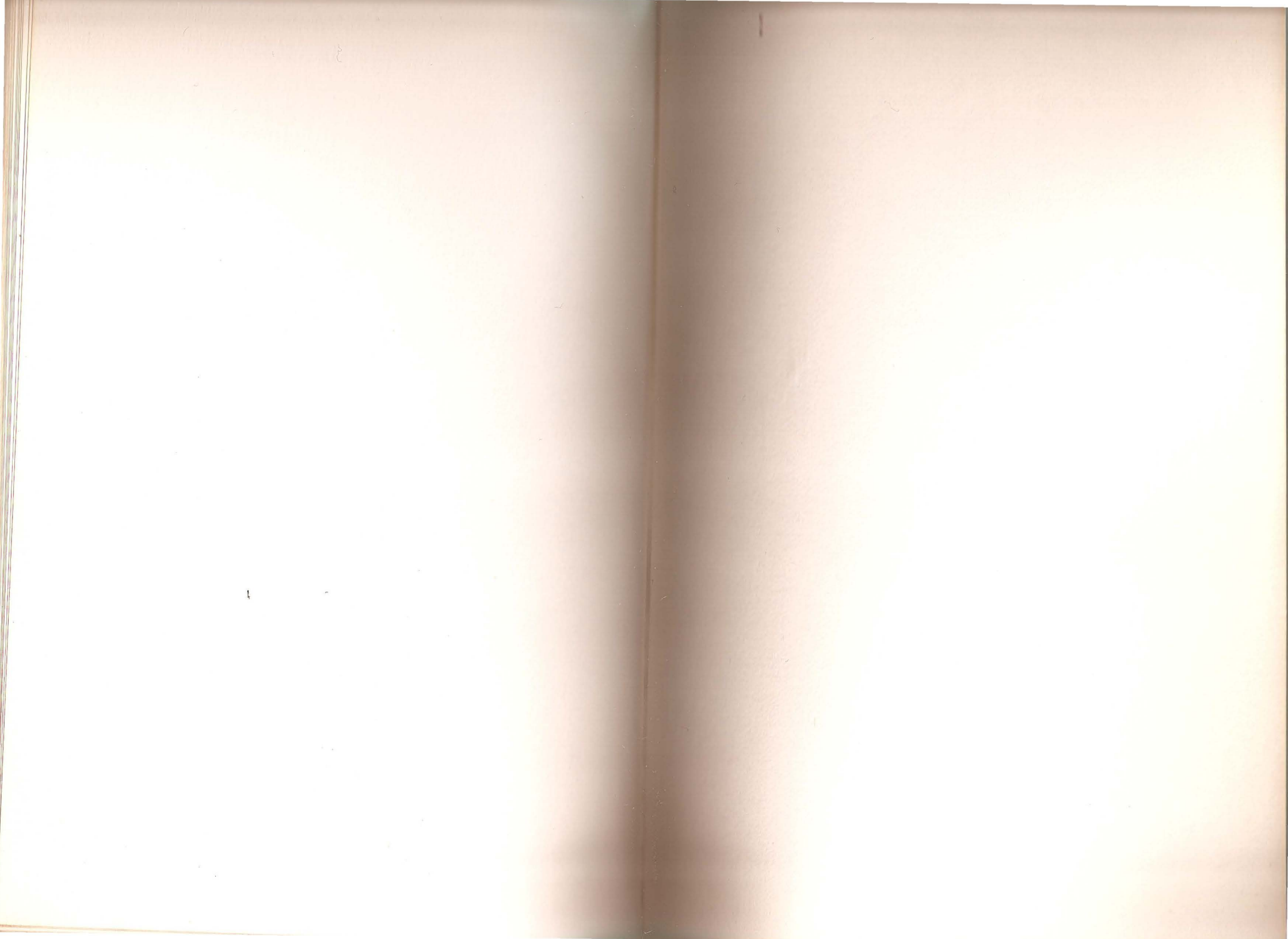
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Hills / Talks comes as close as any volume will for a long time to an articulation of contemporary poetics and a demonstration of the process by which a poetics is discovered. The book is meticulously edited and fascinating to read. —Lyn Hejinian

HILLS 8

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