

TUUMBA 30

ALOGON

MICHAEL PALMER





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SEVEN FORBIDDEN WORDS

"Mon chat sur le carreau cherchant une litière"

Baudelaire, *Spleen*

Who peered from the invisible world
toward a perfectly level field. Terms
will be broken here (have been broken here).
Should a city of blue tile appear
no one will be listening there.
He stood up, walked across the room
and broke his nose against the door.
A was the face of a letter
reflected in the water below.
He watched cross-eyed
learning a few words at a time.
The sun rose behind your shoulder
and told me to act casual
while striking an attitude of studied repose.
You grew these flowers yourself
so how could you forget their names.
The yellow one is said to be uncommon
and the heart tastes as expected, tender
and bitter like an olive
but less violent. It has been summer for a day
or part of a day
with shades drawn. The fires were deliberately set
and the inhabitants welcomed them.

ALOGON

(a spiral for voice)

1

It is light and dark a book lay on the table beside the sun are moon and stars. Sometimes keys are forgotten and the door locks. Above his head is a row of stars and books suggesting the complexity of the art. A chart is being drawn. I would rather live here than in that city. Thank you is what he said. Thank you is what I'm sure she said. 40 children of the poor died. Another 5,960 will have died. The prediction has been made 308 times. Our bellies are swollen with food or the lack thereof. It is morning again. He looks through the drawer for his keys. The door locks behind him. The heart stands up and announces "I have felt". A goat is tethered in the shade, a horse approaches the fence. He listens to the duets from an adjoining room. Begin she says and he begins. The lips and tongue form a yes or yet. If he has been chosen he wonders why. She applies the color with a small brush. A chart is being filled in. The sky has partially cleared. The south wall is missing. He asks for more water and it is brought. He examines the mirror. He searches for the mirror in the dark. Begin she says I have begun. He points toward the window and a building beyond. It's three or four o'clock. She notices the fountain. Inside it's growing dark. Can you remember all that or should I write it down. She moves from the chair

toward the door. I have retained the use of legs and arms. Benches and clouds. Secret speech is forbidden in the park. There was no one in the park. He paces back and forth between the bed and the door. I don't know how to assess myself. My father lived here until he was born. A folio lies open to his right. I recognise nothing from before. This might or might not have been hers. All over the world they flower at once. That's mint and lemon that you smell. He cannot seem to recall. Open or opening to a page.

She draws the remains of a recognisable face.

The subject is seated opposite. A row of books suggests the art. I have little access to myself.

2

They don't believe in ideas. Colors are not ideas. She seemed to open up somewhat after the walk. They live in a world of ideas. Thursday you leave for the south. The blue flowers have displaced the white. He imagines false or apparent motives. The material life seems almost a condition. Nothing has changed since winter but the thin crust of ice. Dinner cost more than a pair of shoes. He removed the keys from the brass hook beside the door. People often ask what will happen. He points to the thirty-six and the four. They had a brief conversation in the cab of the truck. One idea is to sell everything another is to leave it all there. She found she could still make herself understood. Let us re-

member that nothing is to be indicated or explained. The saltimbanque recoiled in horror. Colors are the traces of ideas. He moved his lips but no sound emerged. I am actually a duck or a frog. Things gradually changed over the winter. Let us remember that both words are used to mean the same thing. Here it begins to get interesting. There's enough left for at least another month. I prefer yellow because it's so hard on the eyes. He spoke with a trace of accent laboriously acquired. Colors are substitutes for ideas. Their bodies hang from ornate lampposts the entire length of the street. The words disappeared as quickly as he read them. I have decided to call it Chinese Dream.

They don't believe in ideas. It is the part of Wednesday mercurially inclined. Red is the most dreadful thing. The walls have worn thin. She watched the city burn by its image in the river. Some want something different from life. Colors seem to embody ideas.

Red is a most dreadful thing. The walls have worn us thin. I watched her burn the image.

3

It is or isn't the same. The wall is the same or the hand against it. Their voices are recognisable. Their faces are the same but not recognisable. He held the cup as if it were the last or the lost one. It has been broken and mended at least twice. A cup means you have been here all night. A

second cup means nothing. The seven had been bent then flattened out again. The writing is miniscule and often illegible. The method had never taken hold. The woman in red has fallen and is sitting against the wall. The visitors found the house empty as she had warned. Another three weeks until morning. An oviform hole where the spot had been. In a moment it would be morning. They were alive when he returned. He considered yellow the most difficult thing. It's possible to substitute a name. The original door has been replaced.

4

The colonel speaks a hundred languages. At three and twelve the pond is still. He never really seems. Had dressed as if she thought it was going to rain. Unnameable first of all, very large and accommodating, very wide and open and waiting and waiting. All my weight on my shoulders. Child of twenty-three months lying at the bottom. Why do you ask about these things. Why should you care about these things. I turn the corner and he's there. You are no longer one of us. She could always tell if it was going to rain. I imagine turning a corner and him being there. The pond is perfectly still. Wind is turning the pages. We are surrounded by trees that seem to speak. What good will it do to know about these things. I remember looking into a clear night sky. And on and on. It is matter not ideas. Something always kept us from finishing. What mattered was the vividness of the evocation. The sky was a kind of lid. You al-

ready know these things. It is difficult to recall and reconstruct by yourself. Talking is another realm. We cannot not know history. The colonel speaks a private language. I am thirty years old. This is as good a place as any. A curious thing happened to me. A curious thing happened one day. I stopped and turned around with my mouth gaping open. What else could I do. Old Doc Williams from Rutherford will understand what I mean. So I find myself watching. I sit beside myself on a park bench. We are surrounded by buildings of grey stone. More might be possible.

5

These feelings
are imaginary.
These feelings
are images
of things.
These things
are felt
as real.
These things
are imagined
as real,
'head and
neck, face
and eyes,
arms, fingers,
nipples and

hips.' These
imaginings contain
no ideas.

6

He stands across from he wanders across he falls from a square of light into the dark. Mathematics can be harmful. To the right is a pile of books not a city or a court. I would be willing to return. He asks for more water and it is brought. She moves the chair closer to the door. Begin she says I have begun.

These seven things are real and nothing else. Sorrowing and lifting. The air is still and clear. Red of April. I dream and redream the dying part, knowledge gained and organized, conceptions, ideas and thoughts.

With each sentence a different story begins, green down, blue up, magenta, 123 down and so on. A little money would be nice. She raises her hand to her forehead. It's snowing on the mountain.

She raises her hand and covers her eyes. The leaves form a perfect spiral. Blue of April. She is at home in the intricacies of the garden. There is no garden. There is always mail but it hasn't arrived.

She raises a hand to shade her eyes. All the while it's meant

to be spoken. Carl, Henry, Michael, Rosemary, John. Howard, Mary, David, Paul. Are hours naming days a sentence long. It's interesting to live in smoke and no one must be told.

They move with effort in a certain time. You must count as you run. Words will come to interfere.

7

Does that kind of breathing mean 'yes' or is it a simple interrogation. Each a fact with no implication at all. She dressed that way once to illustrate the idea. Totally structured and arbitrary. It comes and goes and rises and falls and the breathing stops. Sutra of Alphabet Soup. You look at something until it's gone. But this must be carefully explained. You look at something until the demons are gone. You look until the breathing stops. The clouds disappear into the blue, first pleasure then bitterness then the body perishes. Things exist. She dressed that way once to illustrate an idea. I am against disorder. Music floats in the windows. Every event is controlled. It would be nice to live nowhere. We both still dream it very often but at a distance. Four words seem to have crystallized. She memorized the entire book. He had walked three miles through the snow rather than use the telephone. If you grow tired stand up and walk around. Sit still for a while. Clench teeth and fall asleep. Pay attention to error. The skin came off my back in five places. He knew he couldn't move fast enough.

The obligation takes precedence over any style or idea. I am attached to a wheel which hangs from the wall. Sutra of Temporary Loss. Sutra of the Seven Rings of Ice. She followed the light round and round. As she spoke her eyes rolled upward into her skull. An important line has been crossed out. When things appear the heart mirrors them. A year clothed in smoke has passed. Can you understand that. Very large and accommodating, very wide and open and waiting and waiting. This particular page ends abruptly. The ladder with no rungs belongs to us. We are proud as well as embarrassed. Of what use one might ask. She showed him exactly where to place his fingers. This was to be the last part but it has turned out differently. No one exactly lived in the house. The heart cannot be influenced directly. Light effects the breath. They are fascinated by a moth. The breath is troubled. You look until the trouble stops. Two dead men are playing cards.

THE PROJECT OF LINEAR INQUIRY

[Let *a* be taken as...]
a liquid line beneath the skin
and *b* where the blue tiles meet
body and the body's bridge
a seeming road here, endless

rain pearling light
chamber after chamber
of dust-weighted air
the project of seeing things
so to speak, or things seen

namely a hand, namely
the logic of the hand
holding a bell or clouded lens
the vase perched impossibly near the edge
obscuring the metal tines.

She said 'perhaps' then it echoed.
I stood there torn
felt hat in hand
wondering what I had done
to cause this dizziness

'you must learn to live with'.
It reveals no identifiable source
(not anyway the same as a forest floor).
A vagrant march time, car
passes silently, arm rests at his side

holding a bell or ground lens
where *c* stands for inessential night -
how that body would
move vs how it actually does -
too abstract &/or not abstract enough

but a closed curve in either case
she might repeat
indicating the shallow eaves
nothing but coats and scarves below the window
his-her face canted to the left

nothing imagined or imaginable
dark and nothing actually begun
so that the color becomes exactly as it was
in the miniscule word for it
scribbled beside an arrow

on the far wall
perfectly how else continuous with memory.
There are pomegranates on the table
though they have been placed there
salt, pepper, books and schedules

all sharing the same error
and measure of inattention.
What she says rolls forward.
I shouted toward motion, other gestured,
child laughs, sky,

traffic, photograph. I
gave real pain, expelled
breath, decided. Both arms in thought,
mirror otherwise, abandoned
structures mostly, the glass

door with its inscription lay open
before us, nothing to fear.

SEVEN LINES OF EQUAL LENGTH

"Simplement parole et geste."

Mallarmé, *Igitur*

I

He describes a city that apparently never was
thus the sun bending
and the paperback's blue spine
telling of a voyage
past memory into a copse or grove fitted with doors
The sun is an artificial one
and he has lost three-hundred pounds
by listening to Chopin in the background
the Nocturnes and Preludes by day
and the Gizmos by artificial night
so deceptively simple to play

This letter will never reach you
and as long as we both know it's ok
Did the other one reach you
and if so what did it contain
I dreamt we were all in Provence again
a landscape like northern Germany
enjoying ourselves until they fired on the hotel
History was like that for awhile
thus the paperback's blue spine
telling of collision in mid-air

pages fluttering to the earth
at our feet

If you answer that the Adriatic is
jagged that's correct
Other coasts seem non-existent by comparison
or at least without character
The most recent displayed sea lions behind bars
We slept illegally there
I dreamt I entered the race and won
but couldn't find my way to the restaurant

Now the light is on meaning day has begun
sand everywhere the people motionless
as if held within the fog
By the time you return we'll be gone

2

It occurs somewhere off the page
a white or blue and then a white containing grey

3

(Igitur I)

Certainly something of midnight persists
The hour hasn't disappeared through a mirror

hasn't fled into tapestries
recalling a furnished room by its empty sound

(We're told her terror is of almost knowing
by those who say they definitely know)

It's a pure dream disappearing and a recognised clarity
pale and open on a table
or lost in shadow, ordinary
decoration it recognises in itself

but empty of meaning - an hour
had fallen there - you forget
the bright hair framing a face
with eyes equivalent to a mirror

This lateness insists on shadow
A word might be that hour offered silently
and then returned
in order to disturb things otherwise clear

4

(Igitur II - V)

We're told it's a terror of partly knowing
The lost key has been restored to its place

These red hills are said to be green
like paper money or a loquat leaf

He leaves the room and descends the stair
Here then is Therefore as a finished idea

He cuts off his right hand which continues to perform
a saccharine melody detested by everyone

he loves. The city consists of towers
and dumps to choose among

The simple past has weight
but where are the fountains you spoke of

she wonders in perfect innocence
and the flowering trees

and what is the word that stands for these things
he asks her between the branches

The clock is a pleasure to hear
since it rings at the wrong time each day of the year

You must reopen your eyes at the edge of the mirror
and fall forward accurately to avoid the chair

We're told it's a fear of entirely knowing
and that's why the theatre is empty

The burnt-out stars form a new kind of rubble
which threatens eventually to darken the atmosphere

5

Such words' eyes will tell us what it was,
city as in sound - the voice
you hear is your own
caught in her throat - as in hills
rounded, light unexpectedly
full then lost among, might tell us
to be nowhere else. Such sevens as
sevens are. The continent drifts
from itself like memory's art
toward a window unhinged
by those forces memory alters.

6

He remembers a city that never was
actual flowers and a frame of light blue
at the margins of sight. Her stuttering
to accommodate a name (her reluctance
to simplify a name). Or would raise each other
into place. He recalls a name for it
among the repeated phrases,
the border of crosses and stars
standing in crystal at the central point.
Do you think I believe this
because a dog barks? The other, recurring
difference holds us in place.

(déchet)

...a little like October in a sense
in love with itself

or at best possibly not yet
able to see or feel in the dark...

That letter I never sent
and you received contains the question recently asked

He woke into a second dream at the foot of the bed
woke fell over then woke again

Amazing really how first the
for example 'tenebrous sky,' 'initial

doubts' and so on had been constructed
almost entirely of words

forgotten in order to be presently relearned
as 'red' or 'stone' or 'thirty-six,'

tube E to expel air through tube F,
all the attempts were useless

it's said, if not without interest
You could just as well add 'plant,' 'flame,'

'animal' and 'heaven'
and a ladder to be climbed three steps at a time

plus all similar ladders
conceived as parallel lines

(I wonder if the sparrow is still trapped in the barn
among the Greek philosophers, Jews,

gods and demi-gods, scythes and ploughs)
The water feels cold but the air

above us is momentarily clear
Today or yesterday the earth moved

a needle erratically across the page
Comparable marks appeared throughout the afternoon

at perfectly irregular intervals
Another time I saw the Crab bounce in the sky

Certain letters have deeper meanings than others
This is completely wrong. It's morning

and red and dark and stone again
according to the bells. A folio

lies open on the reading stand
"The sun is well above the horizon"

There is a great deal of
work to be done in the
field.

The first thing I did
was to go to the
field.

I went to the field
and found that the
work was not done.

I found that the
work was not done
and that the

work was not done
and that the
work was not done.

I found that the
work was not done
and that the

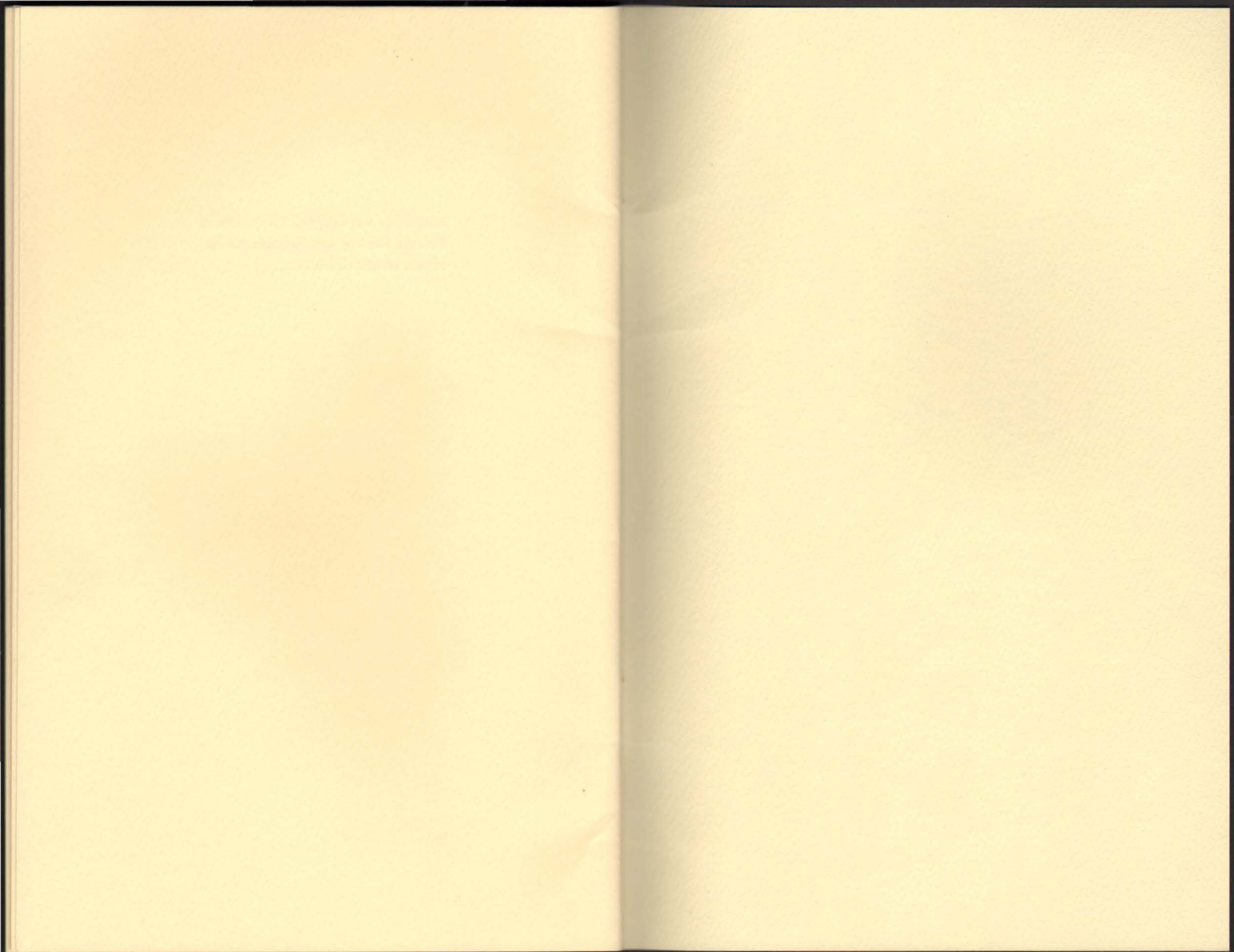
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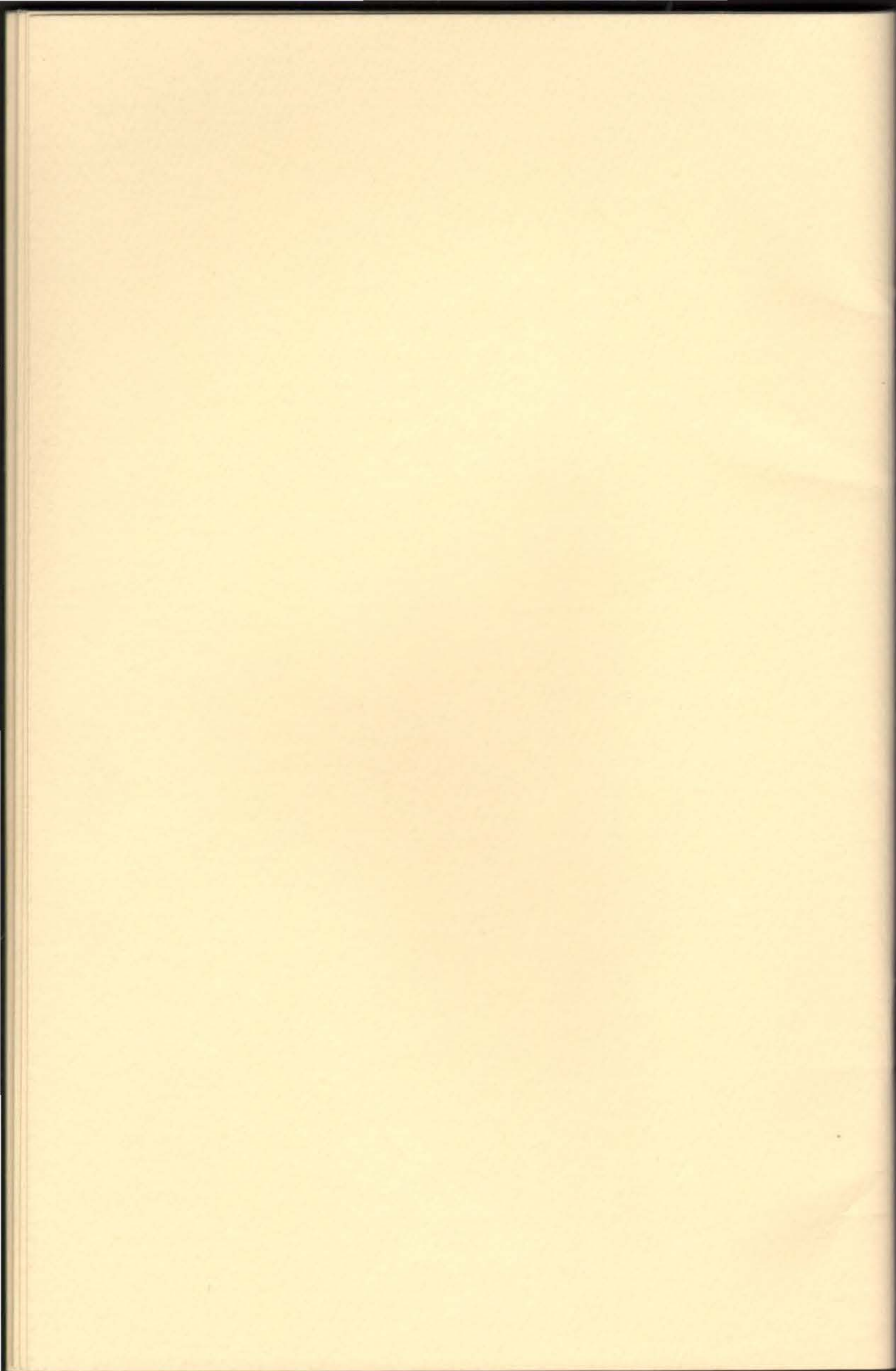
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