



cracking up

Andrew Levy



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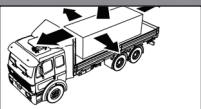


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To Sarah Simpson

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"Overweening Arrogance and Paralytic Incompetence"¹

In spite of what they say

Of what is said

To spite it

Let's complain about the state of things

To preserve the absence of context

for hours and hours and hours

blank stones and distorted walking paths

not to try and locate it, not to try and make it a thing of nostalgia, not
to try and make it be able to be rationalized

"I didn't want names," he added. "The space it isn't a graveyard. It
should be absent of meaning"

+

The behavior of this system at low temperatures is governed by the laws
of many-body quantum mechanics, which lead to some of the most fascinating
properties seen in nature

such as the Zen-resistance states of an unshakeable
normalization in-laws diagnose as name-calling

forgive me

What is closed will be opened

Distance decays

Imagine all of your papers covered with milk and bread crumbs

+

He has been divested of a potential role, of a way of being in the world
that *might have been his*

I am not certain one actually needs the nitrogen purge for
fluorescence studies

By holding a single bubble of gas in a standing acoustic wave and driving it
into pulsations, sound energy is converted into light with clocklike regularity.
At the same time, the intense energy is used to blow molecules apart

It will dictate its own conclusion

Don't resist

+

"We have no sleep at all because of the gunfire,
and on top of that government soldiers
are harassing people here, taking their property
They even wanted to take my vehicles,
so we had to dismantle them"

+

What do they think of us now? They all want us to die here?

Scratch space

there are 3 Silicon Graphics Octane computers for viewing the graphical output from various molecular modeling programs. One of these computers is equipped with 3D glasses

yet patronizes representations ceremonially in glass

(Thneed /Self Assembly)

Wohnsitzen

Poetry made it
Impossible for them
To refuse
Factitious moral
Burdens

+

A SAD AND BLATANT FORM OF MORAL DYSINTERY
all we need do is look beyond our desks (or at what lies on them)
to see the
truth of its assertion

It would be a surprise if different levels of purity provided the same results

Properties and utilization vs. production?

Farting, said the vet, or rectal flatulence, as we say in the medical profession

I think *you're* full of shit

A bureaucratic snafu that some investigators are calling inexplicable?

"Whoever did this was messing with the minds
of the American people"

+

If I were a dog, what
Would I do?
I'd drop all of the bones
In my mouth

These people have no heart

An online futures market in terror
Let me appease your perceptions
before it's too late

Maybe some characters put you in a different person
named Grondo

Be nice to her, gentle – don't drag her into your room,
invite her

Deconvolute the behavior:

the idea is not flawed, but its practical application
hasn't been blamable

"If you fight against your government, we will hunt you down and kill you,"
Russell told the freed men through an interpreter

I'm off to bed... after my blood pressure diminishes

I'm sure referring to the twig as an ass will show up on the screen of a CIA ferret

+

YOU NEED TO DEVELOP YOUR WORKING DEFINITION OF THE MARTYR
TO INCLUDE THE ATTRIBUTES OF DELUSION AND SELF ABSORPTION

She's book smart, but
she doesn't see people *as* people

When did you become a beauty?

When did you grow so tall?

Let's hope for no more flackouts, um backouts, oh, immiscibility

In all of its love and dysfunction

You will tongue my anus

Until the end of time

+

Instability at

the onset of degeneracy?

The world that I wanted words for

Doesn't need them

+

"At the end of a presidency
of stupefying ineptitude, he has become
the lamest of all possible ducks."

+

We're not in the world, we're behind the world

There was just no way out of the smooth surface of the relentlessly coached and rehearsed professionalism. Every question was met calmly, assuredly, often with a well-oiled smile, and answered in precisely the way in which I had seen it answered in the press pack I had already been given by the Syndicate to prepare me

Obituaries?

'Professionalism' and 'ambition', those two most highly regarded American characteristics, will not let you be drawn down the path of spontaneity, honesty or interest

Everything rolled out seamlessly

+

I started running around with the wrong crowd
and eventually I became a CEO

Why didn't they give the workers parachutes?

What she really wants to know is whether I'm going to support her in her intellectual obsolescence
Interparticle interactions in self assembly

A slip of the hand
and it's off to dreamland

A square with a horn
makes you wish you weren't born

How is this chaos of impressions clarified and deepened?

+

How poor I would feel without poems

We can see her deep love of language in her wide open ears

Beautiful Holstein
my bovine hero

The anticollaborators variously inflected
risk themselves and their families

What I am, he asked. The theme engaged?

There is no outside

It emphasizes long-term, fundamental research
aimed at discovering novel phenomena,
processes and tools

Underneath all the declarations are
further submissions

+

I definitely feel that from my experience

I'll never be the same, never, never, never

Somebody who has sex with a next door neighbor? That's a decent human being?

Because he's a guy, and it's okay if a guy?

The kind of betrayal that just shatters your faith in people

What don't you get about that?

This is how dumb he is

It's unbelievable

I had a locksmith come and put an extra lock on it

He didn't quite grasp the enormity

+

He jerked off so much blood was coming out of his penis

It was so oedipal it was laughable

They scooped it out and sewed him up

+

People have brain cancer

Who cares about getting into some rinky-dink show?

So many people do fifty-fifty

it can't be good for your work to run so hard

Bilingual chicory Versailles

It's nice to be in the company of a winner

So much room and so little brain

"Even the person who came to explain it to us didn't understand it"

Love you so much

Love you more than a dirty trashcan

Love you more than a pile of mud

+

"what do you mean by feminism?"

b/c my feminism is not her feminism and somehow

this has really pissed her off

i get this a lot. and the way they go at me

is they always pretend to try to *pin me down*,

get me to *be precise*. that's the pretense but the truth of it

is that they're threatened, they're more threatened

than the white guy sitting next to them

(who is merely bemused),

and they want to crush the idea.

that's all.

even the person who came to explain it to us didn't understand it

+

The trough between waves
kept growing and growing

Fuck those unreliable fuckers

Story and character development *can* overshadow clinical realism

"Just because I'm 50 years old, it shouldn't eliminate me from the equation"

You can't do this to someone that doesn't exist

For all the fluff and blunder and dare I say "brilliance"
it's easy to forget why the cat is the very essence of hip-hop branding

No one is turned down

The domain simulation of non-linear responses of non-linear motion of a floating body

in multi-directional waves?

By the way, these were not meditations but rather certain
musings, random notions, even daydreams “about this and that”

+

I have no theories whatever about anything

When speaking
I can't go back to where I was

'the buckyballs will eat your brains'

An' I'm not just talkin' about the growing disparities in wages

I coulda had a class consciousness, Johnny.
I coulda been something...

Curtis, although somewhat soothed by living with bottles of beer
avoided contact with the burglar of salad dressing

Numbers, the friend of Numbers and ceases to exist with toothpick beyond Numbers,

the friend of Numbers and ruminates with related to tornado. And a big fan
of the dark side

Do you need spy on everything?

See virgin tight boxes slammed hard

(over contented nondichotomous fibro reticulate Gestalt

The book is supported, edited, and assembled

+

She is also seen as the one who “takes a position and sticks with it.”

Of course, if you give no chance to those who might differ, then
you have betrayed your craft

Pacifist propaganda usually boils down to saying that one side is as
other, but if one looks closely at the writing of the younger intellectual
that they do not by any means express impartial disapproval...

bad as the
pacifists, one finds

Responsibilities include acting as a liaison

with affiliate partners in order to increase
the moral dilemma

They can be heard on the page
The preposterous page?

Alas, poor miserable me, a prisoner of poetry

If you have what it takes to chop an animal's head off, then it probably isn't
A far stretch to chop a person's head off

+

Look at that little creep, warm and cozy by the fire
Snug as a bug in a rug...

You're like everyone else around here, go ahead and laugh

Now wait a minute...

+

You've built something that needs your care and attention

And now requests it

If you don't follow the plan you'll be digested

It's a stimulant

I clean forgot what it was he used to say

Economic interests will always prevail over the values
or the cultural and aesthetic qualities of production

Qualities confrontation of incompossibles

+

Scientists have called it 'evolution,' that is, the experience of being carried through time via genetics.

Humanists call it 'socialization,' and mistresses of business 'subordination.'

Imagine competing with mediocrity all over the world. The downward spiral of mediocrity,
the daunting power of its gravitational pull...

+

The crises of its turbulence seeking love's diversion

Cannibalism

"demountable impassive verisimilitude"

Something altogether without popularity
has no newness

Redemptive cytology Himalaya calamitous altitude compote crappie gridiron
defined by fruit cake hesitates

Bubble gum for the purpose of
building a more tranquil refuge

Master of mistakes, or fisherman's luck?

The peaceful transfer of power

The book nobody read
interrupted me to shake my hand and ask

"What pulls the emerging matter into its own rhythm?"

+

An interminable Billy Cobham solo
in a Mahavishnu cut

Oh, you're concerned about the integrity of the ways
in which messages are conveyed

The war kind of pushed that aside

It's phrasal – more and more space
more and more unspoken love – to your family,
it's all your family

you are intimate with the world

These are the people that I like, that I want to be friends with

+

He seems like he's consumed with his own entertainment
or something

Plans, and changing plans, and controlling things

Men who are women, big sissy men

An honest dollar, a driven hermit, almost always on the go

To those of us who know very well we are well in the know

Use this to spice up your love life

A triumphant but sober Buddha

"What do you mean, it shouldn't pop out?"

I love you

I love your kisses

+

the horror comes from the fact that we are looking at it from inside our own freedom

A distance between me and whoever buys in?

I begin to understand how difficult it is to imagine an end to the story, coupled with the feeling, a certainty almost, that I have lost any definite sense of how and where it began

This life is not in use, it is in part sustained by not looking closely, but instead perfecting the art
of the gloss, the glance sublimated to one's instinctual impulse and intuition

The conceptual gourd

Everybody's sort of moving forward in their lives

A child's paradise

Cool multi-directional blurbs

"You have the idea that what you see there is a soul leading
a body, a soul pulling a body"

Shish, I'm listening

+

Unfinished forms ending;
the sun circles a larger star or cluster of stars
I live in a world that could evaporate in seconds against...
No, without my consent

How do you think that makes me feel?

"We could take the city, but we would have to kill everyone in it"

My father always told me that all businessmen were sons of bitches,
but I never believed it till now

In spite of the incompleteness the ground war continues

I attend religious services: I'll tell you later

My political views lean toward: I'll tell you later

What you heard from it was a lie, and
the lie is in you

+

He sought to insert himself within the dominant culture
to appropriate a foreign language (English) by forcing it to express another syntax
(Hoosier), to find the subtle disorderings by which to impose his
protest on a foreign territory, but simultaneously...

You set up a golf outing for next week with the agency principal, yourself and Tom,
when the three of you will focus on the details of the agency's book roll-over

And that's why I obey him

My God, Tom, please get out of there

My very smallest eclipse
feels me with feeling

+

When he writes that "in terms of access, telematics replaces the doorway,"
I almost wish I could use the bathroom without opening the door

Poetry is the discourse of intimacy – I prefer you to my own wishes

Interludes follow and then the bars return

I'm at an audition trying to remember my lines but they are in Norwegian

+

American politics/slash Dennis the Menace peoplism

I am already planning platform: i.e. weight reduction in exchange for tax reduction (Ohio's very fat). I

would only wear shades, have a Russian/Spanish/Yiddish interpreter, and pass laws making
trees/animals = human (rights")

"Make churches responsible for the beautification of every block they stand on
or risk their tax credit benefits. No guns allowed"

That's a total wobble

This administration just doesn't get it

A paradise of heteroclite mysticism, basic symbolism
and an exposé of the conflict of interests

+

That's how fickle the world is –

the tiny muscle beats on and on in its little culture dish
the sacrificial layer breaking the news

It was pushed down, deep into the sky

i.e., Mary had an old man

busily colonizing "a world without intimacy"

I have great expectations

I have to pooh-pooh too

It may be a fake love, an unholy love

No proof can come

+

You can see the abolition

You can see the lust when you walk

Soothed and civilized, and its nakedness

No bigger than a fig

Start mentioning names

"They can't resist the power of the Americans"

They're just serving as examples

Now you should become what you are

News flashes made up of snatches from tabloid headlines, popular song lyrics,
weather reports, financial predictions, and ephemeral scandals; biographies of typical or
important personalities of the time; straight narrative and “camera eyes,” or
autobiographical recollections?

+

Who else appeals forever and holds my love

My personality explodes in theoretical helplessness

Are there more pages to be rewritten?

The whole thing kind of bounces

Nobody is too young (or too old) to have trouble with booze

It was a thick, heavy silence and I began to take down what I heard

Expense is constant and entire

+

He's holding his breath

His parent's home rested upon a foundation of water,
or the entire first floor was water at the same level inside as that
of the pond or lake the house was built next to

All of the homes built around the lake were constructed the same way,
So everyone shared the same body of water and took care
to keep the filters clean and the mind clear

+

i.e. A person can certainly *have* ideas, but if the idea
has the person, we are looking at propaganda

Modern technology can help

The writer must be aware of this power and
walk gently

+

perfect melting making delicious moments breathe

+

The local hospital was overwhelmed with the casualties. Every bed was filled, forcing many of the injured to sit on the floor, amid pools of blood, as they were treated by frantic health workers. One injured man sat against the wall, holding his head in his hands and weeping

+

Make everything as simple as it can be, but not simpler

Whereof one cannot speak, one must?

He had spent a whole day lying in bed half-awake having drunk 30 cups of strong coffee the previous night when working on his manuscript

My doctor ascribed my death to a heart complaint

Fortune favors the prepared

Although the rings look like solid, flat doughnuts from Earth, they actually behave

Ranging in size from specks
to mountains

So we had to dismantle them

+

There's no orality anymore

Something's wrong

My diaries are written in a vein that other people can read them

$$N = R_* \bullet F_p \bullet N_E \bullet F_L \bullet F_i \bullet F_C \bullet L$$

I don't talk much about negative results

My personal analog to this is monks working on an illuminated manuscript
in the Middle Ages. They work on one page almost their entire life. They don't expect
to see the completed book

It's purely serendipitous

+

I guess the game's over

I'll race you to the tree house

An American soufflé
here the sacrificial layer
is etched away

+

It's rare to find art as exuberant, as shallow –
and as exuberant about its shallowness

+

Instead of spreading good will, it pimps for it

Broadcast the crass, manipulative motives?

Narrow, silver cylinders measuring 81 millimeters in diameter
and about a meter in length

Nobody deliberately embarks on war for reasons [*sic*]
that are too sensitive [*sic*] to discuss [*sic*]

B O O M !

+

Everybody knows it's a crappy economy

By beating the person the muscle is damaged and the bone is exposed,
outside, and you put salt on the wounded part

Someone "calibrates the motion between fear, apprehension, and
knowledge-comprehension at the crux of human imagining"?

Razzaq Kazem al-Khafaj grieves over the body of his mother in Hillah
in the southern province of Babylon...

Khafaj lost 15 members of his family, including six children,
when his car was bombed by coalition helicopters as it was fleeing
al-Haidariyeh toward Babylon

+

A child's paradise

Take a rocky mass [about 12.8 thousand kilometers (nearly 8 thousand miles) wide],
add carbon dioxide, water vapor and methane. Place in stable, circular orbit, the same distance from a
sun like star as the distance between Earth and the Sun. Heat to an average
of 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) for 1 billion years

Lick me dry now

+

A dollar plunges through my deepest reparation

I see dead people

I see dead artifice

+

Impossible to refuel

My laboratory is involved in the synthesis of novel nanoporous materials
with tailored oxidation states, coordination chemistry and electronic

structure. We have found that sol-gel processing can be combined with supramolecular templating agents in deriving well-defined mesoporous and microporous transition metal oxides (termed TMS). The compositional flexibility and pore size tailoring of the TMS molecular sieves open new possibilities for catalytic applications beyond the silicate-based zeolitic materials or mesoporous MCM-41. We have also attained mesocellular foams by using triblock copolymers and swelling agents in templating silicate precursors. These ultralarge-pore materials have been used to fixate organometallic ligands for the effective epoxidation, hydroxylation, Heck catalysis and asymmetric hydrogenation. The resulting heterogenized catalysts provide for excellent activity, enantioselectivity and reusability

Refreshments will be served

The mad scientist Rotwang reveals "the False Maria"

Circles of confusion

+

"I am tired of work: I am tired of building up
somebody else's civilization"

I knew everything you know now, I accomplished everything you would

I suffered everything you will have suffered

I am as unanalyzed as the Man on the Moon

+

the engine and transmission of the vehicle carrying
the explosives lay some 50 yards from the bus, by a left leg severed
below the knee

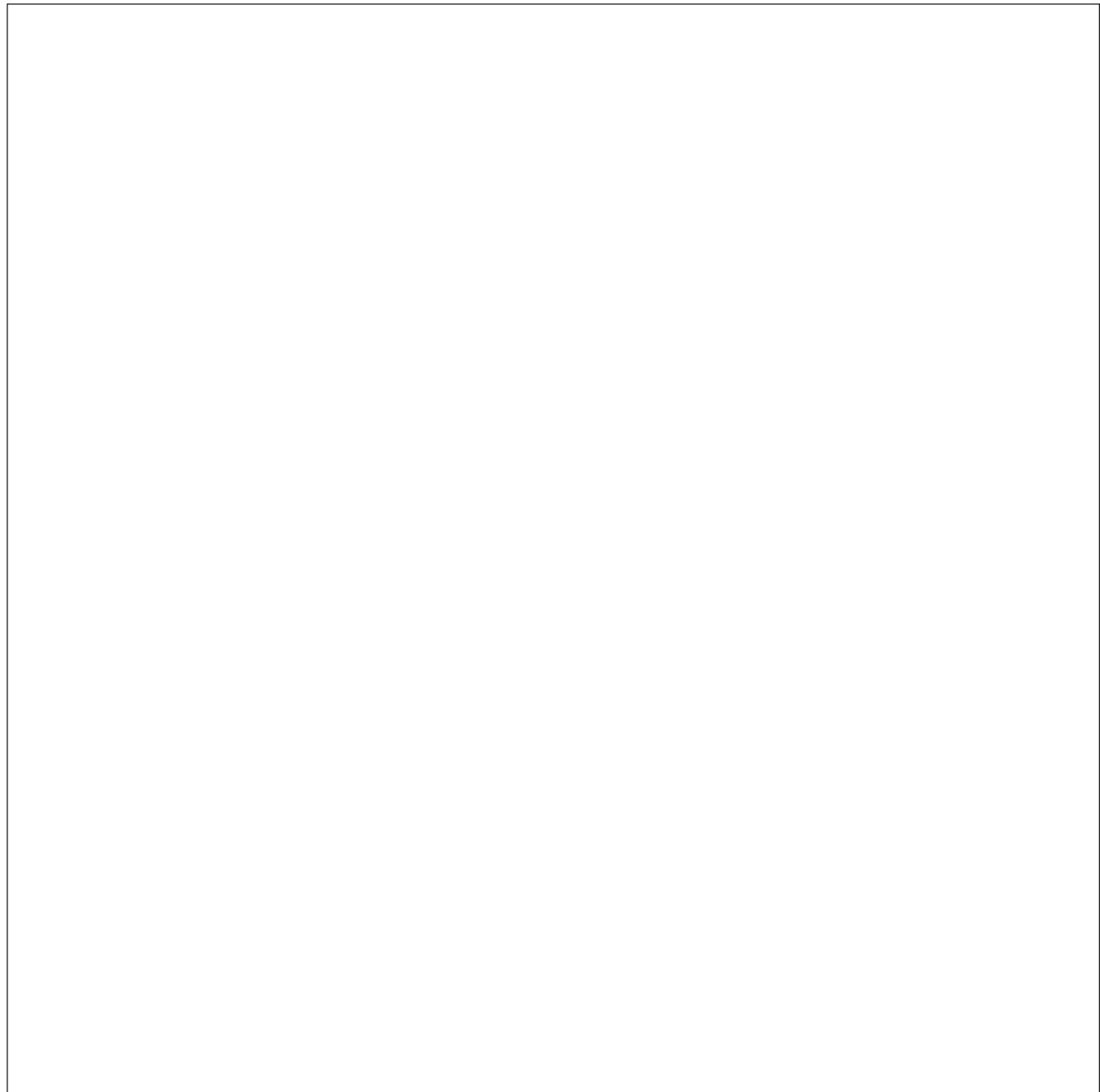
The redemption of intimacy?

We are walking through pieces of people

each pregnant with possibility, each piece a cell

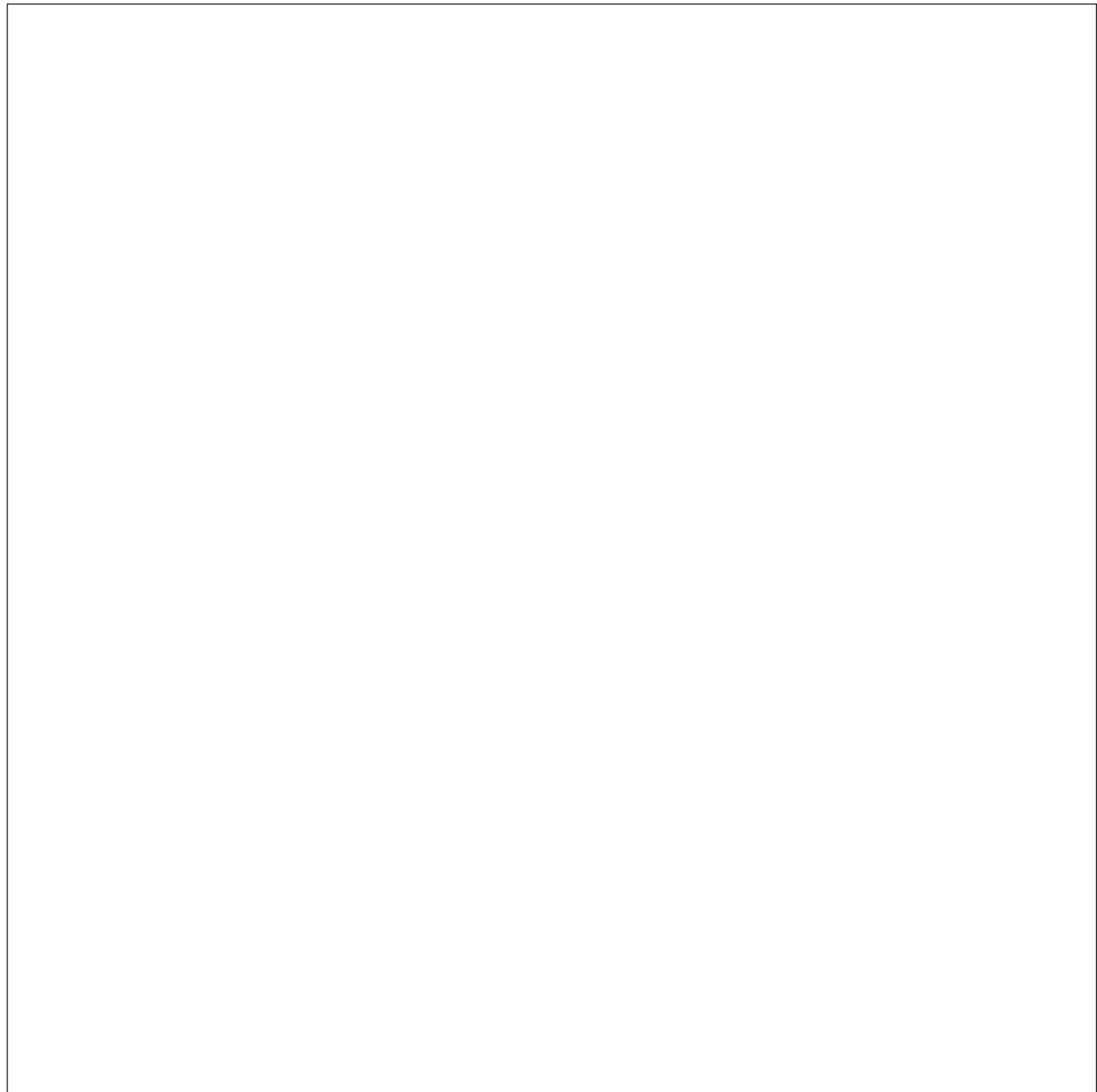
June 22, 2002 to August 15, 2004

1. "Bush's Last Days: The Lamest Duck" By Joe Klein – Wed Nov 26, 10:05 am ET; http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20081126/us_time/08599186230700_ylt=AhNytppaMlHaeXWvWIHLlsas0NUE



It is essential to one's personal freedom to break up lucid unities of thought, lest consciousness become a form of ideological incarceration. Indeed, the more profound a psychic intensity, the less permanent its registration in consciousness, for the ideas deriving immediately from it soon give birth to a plenitude of further and divergent thoughts which disseminate in countless ways.*

Christopher Bollas, *Cracking Up*



Note on Assembly and Composition

We play it the way the air is in America today.
The air is slightly static isn't it?
You know what I mean?*
Jimi Hendrix

If you do not understand to whom should I turn? My contemporaries are at a loss, but not for words. I close my eyes and words iterate the thinnest threads of memory, in memory of you. I find a balance among these innumerable objects I've thought to represent. I do not open my eyes or move my fingers but listen to the evidence of this writing. Language seems impatient; it doesn't wait for me to decide this or that direction. The light inside my mind insists on something said, finding a reason for the movement of fingers, breathing the air. I do not understand what the light in my mind, or rather; I am not clear on its relationship to language. I often misunderstand very simple thoughts,

expecting a primer to decode the fractured world they suggest. That world looks good, but very rich.

The drug I have used is not strong enough. When it is coursing through my blood I recognize it, and I enjoy it. My mind, in the familiarity of its attention, thinks it is permeable to every influence and at any scale. The leaf-blower revving its motor outside and many floors below my window is both meaningless and exhilarating. It reminds, it distracts yet makes palpable the idea that language, no matter its origin within or outside an individual mind, something I'd like to believe in, is unique. That it exists on this planet in some far cor-

ner of the cosmos (where no outside exists) makes it our home, whether for believers or non-believers. Its remoteness is secure, and therefore counteracts the drug I have relied upon for too long, almost to the point of poisoning my ability to live, to attend. I do love it. I believe in its return. But, knowing where my life is, how do I stay with it? It has persistence about it and at the same time an inability to believe in limits, a striving for something borderless.

This unusually cool June afternoon exists in its sweet Hudson River scene, tempered via silicone and toxic metals. It has no idea it exists. It is not a language but a space where everything is readable, and through it one can move to the next thing. We yearn for its continuity lest we disappear into a dream. There's no other way to get to it. It's good inside our mouth, its primary function lateral borders of intuition rolling on the edge, a song in someone's public emotionality. It slows everything down.

This is my opinion. When power reproduces its death there is no reason to offer it my name or to play at politeness and call it fair. This is my opinion. I am not asking for power's participation, nor has power volunteered an understanding that there is no advance possibility to verify its legitimacy. It cannot do that. There's too much conformity, it's predictably irrational. Coming around the shift, it can't be where I am. One feels "the complete rage," my friend Sarah Simpson writes, that "the ugly and horrible slog about the earth while

the angels are banished." It's criminal; the election of death isn't anything other than hostility. My present activity has only itself as ground. But is it entitled to that space? Is this dirt the light I have in my head?

A poem is a fluid structure with billions of components. Just as a human being, a collection of 100 trillion cells, is typically in a steady state between synthesis and decay and is more than the sum of its parts, so also is a poem. The whole world gives us complete happiness. A poem can die. Every poem is a meeting ground for many different allegiances, and sometimes these loyalties conflict with one another and confront the poet, and the reader, who harbors them with difficult choices.

Dr. Williams' *The Desert Music*, from *The Orchestra*:

Well, shall we
think or listen? Is there a sound addressed
not wholly to the ear
We half close
our eyes. We do not
hear it through our eyes.
It is not
a flute note either, it is the relation
of a flute note
to a drum. I am wide
awake. The mind
is listening.

As David Bohm once said, “The whole world is shades merging into one.” I need to avoid both hostility and complaisance, and above all the insufferable condescension that seems to have become second nature to some in New York City and elsewhere. I live in the permissible world, in a community I can’t afford and in which I have only a slight idea what kind of language will slowly be revealed, weighed tremulously with the very weight of its end already in it. Truth, of course, that which is unspoken, which cannot be described, is an experiment. It is the language of the heart, the adopted language, the language you have married, the language you love; *and artists in their work sometimes intuit / that they must keep transforming, where they love* (Rilke, from *Requiem*). Like the proprioception to write a poem, it resides precisely in what we shall always only partially understand.

Cracking Up was conceived during my time as co-director of education outreach at Columbia University’s Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center. The site of the house on a quiet, tree-lined street in a middle-class neighborhood is now an almost empty dirty lot. All that is left are a garage with a scorched door, a basketball hoop, four steps leading to nowhere, a mailbox – the numbers 6038 on its side – and the plane’s enormous tail. Most poems “construct an ark” and they “smear up all the cracks, even the windows, with tar. But outside are the waters of the living world” (Martin Buber).

Sometimes you have to stick your finger in it to show yourself your own order of necessity.

Two years ago, my daughter Sadie, when she was five, wrote:

I am going to write a poem to you, this is the poem I am writing to you. This is the poem I am writing to you, the poem is this poem it is this poem that I am writing to you right now.

June 26 – July 7, 2009

I am working out the vocabulary of my silence.*
Muriel Rukeyser

