

to the reader Inbox x

I should start out by saying I did not know Pellegrino well. I first met him in September of 2022, when I was starting my fifth year of a PhD in Structural Biology here at Silicon Valley University. We had just become roommates, in the small graduate housing apartments offered on campus. He had been assigned to me at random. He seemed to have just arrived, after a sort of extended gap year. I never got a good explanation about his academic situation. Everything about him seemed somehow vague and undefined. He said he was studying Philosophy but some Multidisciplinary Humanities Program. When he introduced himself, it was merely as “Pellegrino” and I wasn’t even sure if that was his first or last name... or, when I come to think of it, whether that was his name at all.

When I met him he gave me the impression of having inherited his clothes and style from an uncle who had once been a hippy– faded and colored T shirts and pants which were just a little too large, along with the same old running shoes with a small hole near the big toe where his socks could be seen. He had longish black hair which looked like it needed a hair-cut, which was pushed back with a pair of cycling glasses. He was tan, skinny and of average height. He had the relaxed and loose accent of a California surfer, which made abstract words sound strange in his mouth, like there was a cognitive dissonance between his accent and the “intellectual” things he sometimes said.

I rarely saw him at the apartment. Whereas I woke up early, each day at 7am for my morning workout, he would likely sleep until noon. Sometimes I would hear the door close to his room in the early hours of the

morning. Some nights I could hear faint electronic music, a thumping beat, through his door. On the rare mornings I did see him, he was always cheerful, but had deep dark circles under his eyes. He may have been a kind of insomniac. He seemed restless, anyhow.

I almost always saw him outside, in the late afternoon or evening towards sunset. He was always walking—where I did not know—at times under the sandstone arcades of the main quad, or out by our many tree-lined paths. He had a strange way of walking which allowed me to spot him from a mile away. He did not walk quickly, but with each step extended his stride as far as he could, just a little too far for the length of his legs, so that he lunged rather than walked. Every so often while he was walking I would see him stop, no matter what or who was around him, and stare out into space. Then after a while he would type something into his phone, and continue on walking as before.

When we talked it was always a nice conversation. He was very good at asking questions about myself—what I was interested in, what I was doing, my plans & so on. He was an attentive listener, always asking a further question to better understand. He had this easy way about him, like he knew instinctively what the right words were, or the right attitude, to put people at ease no matter who they were. He reminded me of those people who can, depending on who they are talking to, at a moment's notice switch from one language to another, so that their personality seemingly changes completely. In fact I think he did speak Italian, or write it at least. He once mentioned he grew up in California, for example, and that his parents were scientists, like me. One of them must have been foreign, given his name. But now that I think about it, he never offered up much information about his own life. Not that I inquired much into his affairs. I was far too busy with my lab work, my dissertation, my teaching and my supervisor to bother myself with these things.

I never did see him walking with anyone else, or for that matter really doing anything with anybody. He never brought anyone home, at least not to my knowledge—though once I may have heard a girl’s voice in his room but I can’t be sure. It was not clear to me when or if he went to class. I never saw him on his computer, even at the university cafe where everybody is at least pretending to do work. He must have worked at some point, I reasoned. All I knew empirically and with certainty was that he walked, circling in the same predetermined orbit, each day by himself. It was like a kind of hypnosis, almost.

It happened in the first days of April—the sun was out, the flowers were in bloom and the spring quarter was just getting underway—when he disappeared for good. I didn’t even notice for the first few days, busy with work, until I took a look into his room when the door was open. Seeing he wasn’t there, out of curiosity I walked in. This was the first good look I had had of his room, since he always kept his door closed. It was at once clear to me that he had left, and in a hurry. His closet and his cabinet drawers were wide open and empty. His bed was unmade. There were no books or notebooks on the bookshelf, or on his wooden, university issued desk. Maybe he didn’t have any to begin with. The only signs he had been there, as far as I could see, were a few pictures taped on the wall above his desk—pages ripped out from an art history book—of what looked to be ancient greek sculptures and old christian paintings in many different versions and colors. Before I left, I rummaged through his desk and could find no note, no writing of any kind. When I stuck my hand deep in a drawer, in-between some old chargers and pens, I found a dead and broken iphone, with a crack that spread out like a spider’s web across the screen.

Admittedly, the moment I first walked into his room I had for a second feared the worst, but upon more reflection later I put the thought out of my

mind. All signs pointed to his leaving town, not a suicide. After all, he had taken his things, and had left no note... nothing except some trash. Only I did not know if he had left on his own accord or if he had been kicked out, in all likelihood because, I suspected, he never went to class or did any work. He reminded me of many young men I knew, smart to be sure, but lazy, and unwilling to really work—so they signed up for grad school to keep the party going for a few more years and put off making a real life decision. I was pretty certain of this, but I decided to test my hypothesis. I first went to the philosophy department and asked for him. They said they knew no one of the name Pellegrino, or, for that matter, when I described him to them, anyone who matched that very particular description. Maybe I got the department wrong. So I went to every humanities department I knew of, Anthropology, Comparative Literature, Religion, Classics, Eastern, Western Studies you name it, I always got the same response—that they had never seen, knew, or had records of anyone remotely like Pellegrino. When I went to the graduate housing office, they told me that as far as they knew the other room in my apartment, Pellegrino's, had been unassigned for the whole year, empty. By all indications Pellegrino had been an imposter, posing as a graduate student.

In the weeks that followed I kept Pellegrino's iPhone on my desk. Sometimes I would pick it up, hold it in my hands, and run my fingers down the web of tiny fractures in the glass. I will admit it did not occur to me, not until well after he left, to plug the phone in and see if it would charge. When I did, after what seemed like an eternity, I saw the white apple logo appear. I examined the phone thoroughly, going through every application to look for any signs of life: any documents, communications, photos, anything that could tell me more about him, who he was and where he might be now. I found a great deal. I discovered the following: an extensive collection of notes, some short and some long, almost forty on the native Notes app. On

his google drive there were saved as well a series of google documents. On the Mail app, six draft emails were all that was saved. They were addressed to no one in particular. The emails and documents were tied to an email address, s.p3llegrin0@gmail.com. The rest of my findings were some photos found on his camera roll, photos, screenshots and even selfies presumably taken on the phone by Pellegrino himself.

You will certainly ask me why I am making these documents public. The contents of the phone, as a whole, remind me of the lab notebooks we scientists keep, in which we, indiscriminately, write each day all our experimental observations and reflections and calculations. This is so that all we see, think and do as scientists is recorded. We are duty-bound to keep these records, and it doesn't matter one bit whether we ourselves think our efforts are of any worth, whether our experiments “succeed” or not. For one we cannot know what insights our own experimental attempts and observations may bring to other Scientists in the future—in particular those “failed” experiments we pour down the drain.

There is of course another, more important reason for my publishing this document. A year has passed since Pellegrino's disappearance. Over the last year I have attempted to contact him through his email but I have never yet received a response. I am hoping that someone may recognize Pellegrino through the things he has said. The reason I am not so hopeful I will find out the truth about Pellegrino is also the reason why I feel comfortable going through someone's phone and publishing its contents. In truth there was, and is no “Pellegrino”. Pellegrino is the name of a part, a role this young man played with me and god knows how many others. Why, and who he really was, we can only guess through the words he has left behind. But are these writings really the truth of the person behind them, or just the script for an act, another part of the part he played?

My findings are attached in the document below– A.V. 5/7/24

the confessions of san pellegrino

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in
the days of your youth;
Walk in the [b] ways of your heart
And [c] in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these

Instagram ▾





🐟 & ❤️

We don't say 🐟 represents the truth. We say that 🐟 is the truth in the same way we don't say that words "represent" the truth—the truth is (in) words. This Truth 🐟 is the truth about ❤️. ❤️ comes from within (the body) but it also comes from without. In the same way we say 🐟 is in our ❤️ but also comes to us from without, as it were, like a gift, and we speak to 🐟 as if 🐟 were outside. The story 🐟 of is the story of ❤️, before a concept, a mere 🧑 story, incarnating itself and named 🐟. Being incarnated we experience it directly. It is in the body. If is ❤️ / 🐟 is not incarnated—not directly experienced NOW, then ❤️ / 🐟 means nothing.



Fwd: SVU Inbox x



S

Pellegrino
to me ▾

4:13 PM (9 minutes ago)



I understand very well what you mean about feeling that you're not good enough--or to put it another way--that you haven't Done enough-- or to put it even another way--feeling like a failure. and that is a strange thing, to feel like a Failure, because it doesn't mean really that you've failed at this or that thing, but the feeling is more total, because when you say you're a failure, you're a failure in Life. this is just an aside but i also have never met someone who was not american who spoke about themselves in these terms--as a failure. and you know i've thought about this a lot. I would ask myself how much of this feeling's strength and weight-- of having to be better-- comes out of guilt. this is something I hate about catholicism--i think the feeling of guilt serves no good purpose, in fact it is the most disabling and paralyzing moral emotion, and incompatible with joy. If we did not feel guilty for failing, what would then propel our desire to succeed? what about joy?

This is what I wanted to ask you though--What is it that you want to succeed in? What is it you want to think about? i take it that "being more educated" or "being more established" are not just ends in of themselves for you, like getting more money or honors or a higher rank, but are important because they are the marks of recognition of having done something well. of having excelled in something. What is it that you want to excel at? i suppose that's the question we're all asking ourselves.... I can understand if you feel you are short of ideas in this respect, if you feel that

you don't have many options available to you... but i have a theory why. one thing i am learning about far too late, is the question of money- how much money do i need? I think we can go around for a long time with a lot of hidden and unremarked upon pressupositions about how much money it is we actually need, to get everything we need in life. as a young man, usually its not that much. if you were left to your own devices today and say, were given a stipend so that you had a roof over your head, food on the table, and say good health care--what would you do with the rest of your day?

One problem with SVU, is that there is a sense that— people think about X because that is their work. Rather than, they think about X THEREFORE it is their work. Like if they were left to their own devices, then they wouldn't be doing it, i suspect. The trap i smell in other people for whom certain things are their “passion.” There is something i hate deeply about thinking, about analysis, like what I am doing now. It can come from the heart, it can touch the heart, it can come from that place but most of the time it doesn't. thinking makes you alien to everyone else and to things around you even if you think about things and that makes you closer to them cuz you observe them, you instead are made distant to the human beings around you even if you are thinking about them...

I feel that SVU is the kind of place one can step out of, even for a long time, and still be there in spirit, mentally that is, whilst being somewhere completely different. that is the strength of the mentality (or mental disease), the profound distortion of attitude, which a place like that can affect. Silicon valley is, historically speaking, the current epicenter of the american capitalist empire (even more so than new york), the richest place at the richest time in the world, though you would not know it if you

compared it to rome (a sad fact)... and SVU is at the epicenter of the epicenter, and those who go there are the golden geese--with the insigna, stamp of the current bourgeoisie elite that opens doors to work anywhere in the world, go to any university at any big and prestigious corporation & so on---with the guarantee that you will alright. so in theory you are given Infinite Possibility. & yet i have found that the people there, and being there, has often had the opposite effect-- of measure by measure limiting my possibilites (the ones that exist in my own mind, the ones that i live with) to an incredibly narrow and narrowing horizon. part of this has to do with the fact of class--the current or aspiring bourgeoisie has always been pretty narrow minded/repressed, and this new technocratic & boring bourgeoisie even more so). It also is because a place like SVU, by its own nature, selects for those teenagers and adults who know how to play a very competitive game & follow the strict rules to win, which results in a place that is populated by these former children who are, importantly, simply not open to trying anything new or risky, who refuse to consider anything remotely outside the "track," any new game outside the one they have played up to now, because those that do are filtered out by the college application game. so in the end I find SVU to be, in the pure and original sense of the word, a very conservative place full of very conservative people, conservative in the sense they want to conserve their status as part of the bourgeoisie, sure, but also that they are conservative about their choices in life--there are few choices that are acceptable to them. this is not a criticism of the desire for success or ambition--the problem is not the desire for success or the ambition for something--whatever we value-- the problem is that the "good," whatever we value, --the possibilities towards which the ambition is directed, the activities in which one succeeds----are in this strange culture environment that is SVU (and the problem is Cultural) in practice very few, because there are very few people who incarnate

those different possibilities in a real way. and this completely defeats the purpose of going to school in the first place, which is to encounter the new, which to say to be introduced to new possibilities for living beyond those we were considering when we were 17. the result is this strange phenomenon, where though in truth we have, materially and in reality all the possibilities in the world, we feel as if we have none, and the horizon of our lives shortens and squeezes out any color until we live in a grey tube of despair. the beautiful thing though, is that after living in this narrow grey tube, it took very little to get that wonderful and also incredibly painful feeling feeling of "damn I didn't know I could have done that!" or "I didn't know i was allowed to do that" basically hearing or seeing something which tells you that something you had ruled out long ago as something you couldn't do, or wouldn't be able to do, was actually possible this whole time (& hence the pain of regret). For my own part, i'm looking into jobs teaching English... just so I can live on my own in a city and have time to do my own projects... but there is something dissatisfying about that clearly and i suspect i am ruling many things out/censoring options and that accounts for my dissatisfaction.



< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:16



Joyce: His earlier stories are simpler, less cerebral, less elaborate as portraits—frames of moments in feeling—but more beautiful, more moving, because you can feel the heart in them.

< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:19



Philosophy, necessary but not sufficient.

Art, necessary & sufficient



The Wondrous & Magnificent Silicon Valley Space Station

I like to think of SVU as a space station orbiting around earth. Covering this curved floating city would be a great roof which has been designed to simulate our own, earthly heaven. It is a closed system, in which everything is sunny, temperate, and benign. Everything is measured and regulated, including, of course, the people inside. Only some tourists are allowed, the rest are carefully checked, just like well-manicured parks with their flowers and trees and green grass and flowing water fountains. If you listen carefully you will detect the lightest humming, unyielding and constant, of a thousand engines--great heaters and refrigerators which bound the tall-walled working and housing facilities and keep everything in the closed ecosystem in a measured Homeostasis.

It is only the changing foliage of trees and flowers, the length of the day, or the fluctuations of temperature and precipitation that would inform you of the movement of time. Since we are no longer an agrarian, nor a religious society, there is no need for those events which marked and celebrated the traditional cycles of sowing and harvest, the passages of the moon and sun, the coming of spring and winter. Life is measured instead by the coming and going of the space shuttles, all passing around in predetermined paths, which rise and fall in pitch and intensity as the working day begins and ends.

The station resembles a great airport terminal, with its arrivals and departures, and above all in the transience of its inhabitants. The station is populated by and large by engineers, doctors, and a few scientists. These are the educated people who tend to the health of the various systems which keep the station alive. With them are just as many business people, whose job instead is to tend to the capital of earthly corporations. Workers are also present to serve food and clean up after the others, but they are kept in separate living quarters and are otherwise ignored. All the business on the station is run in an easy, understandable Business English (the lingua franca of our age) abbreviated for technical clarity and ease of compression into digital files.

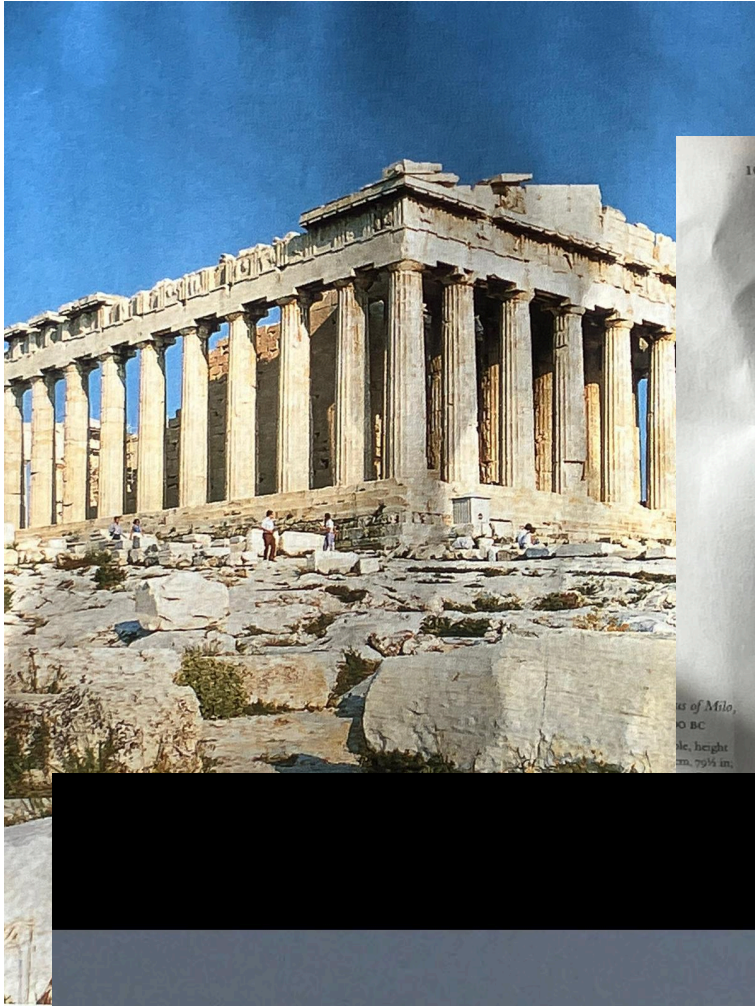
It is Science, divulged on popular transmissions and discussed at work and at home, which has the final say on the most efficient and optimal program of one's day (which is to say, of one's life). Exercise should be regular and vigorous, (lowering and elevating brain activity in crucial sectors). Ten minutes of sunlight is recommended, especially in the early morning. Sex is recommended at least once a

week, to clear the lymphatic system, to promote dopamine release and can be justified as well by its provision of mild aerobic stimulation.

Faced with the necessity of these sexual relations, computer applications have been devised to ascertain, to a high degree of certainty, each person's ideal erotic partner. This innovative and efficient social engineering removes the need to frequent unruly places such as bars or concerts where young people on earth congregate to meet each other. Children and adolescents too are much too busy with work, study, and their computers, to bother themselves with an evening of unsupervised parties and drug-use. They are instead provided medically-sanctioned amphetamines and other stimulants to improve their mental performance, and other mood-regulating drugs should non-productive emotions such as sadness manifest themselves. The occasion of Death, which regrettably does occur despite the best efforts, is dealt with quickly, efficiently and above all secretly, so that the psychic health of other workers may not be disturbed.

The main business of the station is education, and it is taken up with great seriousness. On earth, the perpetual conflicts between historically antagonistic religious, ethnic, and political groups, as well as the tensions between the sexes, have never been overcome in schools. Luckily the educational system here has been designed with great foresight. By forbidding any discourse, or humor, touching upon these problems, these problems have finally been resolved.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics—the disciplines that have made possible this floating world—are held by the youth in great esteem, and are well-rewarded. Among a peculiar few, the knowledge of arts—hobbies—such as painting, poetry still persist (much like stamp-collecting). These arts are seen as a useful way of relaxing the student after the real work is done, who will not have to worry about satisfying any strenuous, objective requirements (which anyways do not exist in Art). Some also study philosophy, a fruitless discipline whose purpose and usefulness they themselves cannot even state. Eccentrics, they are considered by most as either idle or rich—or both. They tend to congregate in and around the schools, to hold acrimonious and fruitless disputes on word choice, and eventually to recommend one other for teaching posts so that they may reproduce their occult interests in the next generation. Music is rarely heard on the station, since it distracts people from work and may lead to dancing.



us of Milo,
0 BC
le, height
m, 79 1/4 in.

Many of the most famous works of classical art which were admired in later times as representing the most perfect types of human beings are copies or variants of statues which were created in this period, the middle of the fourth century BC. The Apollo Belvedere, *figure 64*, shows the ideal model of a man's body. As he stands before us in his impressive pose, holding up the bow in the extended arm and with his head turned sideways as if he were following the arrow with his eyes, we have no difficulty in recognizing the faint echo of the ancient scheme in which each part of the body was given its most characteristic view. Among the famous classical statues of Venus, the Venus of Milo (so called because it was found on the island of Melos) is perhaps the best known, *figure 65*. Probably it belonged to a group of Venus and Cupid which was made in a somewhat later period, but which used the achievements and the methods of Praxiteles. It was designed to be seen from the side (Venus was extending her arms towards Cupid), and again we can admire the clarity and simplicity with which the artist modelled the beautiful body, the way he marked its main divisions without ever becoming harsh or vague.

Of course, this method of creating beauty by making a general and schematic figure more and





Two palms reach and sway into
the sky

the italian angel prays, mosaic-
stones shine gold-green

seeing those red-orange lilies
wide open on their bright green
stalk in the sun

The organ like a storm brewing
up around a person.





👁️ **starbucks** 👁️

Just now I went to starbucks and without looking went straight up to the counter. Emerging was a girl. Her face was painted whiter than normal and she was short and otherwise plain if not for her eyes which were winged in black liner and with long applied eyelashes, greatening the impression of a great, luscious, expressive eyes of warmth. The interaction was quick, no word wasted or out of the ordinary, yet during this business exchange she did not for a moment break eye contact. In that moment, or moments, all the space in between us, normally empty, became as it were solid, as if one is immediately conscious of all the individual molecules which make up the air in between our eyes, and forms a transparent but contiguous mass from eye to eye, body to body, and all information, of our state of being, our desire, is communicated instantly as it is when two people touch. Nothing needed to be said, it was understood, and that was it.





What was the truth

I sought in words? Was it those moving-feeling pictures which accosted me as I napped half-asleep? Was this truth in truth just a feeling, a mere feeling propelling me, which came to me as I re-visited them once again, by my computer, drawing out into the blank paper the sketching-drafts that were my life? A closeness to something which could only be had then, in this act? I could go through the whole day and do nothing, feel everything directly and immediately, but something was missing if these feelings, felt directly and immediately, could not be felt-once-again through language as if this was not only the final confirmation of their reality, but gave them another reality, a reality that I could re-visit myself and at the same time separate from myself into a reality different than my own, and one that existed, in this sequence of symbols laid out on the computer-page, a voice singing out from the desert of my own silence.





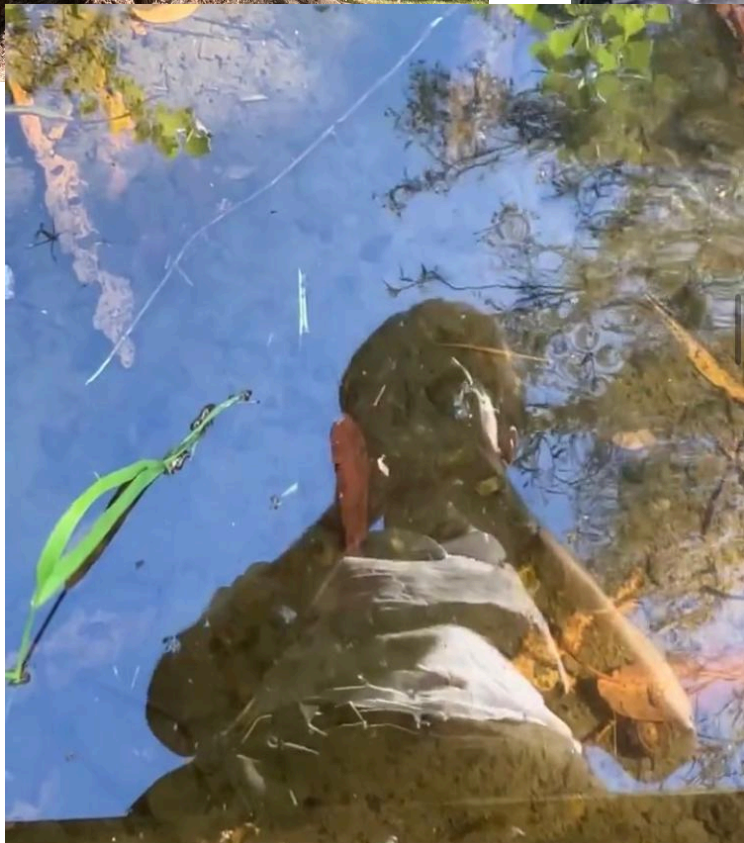
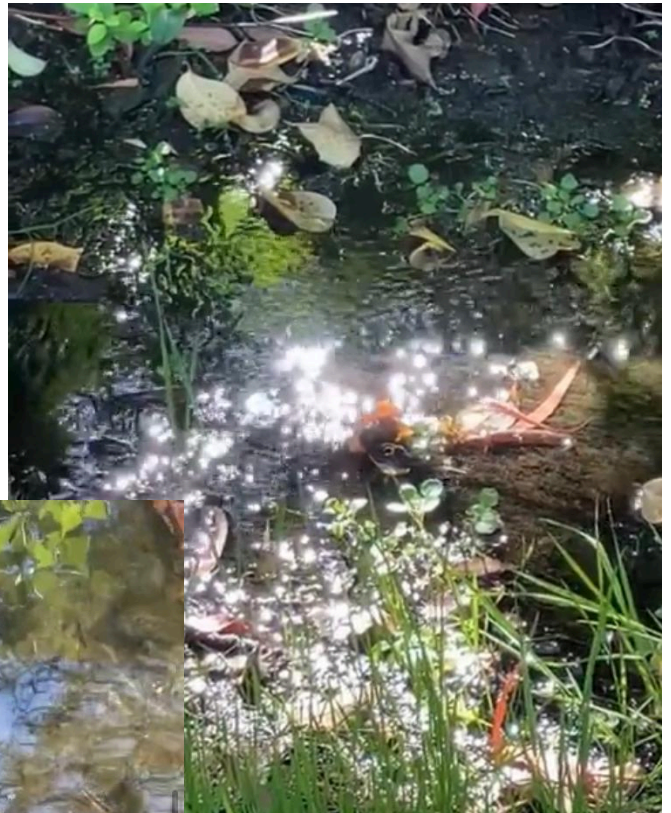
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May 6, 2024 at 8:02



The Sun hung full in the middle of the open window, A wind ran through the tall eucalyptus, whose leaves lightly shook & shivered sparkling with scattered light. Distant a leaf blower blowed, its engine constant and jarring in its suburban song. & then, when it briefly ceased, I heard the rise & fall of cars running over the asphalt. In the fading margins of my brain half-formed images turned, and passed through freely one into another, as I lay in the sun-lit room on my bed, nice and warm.







At the pond I felt everything shaking, light dancing upon me, like the shadows of waves at the bottom of the pool, the dark and the light peaks and valleys, of each undulated wavelet merging and gone, the pattern shifting & flashing over & over upon me, like the sun behind a windblowing tree so that its force, directly behind the lightly twisting branches, was made just bearable, glittering ablaze tempered through the leaves and branches.



Fwd: talking Inbox x



Pellegrino
to me ▾

3:51PM (27 minutes ago)



one of the things i was telling my father over the phone was that, whatever questions i has about my future, about what i want and wish for, i find they end up confronting me in the form of people--either they ask me an unexpected question i was avoiding or they themselves are the question-- (do i want to live like this person, do i want his life?). though i've discovered that i truly am suited to teaching, and that it would be a joy to speak with youths for a living (perhaps with adolescents for a change who posses reason) i wouldn't consider that my work--to teach. i think i would be insincere if i said that. i think my work is to express things, to speak to others. for now that is through writing because its the only way i know so far to connect with others (not knowing how to paint or play music) but i would not call myself a writer or an artist, just yet.

you know yesterday i met a stammerer (a stutterer), someone with a stammer or stutter, and i had a realization-- the moment i saw him with such difficulty mouth a few simple words and then remain silent-- that i myself have been stammerer, a stutterer!! i understood in that moment the immense effort he undertook, tongue-tied, to say such few and seemingly inconsequential words was an effort was something i knew all-too-well. what i recognised in him was his being overcome by was this very desire to speak, this need to get out the words, almost at all costs, in front of the other. that has definitely been true for me in the past, and after all this thought about what to say i've only just begun to get damn the word out in front of others.i love performing, i love having an audience--the theatricality

of things. i don't watch much actual theatre but i see theatre in everything. anyways i think dancing has really helped me in this regard. helped me loosen the tongue, so to speak.

and i think what i mean by seeing theatre everywhere is not the feeling of artificiality of things...when people are fake or so on because they are putting on a show for someone, as opposed to being natural... on the contrary, i think when things are explicitly theatrical, when we are in the theatre itself, when the public and the performance and the actors are laid out, that is when things feel the most Real in a sense. we all have our lines and our parts and although no one might be present we still perform them and perform ourselves and i quite like that, it is freeing, because i don't see what i am doing as eternally binding. i could just as well play another part if i wished to even though it doesn't suit me as well. it's also that what i'm living, each day, IS theatre, in the sense that it is people speaking to each other, in a place, with or without music, coming in and out of rooms, all the while me hearing and seeing everything. when this reality (of the apparent unreality/artifice) is acknowledged... in/by art... things feel real.

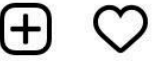
your question about my stuttering, and prayer, and theatre Are all in a sense dealing with same thing but i won't be able to do it justice... i'll have to leave the abstractions to you! when i say i am and was a stutterer that just means that i have or feel i have so much to say--to cry out, to sing--so much to offer up--a prayer, but there was something that obstructed what is and should be a spontaneous act--and that was the tremendous need itself--the fear that i wouldn't say anything, that the prayer will not be made, and, well, what will the others think of me then? and the prayer--what is said, the gesture made, the song sung-- is called forth by the other, by the "public" the audience, the beloved, ect-- whether or not they are actually "there" or not.... it comes out of my relationship with them and is my

relationship with them.... so i am always a performer, performing, and if im not performing that means there is no relationship. when i say i want to perform it is just that i want to make more real, more incarnate, meaning simply more immediate and intense, than what already happens when i am on my own but still with that imaginary public.

i think you understand what i'm about to say... because i think its something all women understand innately... and what makes all women natural artists in a way. I want to show myself just to show myself, i want to expose myself just to expose myself, whether its what i think or how i look or feel, even if often i hide it i want it to be in view, on display. im shy about it of course and often i dont, but underneath that is a deep desire to exhibit oneself, to show off! even to denude oneself completely. we're young and beautiful once though, right? when i feel this way, i like to dress up trying on different colors or costumes, almost to feel undressed by the looks of others, to dance like no one is watching knowing that i am watched. its fun! to try different parts play different roles. as long as theres an audience. the same impulse that brings me to do that is the same one i think that brings me to write--to sing, rather--but maybe just another form of vanity. maybe why im attracted to art is that i recognize all those seemingly small and disconnected things As being Art--whether it is choosing colors or just moving or telling a story--or perhaps that i can concentrate all these desires--to confess, to dance, to show off yourself, to show period--all into one activity--this thing we call Art--though im not sure what art form could contain all these things. but perhaps what is so great about a relationship (of the kind we were speaking about earlier) is that we have found a person with whom we can infact, do many of these things and therefore have exposed/shown more of ourselves to.

i am so glad too you feel that way about philosophy and its refreshing to me to feel this great enthusiasm of yours though i can't really put into words why it [philosophy and your enthusiasm for it] feels important to me... maybe its just the name of a certain kind of encounter or conversation i have with people which is special. i think sometimes of aristotle's definition of man as zoon to loogon--which means not the animal with reason but more directly the animal with speech. i cannot offer you any analysis of philosophy especially to you for the love of god i will only observe in my experience philosophy in its most exciting form has always taken the form of performance--experienced AS a performance--which in its nature is theatre. platos dialogues are the liner notes of a play, a play that in a sense we-re-enact as we read it sometimes aloud. the works of aristotle are not a treatise but the notes written down after a lecture given aloud--a monologue. the writing then can bring rise to and supplement a conversation, in the same way we can talk about what was said or literally read out someone elses lines--but it always returns to the spoken word-- in essence that is what it is, and whatever truth comes out, whatever excites us and gets us out of bed comes out of the performance, the dialogue, the encounter, the live show. without that whats the point? and thats what i found to be missing in the university frankly. the encounter, the dialogue i wanted/want something more than what i found there. maybe because there are other ways to encounter and to know someone & oneself...

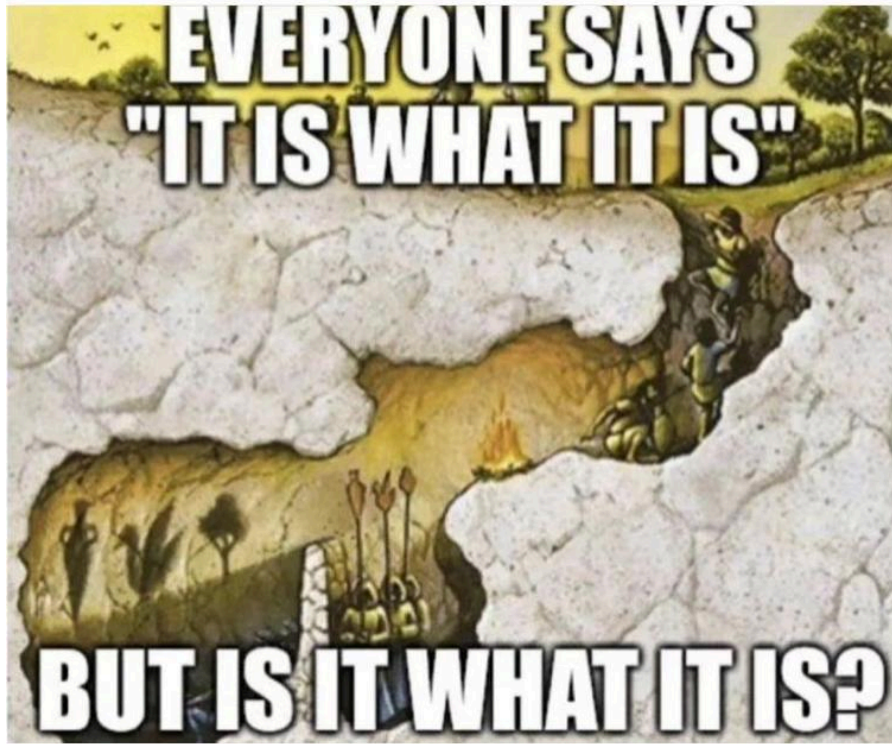
Instagram



2 DAYS AGO

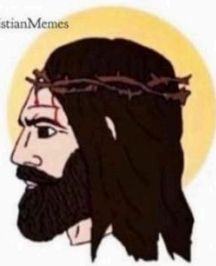


philosophy_lo1



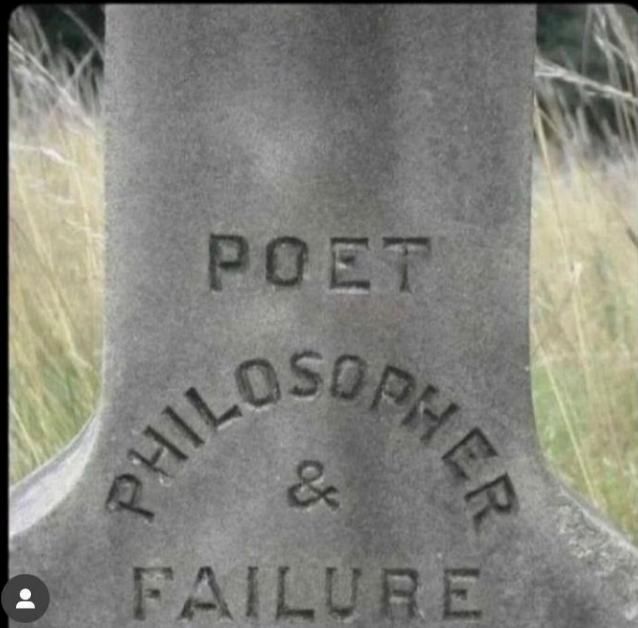
Stop giving me your toughest battles

@EpicChristianMemes



Lol just go to bed earlier

Find you a man who can do all three 1/2



Comments

< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:18



The fact of anything being made is a miracle. Each event of it being made (of an idea expressing itself) is miraculous.







The priest posed the question

–“what is the end?” “you say you want to write, & then?” I was tempted to answer: “then nothing... The writing is an end in itself, worthy in itself”. I said nothing. The priest said, “Writing is all well and good, but it is a means of indicating something—and you have fixated on the Finger” Rather than what?, I asked myself. What was it, other than what I saw? None of these propositions did I share with the priest, who had asked me again the question--what was the end? Of course I knew what the priest's answer was, if he was a subtle and dialectical priest. The word would have come naturally to my lips, out of habit because we all knew what the answer was, if not for the truth that I had no idea what the word meant--only I had been told what it meant, and that it had been deduced by intelligent people. The ultimate answer to the “then what” and the “why.” I did not want to give him this satisfaction I myself did not have and told him immediately that I did not know what the answer was and added for good measure that it would be vanity to say anything about it. I could tell the priest was becoming impatient with me. “basta?” he asked... basta? enough? “Do you have any more sins?” “I have questions,” I responded.





Eyes closed, quad

When I closed my eyes, the late-afternoon sun above the roof-tops, heating the stones upon which I sat, shones through my closed eye-lids, leaving a full spectacle, like a massive Movie-Screen extending in every direction, of what appeared to me like a muted version of the Sun itself as it appeared in those videos taken up close of its surface— an ever-shifting, molten orange mass, sparkling and popping in waves of small infinite explosions everywhere. I wanted to explore each corner with my eyes, examine each individual pixel announcing itself over and over upon the screen's eternal static. My thoughts were for once, finally, quiet.



Calling names

“Liberal” and “Conservative” are two words which do not mean much to me. To be conservative means to want to conserve something—but what exactly do you want to conserve? Your own culture? Some say tradition—well which tradition, exactly? There are many traditions, cultures which are at odds with each other. There is a liberal tradition, too, a very strong one. It is passed down just like catholicism. In fact the liberals are quite conservative—since the culture that they want to conserve is their own, their homogeneous and particular liberalism which they have inherited from their parents or professors and which we can clearly identify from their clothes, coffee shops and tastes in music. Liberals are tolerant in theory and in practice just as intolerant if not more intolerant than conservatives who are intolerant in theory and, accepting their own intolerance, tend to have a far better sense of humor about things. And marxists—they seem humorless too, and dogmatic, and that is probably why I don’t want to be called one.

I know the name Marxist isn't to be thrown around lightly and that using it means something more than just a theoretical understanding reached and tested over time. I guess what I wanted to separate in my own mind, first of is being a Marxist in terms of this philosophical understanding, the accepting this analysis of surplus value, as you said, and of the larger functioning of and development of capitalism--and even the class-based materialist analysis of history.... and then being Marxist in terms of one's politics. They seem like two different things to me. On the surface level from my readings of Marx a long time ago, I would perhaps flippantly accept straightaway at face value Marx's critique of capitalism, but that wouldn't necessarily lead me towards one type of politics or another. That would merely tell me that any talk of politics without calling into question capitalism, would be like debating the rearrangement of the cherries on top of a three-story-cake the composition, ingredients, baking, of which has already been decided before-hand. To be Marxist in that former sense would merely be to say that--there can be no real politics (or ethics) for that matter--whether you're a Monarchist or an Orthodox Christian or a Hippie Anarchist-- until the capitalism problem has been dealt with. But the Marxism in the latter sense, as a political label seems to go further, not only imagining a future political-economic order, but prescribing it, and, based on its theory, being certain of its coming. And on the

other hand Marxist politics tries to give an account of the individual man, and his needs and desires, his relationship to the material world, but this "Marxism" seems to go way past the mere accepting of Marx's analysis of political economy which would in theory make someone marxist. Politics to me is only interesting in so far as it follows directly from the understanding of what each of us individually need, in the deepest part of our spirit, like Plato it has to be the fruit of the understanding of the individual personality, of our deepest desires, fantasies and needs, of the role of art and of literature, basically of Paideia--a question which seems to be relegated as secondary in this Political Marxism, secondary as only a means to wake people up to their political reality and remind them of it, but that is all. I'm scared to say this obviously with all the Marxist cultural theorists out there but I feel Marxism, a political culture, as a house to live in, appears to me as hollow precisely because it cannot supply and deal with the life of the individual man or woman, past his immediate material needs. Marxism as politics still has to do this even though it appears to be unprepared for the task, since politics comes out of a deeper and more fundamental ethical, and dare i say spiritual understanding, which to materialist Marxists seems to be an embarrassing topic. Perhaps this cultural hollowness is why it can function equally in catholic el salvador as it can in confucian china, as a negative source of critique. And since my grievance against capital, past the obvious one, is the way in which it has destroyed those cultural forms of life--our songs, our dances, our ways of working and being together-- the traditions--- which we even now still remember and regard as precious and therefore grieve-- this too i don't find spoken about by marxists or communists today, except for some token nostalgia for indigenous third-world farmers. The reason why I find the anarchist label more appealing too is that it, like Marxism is based on an analysis too on how things are--that humans do and and have will naturally organize themselves around their values and needs without the need for the modern state or for private capitalist property--precisely those traditions and forms of life which i described earlier which are destroyed the moment Capital and the state its handmaiden begin and begun to get involved, but as a politics (as i understand it idiosyncratically) instead does not in any real sense prescribe any new way of organization or society, but merely a removing of the manmade obstacles which obstruct what is the natural ground-state, which is this free society which at the end of the day marx too imagined.





What is naturally ending,
so clear like the day falling
into night, in its sadness
feels, in the moment and in
my memory, to hold
eternity. Things now seem
unnaturally never-ending,
with a pale and ghostly
light to them. in the
avoiding of the end I lose
what is eternal, what is
ending. Let them end, let
them crumble, and in the
ruins I can have life.





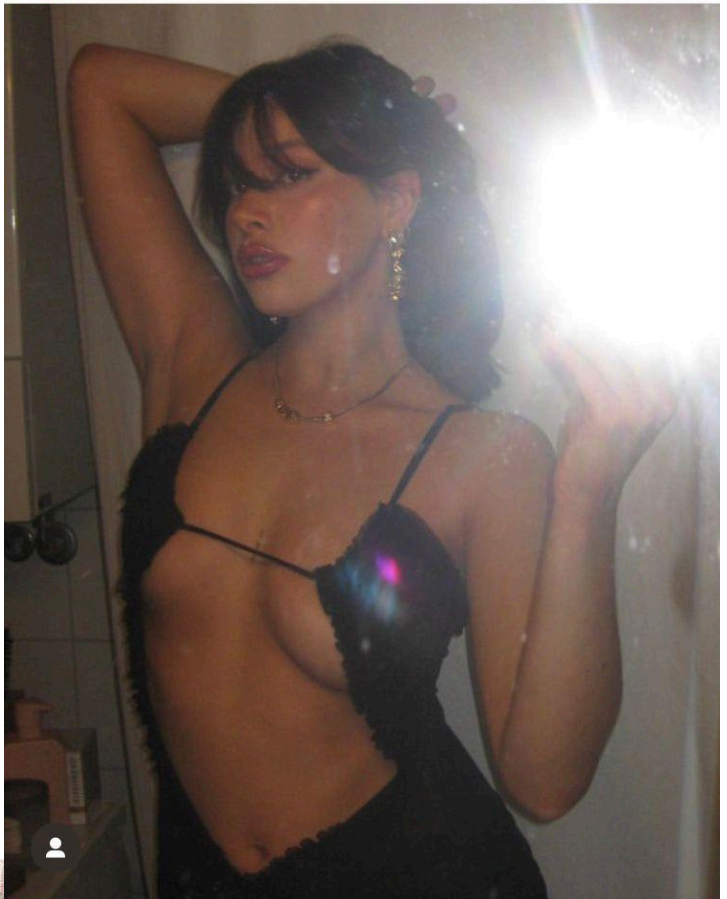
Hostel

When you stay in a hostel for more than a week or so you will begin to discover a few things. There is in every hostel dormitory a faint aura of shoe-odor and sweat and dirty clothes. The morning always comes earlier than you'd like. Through your ear-plugs you are greeted by zipping bags, heavy sighs and groans, and the slamming of the doors. And, if you stay long enough, you might begin to meet those strange creatures who call the hostel home. They are always men. It is rare to see a woman, even if she is old, alone. These are men without women. You can tell when a man is being taken care of by a woman, there are no women for them. Some fall asleep in their work-clothes. When the lights turn off in the room, you can see their small faces all around illuminated by their small phone screens, held in both hands as they sit under the covers. I watched the outlines of changing images, like channels on a television, play upon their faces and the wall behind them.





rubeyray



In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy. Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead. The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom. Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity. He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence. The cut worm forgives the plow. Dip him in the river who loves water. A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees. He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star. Eternity is in love with the productions of time. The busy bee has no time for sorrow. The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure. All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap. Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth. No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings. A dead body, revenges not injuries. The most sublime act is to set another

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IT LTE ✨ 10:14 PM

12%

llers chooses the fairest leaves to lay her
so the priest lays his curse on the
boys. To create a little flower is the labour
Damn, braces: Bless relaxes. The best
the oldest, the best water the newest.
plow not! Praises reap not! Joys laugh
rows weep not! - The head Sublime, the
athos, the genitals Beauty, the hands &
proportion. As the air to a bird of the sea
so is contempt to the contemptible. Th
sh'd every thing was black, the owl, that
ing was white. Exuberance is Beauty. If
was advised by the fox, he would be
Improvement makes strait roads, but
oked roads without Improvement, are

roads of Genius. Sooner murder an infant in its
cradle than nurse unacted desires. Where man is
not nature is barren. Truth can never be told so
as to be understood, and not be believ'd. Enough
or Too much!

< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:26



The French word for experiment is "experience." the french call running an experiment "faire une experience" literally, making an experience.



Fwd: love Inbox x



Pellegrino
to me ▾

4:13 PM (9 minutes ago)



I have no trouble imagining you at home so well-loved. you (appear to me at least) to have that interior confidence that comes with being so well-surrounded, well nurtured in the ways that matter--honestly kind of like a plant that has had all of its water and its sun and just stands up there satisfied with itself and with everyone sensing this health is drawn to its shade and its clean air--so that you are naturally generous with others because the grounds upon which you stand are in this way stable. im not saying that always to be healthy is to be stable and things arent always that way god knows but that was my impression at first. in response to what happened i can only say; i can only imagine, because i really only can imagine it. And with difficulty, because it has never really happened to me. like when someone describes a trip somewhere, somewhere i've always wanted to go, and i get some of the excitement secondhand, and when they tell me i'd like to understand to get more of that to the degree i can, and to some degree i definitely can. i can find bits and pieces of it here and there, in different places with different people so that perhaps i could cobble together all these impressions into a story i could understand and put myself in but it would be with such a milder flavor and strength that what i gather actually happened to you. Past this all i have are questions. what does it mean to break up with someone you are still in love with? what reason could be possibly given for it? i was asking myself what it was like to see someone or to share a classroom with someone with whom you've shared something like that, and with which now, there was this newly

enforced distance, enforced by reason almost. what understanding do you have when you look at each other, or do you avoid each other's gaze?

you asked me if i have ever been in love and in the past i would have said no and made some qualification, but i would say yes. only because i think that love is not some Great Cosmic Mega event but more like a question that is asked at every second, with only one answer--yes or no? it is just the intensity and the continuity of the yesses that make us say we've been "in love" or not. that i've never had, such a long and extended and intense series... so i wouldn't say i've been "in love" as most people mean it, but as i define it, yes, and many times! god knows i've had some intense yesses... but sometimes they last just the span of a brief eye contact on the subway, or a conversation, and that is all, and that's ok!... i felt that when i met you, for example! not ashamed to say it! it felt great! some yeses are terrifying though, and they are invitations to something as well as great big flashing danger signs and they are easy to run away from as a result... and we can go through life with someone who is agreeable, who does not elicit any nos.... but doesn't excite you (and therefore terrify you) in that way. my last relationship" was like that, brief and for that matter almost two years ago, based fundamentally on a misunderstanding of my own emotions--i think when i met her i wanted intimacy...but the intimacy of friendship, not of being lovers. i felt we could talk about everything and that i had found a comrade, but she wanted and thought she had this Great true love. everything moved so quickly and was so confused that i was not clear enough when it mattered with her in the beginning, flattered by her own attention/desire and by this vortex of feeling and therefore lots of damage resulted from what was essentially a misunderstanding-- so much arguing and negotiating--when there should have been just the presence of friendship. this left some bitterness afterwards because in her hurtness she

hurt me... i didn't know it then, i thought we'd all forgiven eachother long ago but some shards had remained, causing some unconscious anger towards her...even until recently i am ashamed to admit--and i did have to do some thinking to understand and to feel what it was exactly that was causing the pain so that i could forgive her for it completely and move on. and i forgive her. it wasn't her fault really.

it honestly sounds to me like you are still in love with this fellow and he with you and the pain of this i can feel in your writing be cause of what appears to be an unnatural separation, made even more apparent by the fact that you still have to live and work and speak together. you having to restrain yourself from what you would naturally do, i mean. it appears as if its unnatural for him as well but that he is possessed by some idea that makes him do that. im really sorry about that. that must be so difficult for you. i don't even know what it would mean to stop being in love with someone anyways so maybe this is a banality. good god i would not know what to do. i do not want to sound presumptuous not knowing a thing either about you or him or even the subject matter... i will venture that perhaps the idea this young man might be possessed with, and afraid of, is that of what this love, (yours, his) might ask of him... sometimes we as men want to "keep our options open" and we are afraid that we will be losing out on some experiences with other women, other kinds of woman who we think offer something else-- if we truly tie ourselves to, or commit to seeing through--the feelings for one person. often there isn't even a specific Other woman in mind, just a vague outline of possibility and therefore supposedly of freedom, and this supposed possibility is Strong enough to impinge on what is real and between our hands.

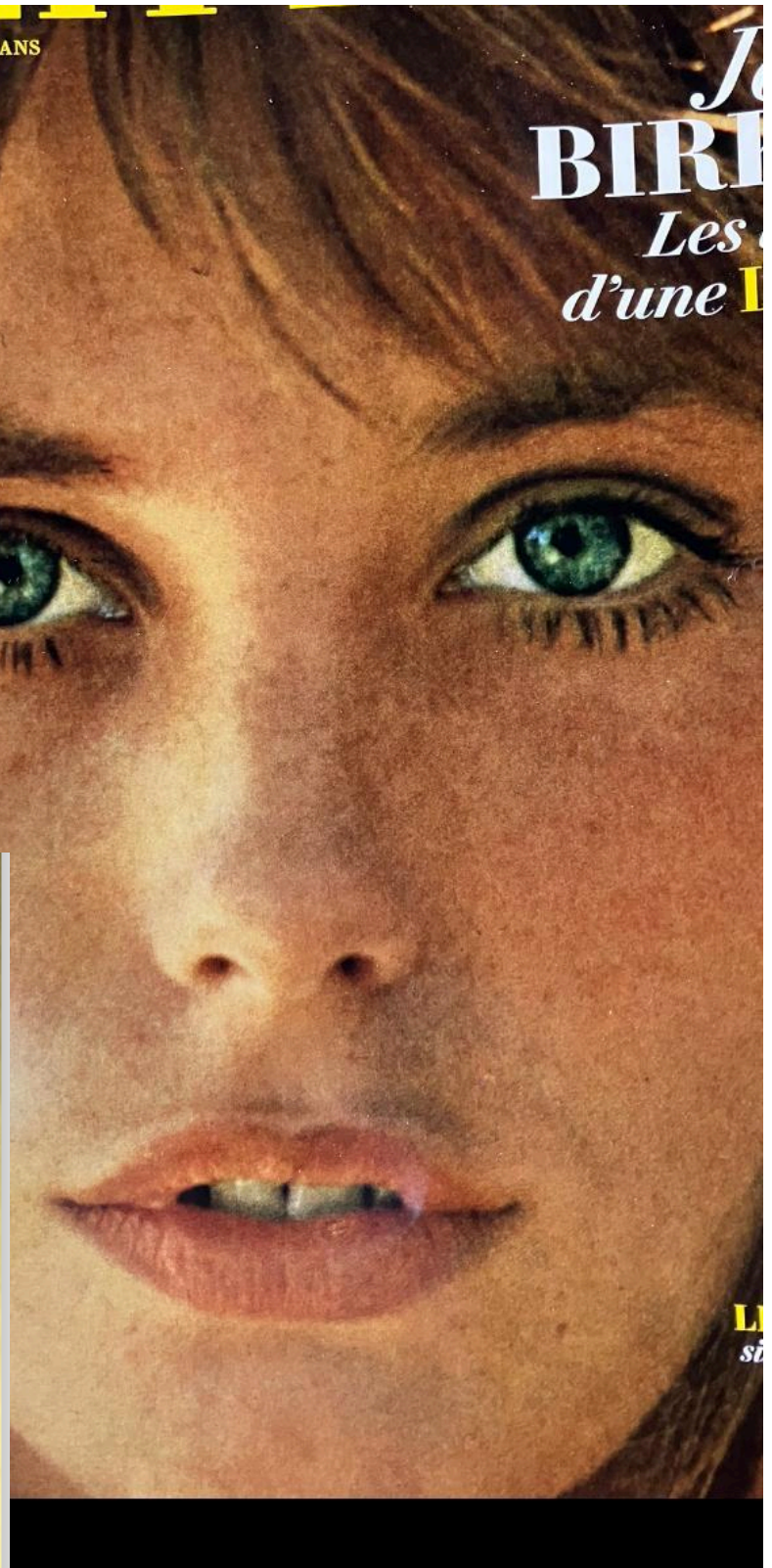
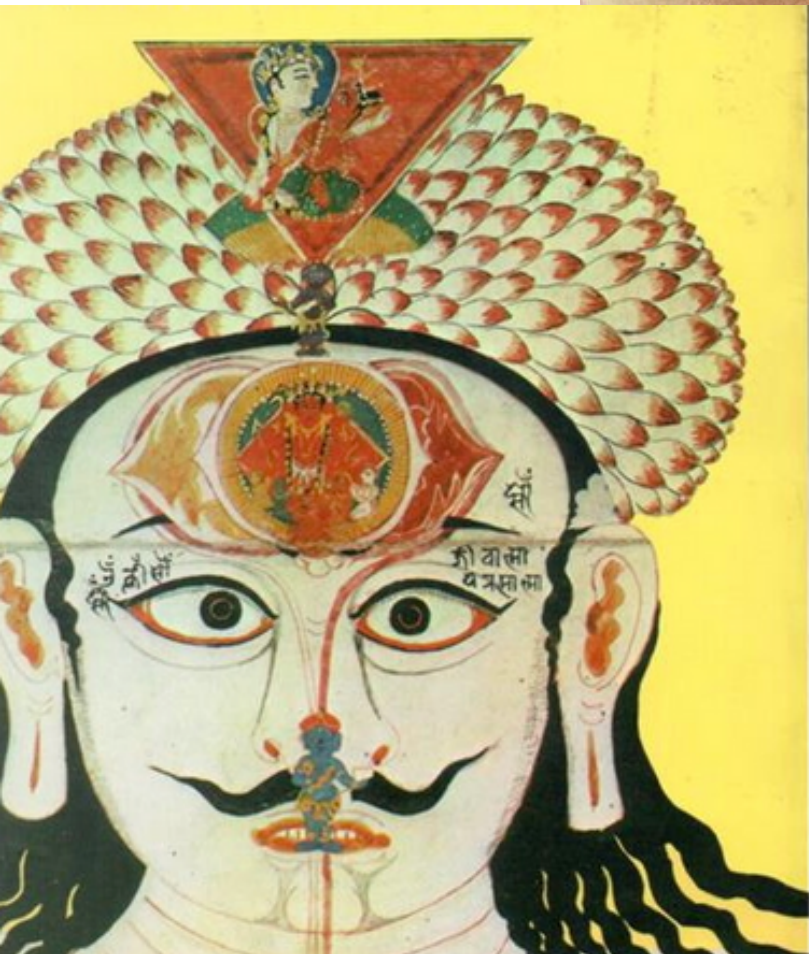
I would answer yes to both your questions. yes there must be some fear somewhere about meeting someone new, but i havent really encountered it

yet... its not as sharp or immediately apparent as it used to be but that doesn't mean its not there, maybe i just need to be a little closer to someone and therefore more in danger in order to feel it--but as of now i don't and that makes me feel way more open to meeting women. whats the worst that could happen, anyways. it might not be fear (of a particular thing) but more of an anxiety (more indeterminate) of making the most of things, which to me means at the moment making myself open to encounters. it is down to fate, so im not worried about it happening or not, i will know it when it comes, and that relaxes me but that doesn't mean i dont have to be vigilant, to be active--in the sense that i have to go out, go on dates, introduce myself in some form--but i don't see this as a question merely of romance but just of what i want to do in general. you used the right words--exposing oneself. youre absolutely right, i want to be in the place where i am more exposed, where i can meet a greater variety of people, increase the probability of that. but not only for that. where do you go out to? what kind of people do you want to meet?

ah and to answer your final question--of course i want to admire someone, and i admired this girl i told you about... her character, her thoughts and so on... but without... that Eros... and i think you know what i mean.... there can be no true romantic contact, or touch, because there is a distance, a space between you... you know right away if the space between you is filled--so there is no space--by desire-- you know the vibe right away. no analysis needed. that is what i meant by beauty--its not some disinterested beauty, but Erotic beauty, which you feel right away, which brings out that deep and painful physical longing, which you get when you truly desire someone, which is sensuality. without that it can only be a friendship. though its true that every friendship has at its basis some form of desire, right? even if its sublimated or incredibly minor...

dehors, MORDANT DEDANS

J
BIRI
Les
d'une I



< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:26



Autobiography titles: Late to the Party, late to his own funeral, the Confessions of a Mediocrity, the Confessions of S. Pellegrino



The man in the Sherman Fairchild Science Building

The gray walls of Fairchild are dirtied by the rains. Before I was up above, where the afternoon light played through the longways windows onto the lab benches and the clear beakers and their young faces. Now I am down below, where a tangle of metallic tubes runs down the ceiling over wide, tall and dimly-lit corridors, and I am kept company by heavy footsteps and the constant exhale of the generators. Long ago I stopped receiving their emails. They have forgotten me but they can't get rid of me even if they tried. I have become like those dark corners in our storage refrigerators where no hand can reach, so that whatever organism which has found its way there grows unimpeded, mutating growing unexposed to light. I saw a girl come down here but I could not say when. She must have been one of the new ones. I saw her but she did not see me. This place will be my tomb.



Nobly, the great priest
deposits his daily stool
in bleak winter fields

Tr. ??



I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER
SAY:

The sky used to be the inexhaustible
and mysterious font where blessings
and curses came. Science has turned
it into a life-less expanse of tiny lights
and rock. I would not need to know
who they were exactly---just a word,
a sign. Then I would be satisfied. Then
the whole of the same sky of
yesterday would be transfigured and
re-animated. Then when I looked up I
would feel something again.

The Dangers of Smoking (& Philosophy)

- Doing it will lend a particular flavor to your breath when you speak, which may repel most people.
- People will be able to tell you have a habit without you needing to say so. Wherever it is done, the signs of it will cling unto the objects and places around you.
- In general it will stimulate the lungs as well as, of course, the mind with a mild and usually pleasant buzz. Soon the lungs will feel used and exhausted. It may cut off circulation to the limbs and other extremities. After doing it, your appetite for other forms of consumption will be suppressed, for a time.
- Alternatives, proposed by the healthy and well-meaning as a way to wean oneself off the habit, containing small trace amounts of its active addictive ingredient, may temporarily ease cravings, but are in general dissatisfying to those seriously addicted and are quickly discarded.
- Serious addicts will give you examples of people who have lived long, rich, and happy lives whilst maintaining daily use of this addictive substance. You must not listen to them. This is an attempt to persuade you and themselves that their habit is healthy.
- Those in their vicinity are liable to incur its second-hand effects, and children at their stage of development might be the greatest victims.
- Addictions tend to develop in adolescence, when one is most impressionable to peers and older role-models such as teachers.
- Those with parents or other close family members who do it are particularly at risk of developing an addiction.
- Sometimes older siblings and friends may enable it in their younger peers by giving them access to addictive (and forbidden) materials.
- Youths are often seduced by portrayals of it in films, tv, and other media, where it is done by sympathetic and desirable characters.
- If you are lucky enough to go through your youth unexposed to it, you are unlikely develop an addiction in middle age.
- Once begun, even after a long period of sobriety, the sight of someone else doing it, or the offer to do it with a stranger, can be enough to incite you to return to your old ways.
- It can be done alone but it can be more pleasurable in another's company.

- You may find yourself doing it at strange times of the day or at night, in strange places and with strange people.
- It is often accompanied by caffeine or alcohol. In the past it was often seen happening in bars and cafes where these drugs were served. It even mixed with other disreputable activities and people.
- Now isolated rooms in boring places have been set aside by the government to prevent addicts from mingling with the general population.
- It is a great thrill to do it in places where it may be explicitly forbidden, like classrooms, government buildings or churches.
- Sometimes, when missing your own, you may need the spark of another to start doing it.
- Sometimes, you have the spark but need another's paper to begin.
- It is an increasingly expensive habit to maintain in developed countries.
- Doing it has traditionally required significant amounts of paper but now electric & less labor-intensive options have been proposed, which are, for some reason, less satisfying.
- You may make many new acquaintances, and even friendships through this addiction, by going to the places where those who do it congregate (which exclude those allergic to it) and meeting fellow addicts.
- It is often used as a pretext to start a conversation or even as a sexual advance, but you will find that as soon as you cease your habit these relationships and acquaintances will disappear—as there will be little else to do together.
- Many have built their whole social life around it and without it their life would be an eternal solitude.
- Some who otherwise do not do it will nonetheless make an effort to be seen doing it publicly, especially at parties and other social gatherings where significant members of the opposite sex can be found, in order to attract certain particular members of that sex who may find it sexually attractive.
- It will become difficult to live with and date someone who does not also share your habit
- Most people will probably say you are better off doing something else, and they are most probably right.



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IV

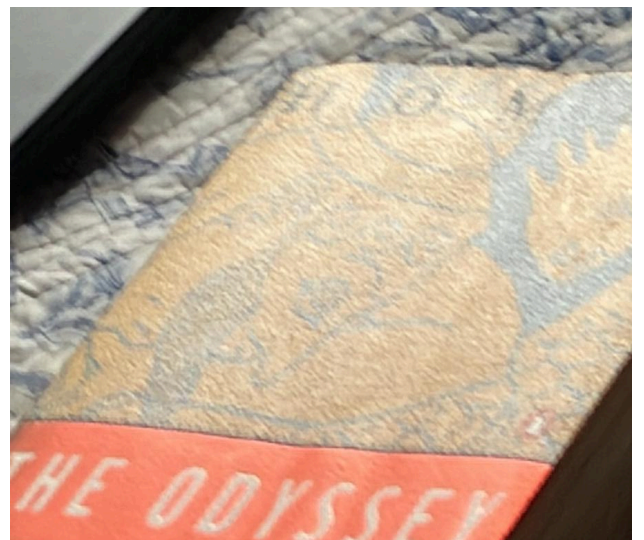
If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and
proud.



AA

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San francisco by-the-ocean

I stood out by the upswept cypresses in the dust reaching out of the tilted hill into the open air and the ocean churning below. The path I just walked through, tightened with white-blue bells, bright red lion-tails, and the yellow of daffodils, the violet of the lavender plants and the wide lily-pad leaves in green churning, opened up to a clearing, dusty, amidst which rose upswept cypresses reaching out to the sea, and shabby eucalypti upon which hung, swinging in the wind, their discarded bark. For some reason I thought of Odysseus and of the long journeys I had faced and the ocean. A breeze, a promise of something, swept through and past me, and my mind, usually clouded with an impending decision, with an idea of how things were and will be, opened up now to possibility, a warm invitation leading up from the shifting fronds to the slow moving-boughs of the eucalyptus framing the open sky.



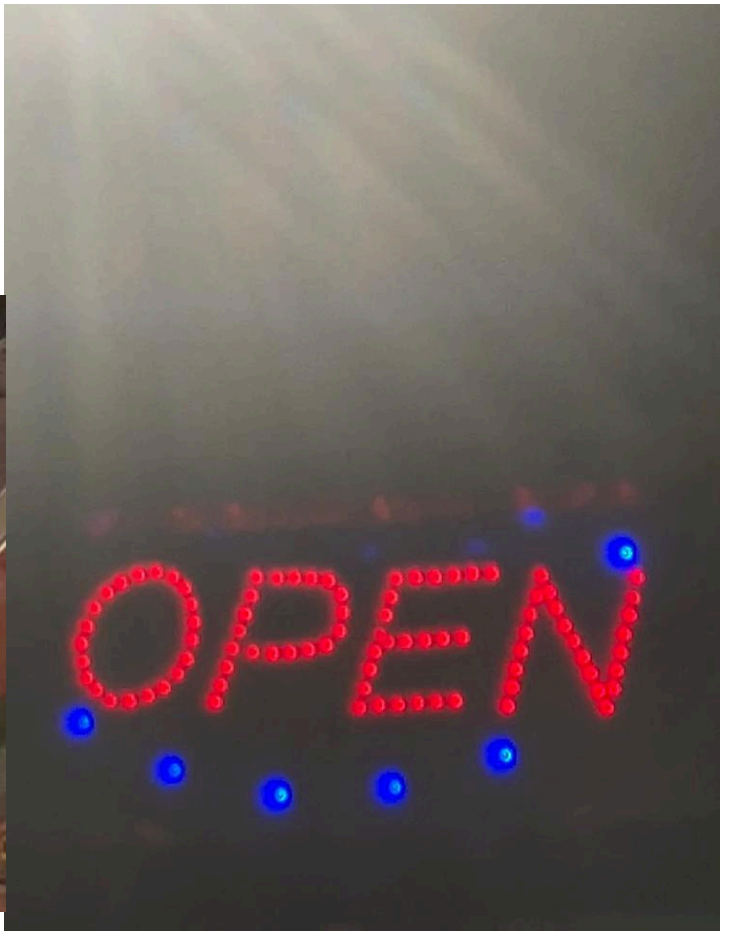
< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:24



The humanities today are just a book-club for the bourgeois





Fwd: ny Inbox x



Pellegrino
to me ▾

4:12 PM (9 minutes ago)



I haven't had opportunity to write lately so my mind is swimming with all sorts of impressions and feelings that i haven't been-able to revisit properly or get out in one way or another. being in new york, it's all over-stimulating, going out to see and see as much as possible. with hungry eyes sometimes i get a kind of indigestion. i didn't grow up in a place like that. it's almost like people are in this collective madness, gorging themselves in a bath of sights and sounds which they don't fully digest. When i don't have time to, i don't know, see/feel something fully, see it again perhaps, draw it out from memory, or speak about it to another(not knowing if all those things are the same thing) i feel that all slips by like the photos taken on my phone on my vacation but that remain in the picture gallery folder never seen again.

I stayed on the very edge of new york, in some dirty, grey, neighborhood where the working-classes still live, and where houses have ugly fonts spelling the address and garish but threatening metal fences walling off their small patch of artificial grass. My room was an overpriced Airbnb which smelled like it had just been cleaned but not well, so that the cleaner smell mixed in with whatever sweaty-must lingered in the dark un-cleaned corners. Outside there was a wooden bench set up and above it a-makeshift sun roof. On the sides of it hung what remained of a stained glass window framed in wood. There was no particular design, just rectangular panels of Rich Red, Purple, Pink Yellow, and Green variously

arranged. This Sudden Burst of color, this touch of humanity and effort to beautify in this otherwise Absolutely Grey-Brown contiguous mass of sadness, gave me an inexplicable joy.

I was sitting in an old Italian Cafe in GV when I first thought of this, and wrote it down. Outside it was all painted green, and inside it is small and warm, lived-in wood, and paneled not in a garish way by paintings and frames and prints and statuettes each bringing back the old world, cluttered together like the small circular tables and wooden chairs...i think i was trying to see if I could explain to grandmother what new york was like. And I explained it like this: I said that new york was like the Carnival that comes each year in her village. It is a festival of lights, of food, of music noise and movement. Many go also to join in the spectacle—both to watch and perform in front of the others. And so you have the crowds there for their entertainment, you have the performers performing, and then you have those who run the rides, sell the food, and clean up after the day is done. Living in New York, I continued, is like living at this 24/7 carnival. The ticket for this Carnival is Expensive—the Price is so steep—that when we step into this festive Twilight Zone, and meet its residents, we inevitably ask ourselves: how do they afford this luxury? Because it is a luxury...no one really needs to live at the carnival except those who work there. The young and not-so-young people who live here are like those kids who have so much fun at the carnival that they never want to leave, and do whatever they can to stay and come back every day. Is it a home for them? Can a carnival ever be a Home?

Have you ever seen where those who work for the traveling carnival live? Behind the lights and the music, away from the tents, is usually a collection of trailers on the festival grounds. Have you ever passed by those trailers

during the day, when there are children playing outside, and their parents lying around drunk and tired in foldable chairs? Most People who work here live in places like this, far away from excitement, in ugly places where people get up early in the morning, where they all seem smaller and shorter than usual, and darker and dustier than usual, shuffling and trudging off into the subway compartment with their android phones pulled out. It feels as though things lack substance, as if everything had been hastily constructed as to appear old, or old enough—to evoke some era or experience— either that or is brand new. In any case when you take a hold of the brick and stone or metal it strips away easily, chipping off into plastic. But the plastic seems strong enough—it holds. There exists, I think, a tasteful kind of wealth, and even a charming poverty too, maybe in some old world fantasy, if poverty can ever be charming. New York has neither. In this sense it is democratic. Both the rich and the poor are equally ugly.

Sometimes I look at the old people walking around. The old of new york appear to me to be worn down, tough and rigid, but insistent on proving that they can keep going and keep up no matter what. They seem to be at once insensitive to the mass of people and movement going on around them, but at the same time be dependent upon it for their energy. There are not that many, in truth. I think to understand a place, one shouldn't look at the young. It is the elders of the place which show you its soul... years and years of living in the same place will cause you to melt into it, to take upon yourself its properties, and show its true nature in your body and spirit.

Later that night I walked back home through the same neighborhood. I chose to walk back home, since it was not far. I had stopped outside a deli open late on a street corner. All of its windows were boarded up to protect from thieves and its windowed door was plastered over with many-colored

announcements. A light wind blew, and outside, on the crossroads there a patina of water glistened on the asphalt, reflecting upon its dark surface the white lights of the deli, and the green & red of the traffic light speaking to the wide and empty space where the two streets met. It was cold and the other person in the deli walked away quickly hunched-over in their black puffer jacket. I stood outside there watching the lights change over the open crossroads. I took a picture of it on my phone. It felt important somehow, being alone there at that moment, as if what I was seeing, and my solitude, was precipitating some kind of clarity. I do not actually remember what I was thinking when I took that photo, but searching through my phone I looked back upon it. There is nothing so remarkable about the scene itself, but something about the moment in which I took it, what I was looking upon as a thought/feeling came. Maybe that was the precise moment I decided to leave New York.





knowingthings

There are things which exist but which we don't know of, like many things in the universe. They exist regardless of whether we perceive them/ know (of) them or not. Yet we are aware of the fact that we are unaware of them. When we discover them, which is to say come to be aware of them after our unawareness, this leads us to the first assertion of things existing prior and outside of our awareness. we are only aware of things, or can name them, in so far as they are named, made aware (of) by, the Mind. So anything that exists, exists in so far as the mind is able to supply a name—an idea—of it. Though we can say that the mind is forced to create the name/idea which did not exist previously, we can ask: do ideas, names, have a life in the mind before they are put to use... if these ideas must pre-exist in the mind, then everything that exists, including sensations, must exist in the mind, and nothing can exist for us until it exists in the mind and that includes all those things which exist but whose existence we are unaware of. Where do they come from, the ideas inevitably summoned up to make things exist?...



25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

34 And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers.





so ancient and so new

I wish I could survey the life around me, everything as it was, everything as it is, all which fell into my experience, now, in twenty twenty three, almost twenty twenty four, in front of my computer: clicking from one web site to another, awaiting messages, sending them, dancing along to videos and to music, this split-up succession of faces and words and songs, this presence of the past, of old words and ways, all that once held real texture and weight washed away in the glittering metal and digitality of things. All is so mixed together now, the short and the long, the quick and the slow, the ancient and the utterly new, in the span of one digital second, that I cannot not make sense of it all, order it in my mind, nor make my way through it unless I speak it aloud.





Under Capitalism

Nothing weird can exist

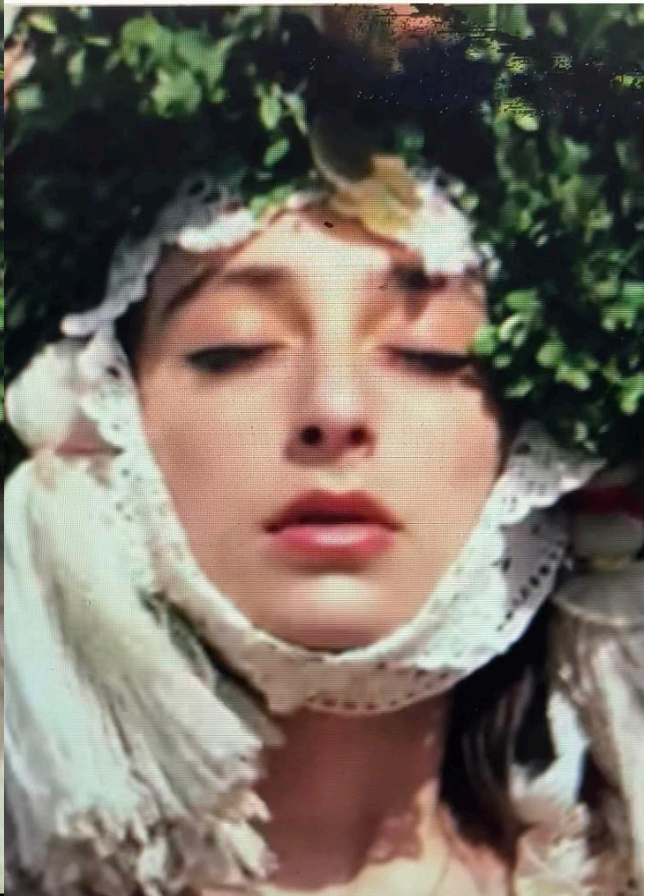
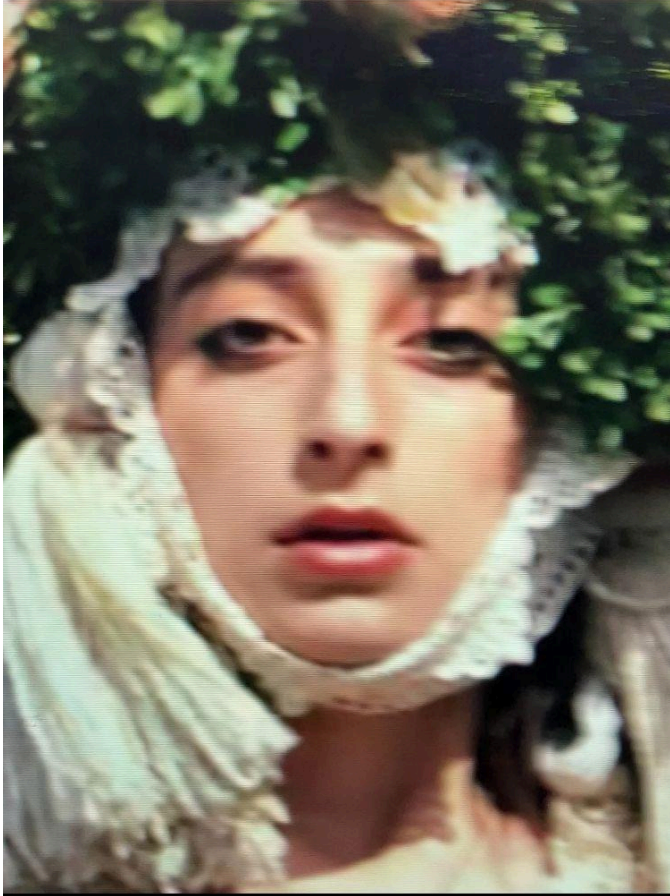


beautiful faces

the beautiful face, I can't get tired of it, it sings out continuously the song of itself, a song to which I become addicted. What I am constantly looking for is the looking-upon the beautiful face and maybe even being looked upon in return. To be looked at by what is looked upon, to look at her looking at me looking, it is also the closest thing I see to a mirror in reality, for the object in the mirror does not look away. Or the closest thing to having someone's beauty the way I have, perpetually, my own face in the mirror. This, in my life, I cannot understate, is the most simultaneously frightening, awe-inducing, and moving experience I may have. Sight is the king of the senses. The face, the beautiful face, is what I want, what I am looking for always, and to have it appear-& it always does just appear, as it where, given by life unexpectedly, at least the first time, showing up in my line of sight all of a sudden, their face, & for it to be given like that, the thing which the eyes long to have, their one place of rest, which gives them the most joy but also the most fright (for they are frightened to lose the thing, the place of their eternal rest), an attack upon our eyes which cannot choose, the event of that face, at once an inconceivable relief & terror appearing out of all the other faces, out of nowhere)--is a gift. But a passing gift. even if I look upon it for what feels like forever and try to fix it deep in my mind--it fades away the moment I'm alone, staring at a dark blank wall by myself. Knowing that it is precious but it is brief, it is a flower in bloom, it requires, it demands, this beauty, all of my attention, but only to feel completely and therefore fall completely under its power.

When this beauty looks back at me, when it moves, when it is alive, I am alive--in fact the most alive, in this mutual-looking..the love in my eyes looks for love in their eyes. Maybe even more beautiful and therefore terrifying is to discover the judgment of whether I myself am beautiful in their own eyes, whether I possess the beauty that could be the cause of such love that I have for them. If I do not then I am lost. I can hope that this beauty isn't something outside that will leave me in a moment, to abandon me to be alone, dependent on a face or faces which come & go--but is instead, in truth, something which is really my own. What I want to keep is the image of some beauty--the manifesting of this beauty which--existing as an image, is an image which exists and can exist independently

of the event of the beautiful face which I see, of the person which i want, and is accompanied by a feeling, the beauty-feeling. This beauty-feeling is the quality that the beautiful face has, which cannot be separated by the face, to be sure, but that I see and feel in not just one face, but many faces in my life, called forth by the beautiful face, not only in real life, but in pictures, or portraits or films, which that same beauty-feeling present. This persuades me finally that existing in me is some primordial beauty-image, and beauty-feeling, something which can always be contacted, and called up in me, when I am reminded of it by the beautiful faces I see in life and in art. I am reminded finally in my painful longing for this face, which I would go anywhere to satisfy, at each magical instance, event, of someone's beautiful face—that it is very much my own, this beauty, that I love. For that, in its rarity and ephemerality, it is most worthy of the work of my hands—to, in devotion, outline and draw out each form & shade & color, in pictures & words—which, for a mysterious reason, has moved me so greatly. I feel it deserves to be shared & propagated to the deserving and the undeserving both, to be revealed rather than hidden away, to be given as a gift again and again for all, what was once given to me alone, in a passing moment.



< Notes



The man sat in the window seat.

He listened to music on string headphones. He seemed tense as the plane lay in wait ready to depart. He was poised as it were to jump out and leave at any moment. When the engines fired and the plane began to rise, as the ground fell away and the forms of cities and fields came into view in the small plastic oval opening, I felt him drawing a sharp, full breath. As quickly as he could, he took out his phone and through his screen opened the camera to take a video. I could see all that passed outside through the small digital window he held out clutched in front of him. The plane took a big turn and the cabin inclined left and the sunlight finally poured in with full force upon our turned heads and leaning bodies. Through the screen of the phone I could see a ground of clouds above which we floated soundlessly. The still cloud river stirred forwards back and away and above it, blue light, sun lit, blue-stretching all the way through to the horizons disappearing point. I suppressed the impulse to applaud after the touching down-shaking (badaDUMBRUmmm)





if 🇺🇸 is like a river into which I am taken up i have found myself in those small pools which form alongside the wide fast-flowing waters in the calm collecting in-between rock and root of all that falls for one reason or the other out of the flow there is always something wrong with them (with those pieces of debris bobbing down-and-up close to one another unable to properly float encumbered by strange misshapen dimensions) entangled in one another caught and held where each more slowly each one floating circles one in the turning current behind the noise and roar of the passing show



Fwd: a j Inbox x



Pellegrino

to me ▾

3:49 PM (32 minutes ago)



non so perché, sento un forte bisogno di parlarti... guardaè piu forte di me. ma per l'amor di dio, capisco e rispetto il tuo silenzio, non so perché ma ti penso spesso in questi giorni, con una grande tenerezza. mi sento un po stupido scriverti così ma va beh sarà un monologo for my own benefit. sai stavo guardando questo film e c'era un personaggio, una ragazza che aveva il tuo stesso viso, ma al momento non mi ricordavo chi mi ricordava e perché sembrava così familiare... era un film degli anni novanta su van gogh..era tanto bella. e quando mi sono reso conto sentivo una mancanza, una tristezza, e non capivo bene da dove arrivava o perché c'era. parlerò candidamente come un diario tanto.

non è per il fatto che non siamo andati avanti come amanti-- se ce, ce, se non ce non ce, è una cosa che si capisce subito senza dire niente. e poi, sai, persone che abitano periodi così, un po ambigui della nostra vita, come stata quella potrei dire per entrambi (e direi che noi stessi eravamo un po ambigui) e giusto in un certo senso tenerli e lasciarli lì dove erano, un po come non rivoltarsi la testa quando si lascia un luogo (ricordandomi qualcosa che mi hai detto su non voler tornare a b.) io sono così, a me piace andar avanti e lasciar queste cose al passato, di non fissarsi con una falsa nostalgia, e questo distacco può essere abbastanza brutale, ma necessario. e penso che può darsi tu sia così pure. ma dicendolo mi rendo conto che è stata una cosa, una relazione tanto provvisoria, come fossero le cose durante il covid, provvisoria ma necessaria, forse tanto per solitudine che per desiderio. ed l'ambiguità quindi pure resta nel, nel fatto che, come quelle amicizie che si fanno in ostello per esempio, dove si

scambia una intimità nata da curiosità ma anche dalla necessità, essendo in un posto nuovo e sapendo che domani si parte, che molte cose non si fanno e non si sapranno mai, ed è affatto per questo che si può essere intimi in quel modo, perché ce una distanza già intensa prima che si comincia, e mi rendo conto che forse io sono stato così con te, perché di molte cose non ne abbiamo parlato, ne attraversate, ed amen giusto così.

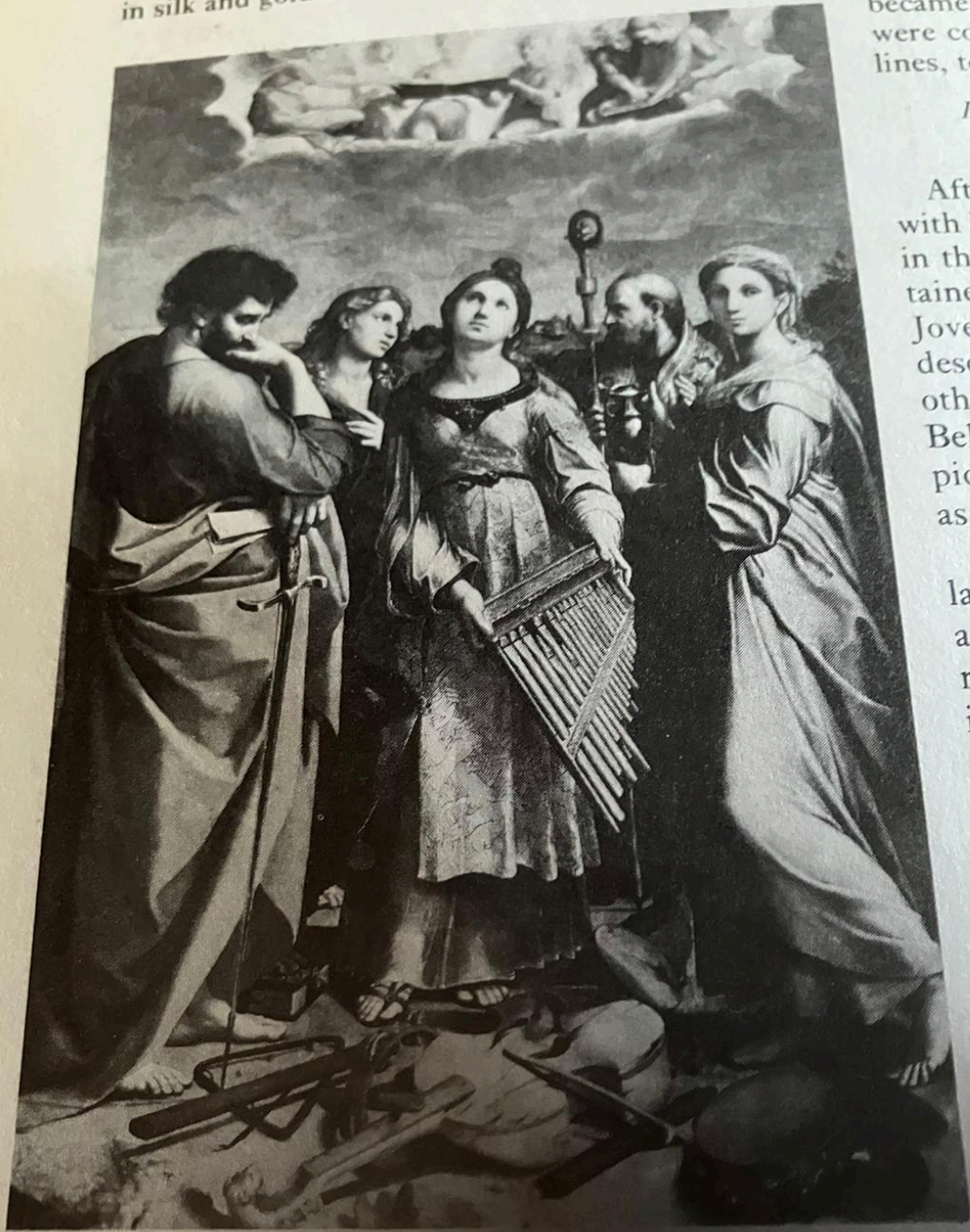
e francamente non sono stato franco con quello che sentivo, forse per queste ragioni, che non sentivo il bisogno di darle, tanto c'era sempre qualcun altro, era provvisorio e temporaneo quindi, pensandoci adesso, a voce alta, quello che mi intristisce non è il fatto che tu non sia stata mia ragazza o che non l'hai voluto essere, perché non penso che era, strettamente parlando, una cosa così seria, era più un gioco. secondo me tu capisci questo. quello che manco, e di che mi rendo conto, adesso o nei miei messaggi un po desiderosi che con te, è che in te avevo un'amica, o almeno una amica potenziale, ed e questo, veramente, sotto sotto, che volevo con te, e che, pensando a questi anni che sono passati, sento un gran spreco, perché ho perso un'amicizia, un'amicizia che volevo. ma pure quando ci conoscevamo, so di non essere neanche stato un buon amico, ma questo dovevo impararlo dopo. purtroppo queste cose si fanno troppo tardi. per me l'amicizia è più importante di tutte le cose e so di aver perso una cosa preziosa, che è la mia amicizia con te, e lo so che è colpa mia...non credo nel senso di colpa veramente, pero è così, la sento.

secondo me avrei voluto che fosse stata una cosa leggera, che potrei quindi scordarmi e basta, e con le cose diciamo amoroze con le donne è abbastanza facile vederle così, ma quando si tratta di amicizia, non è infine così facile. ma lo so che anche queste cose hanno il loro tempo e la loro stagione, e quando il momento passa e uno non è lucido ce dà accettar le cose, ed ho fatto pace con questo fatto.

vorrei solo correggere una cosa che ti ho detto anni fa quando ti sono andata a trovare perché non l'ho detto giusto. era il mattino dopo ed eravamo seduti al caffè. e parlavamo del amore giustamente... e mi avevi chiesto se ero mai stato innamorato... e penso prima di aver risposto una cosa un po dialettica, come, "o sono stato innamorato tante volte, o non lo sono stato mai" e poi con un secondo pensiero un po triste ho detto che non ce mai stato l'amore. Ed è questo che ti volevo dire, veramente-- e vorrei tanto che tu leggessi questo solo per questo-- che non è vero!, che mi sbagliavo completamente su cos'era l'amore!

ed è solo quando una amica me l'ha fatto notare questa cosa--che l'amore non è una cosa che si trova dopo una lunga analisi scientifica dei fatti, come un fenomeno raro che dobbiamo cercare ed accertare per poi, se siamo fortunati, dichiarare la sua presenza nella vita. mi ha fatto capire che non esiste quest Un, grande amore che forse un giorno verrà trovato e dichiarato. è questo che avrei dovuto dirti: che l'amore che vorremmo è fatto invece di milioni e milioni di piccoli amori, e questi amori si svolgono in ogni istante, ed sono semplici da individuare-- sono il "sì" che sentiamo, che ci portano verso qualcosa o qualcuno, invece del "no." ed è solo la forza di certi sì, una ripetizione insistente del sì, un sì che non si ferma mai, che ci fa parlare dell'Amore come questo evento raro e singolare, e ci fa fare tutte queste distinzioni. quindi vorrei che tu sappia che so di aver sentito tanti "sì" così belli e variegati, forti e leggeri, piccoli e grandi, quando giocavamo insieme che so senza alcun dubbio di averti amato lì e mi dispiace di averti dato l'impressione al contrario, e sento quel bel sì anche adesso e non penso che andrà mai via perché non mi è mai andato via.

that St Cecilia is wearing
in silk and gold covering a marvellously painted

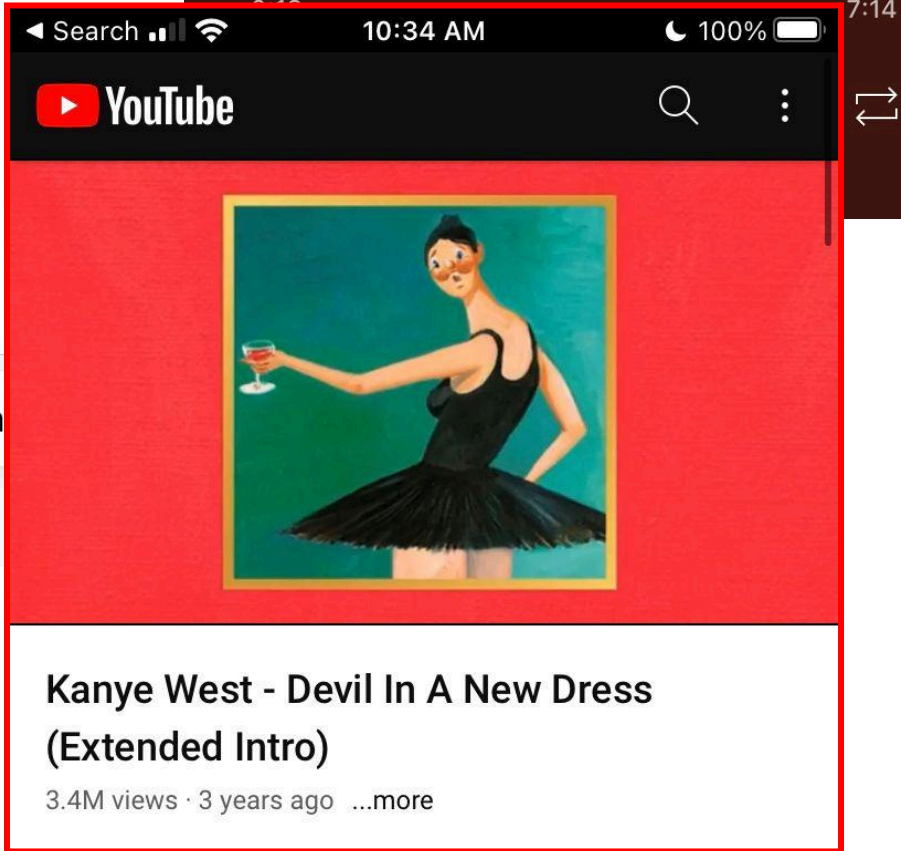
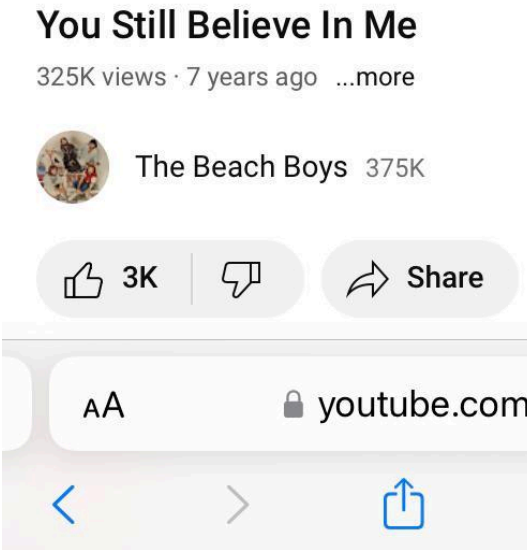
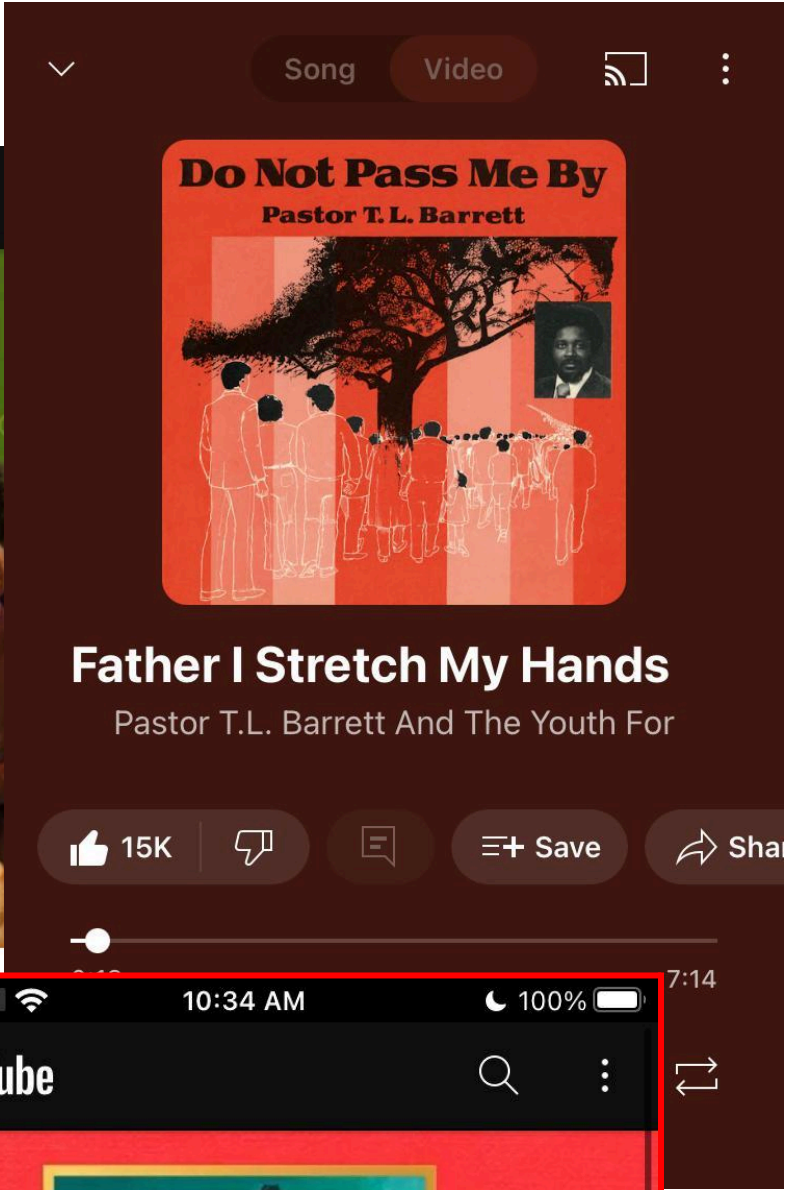
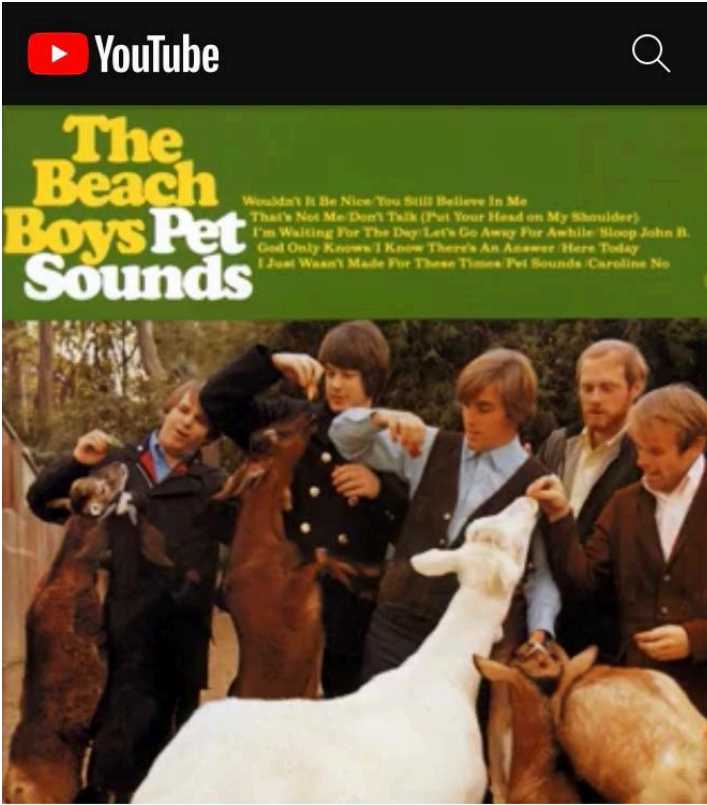


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155. Raphael: *St Cecilia*.
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna





Words to use instead of "writing"

"I just did a couple of hours of" :

Hearing

Transcribing

Self-Talking

Drawing (words)



Study-rooms

I was born into lived-in rooms, and I sit on marked up desks and chairs with sagging seats, and walk on stairs with rubbed off lips. All signs taken together to make up the weight which hangs in the air over and between the things I use, as what remains of those who came before. Composing the rhythm of a life, as water I might follow or rather fall down the grooves etched and smoothed out before me, led on by this fantasmatic mass which, though existing in memory only might feel more substantial than myself, against which, i , throwing all my own weight, might wish desperately to oppose. it is that state, half wakeful half not, which overtakes me in the early afternoon, after the day is well on its way, which i wish to resist in the name of doing more, in the name of the resolutions we made as the day began in the first daylight hours. The pleasant heat and immobility of a full belly, which sweetly suggests no further effort be made, the lulling saw of birds through the open windows.







Groundhog day

Bill Murray is there until he can "get it right." Getting it right is exactly like this: in your childhood home you have a piano by the kitchen. No one decided to learn how to play it. Over time you pile books on it, after a while you pass by it and almost forget that its a piano. It becomes a piece of furniture, gathering dust, and nothing more. And there is nothing sadder than an unplayed instrument, something wrong even. But the day in which, for some reason, you see the piano under all the books and the dust, open up the keyboard, and recollect that you are able to learn a song—your usual world has been transfigured. You discover a music that was always there, ready to be played, if only you could see it, or hear it rather. We keep coming home because the piano is silently calling us to be played for the first time.



the fearful garden

The university is a garden. Like any garden it must be protected from all that is unpredictable and violent and therefore dangerous. In this garden all our interactions between each other occur in rather intimate spaces, or rooms. All university people know the intimacy of these rooms can make them quite dangerous, because our closeness to each other might bring out, god forbid, some real emotions—and as we know real emotions, positive or negative, can be unpredictable and violent. And of those emotions, the most fearful and dangerous is of course desire.

In order for this place to function (its condition of possibility) a filter has to be imposed, like in sound, on the high and low frequencies. We all work and function within this narrow band, which is comfortable, agreeable, and safe. There can be no violence here. When was the last time you saw a fight, an argument, or for that matter, two kids kissing? If we feel desire here it must be a manageable and regulated desire. If it were a full and real desire—and therefore to some degree violent—the whole system would explode. It certainly would no longer be able to provide its expensive educational product to thousands of customers every year.

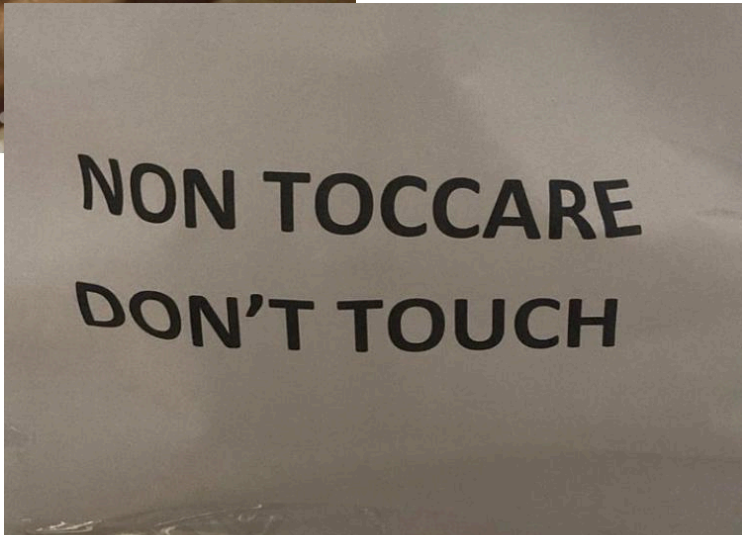
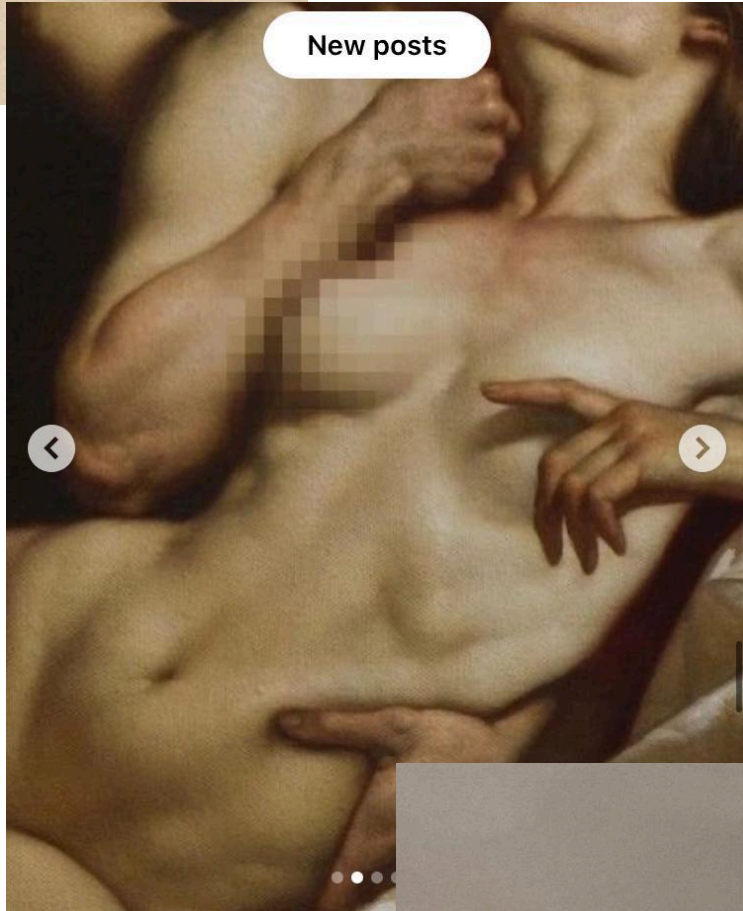
In this university-garden, the most intimate of rooms is the class-room, because in it we talk intimately about intimate things, and therefore it is the most erotic place, maybe even more erotic than the bed-room. A bunch of young people, (beautiful-because-they're-young), flowers at their fullest bloom, at the height of their own desire—students— are put all together in one room with us, the teachers, and asked to talk to one another intimately about intimate things. We as a rule tend to separate this “erotic” desire between people with the “intellectual” desire which is the reason why everyone is in the classroom in the first place. You do not need to read the Symposium to know that this distinction is not so clear, that the relation between the two is far closer than we think—and we cannot keep the classroom “clean” from erotic desire. By this I mean, the desire between student and student and teacher, to be exact. Let's not dance around it.

Philosophy— “Philo-sophia”, starts with “philia”— Love, desire. The word student comes from the latin *studere*, which means “to be eager for” or “to desire.” The student is she who is eager, who desires—but desires, is eager for what, exactly? Which one is it, then, the erotic or the intellectual? Why not both? Could we not say, at least in some cases, this love—desire—is not just linearly present between teacher and student (s), but expands spherically to englobe the cosmos and

all the objects of knowledge within it which a student desires to know, a knowledge which in turn compacts itself to be found in the teacher, who is then desired for precisely for incarnating this knowledge?

As of today, of course, desire itself is the most taboo, the most criminalized, subject matter at the university. First of all you are not allowed to act on your desire. There are all sorts of rules about what is appropriate and inappropriate flirting, when and under what circumstances you may touch someone, whether a contract must be signed & so on. Fair enough. In theory we are here to study, and work, not to fuck. It goes further. You are also not allowed to talk about your desire, like we would not openly talk about our other emotions, such as fear or sadness or excitement, on the grounds that it is distracting and irrelevant. This, perhaps, is also fair—it's not on the syllabus. It goes further, however,—unlike fear, or sadness, or excitement for example— if you were possessed, all of a sudden, by desire for someone in your class...even if you did nothing... you would be in deep trouble. The rule is that the expression of your desire—even just your face, or even just your eyes—can “creep” them out, it can make them uncomfortable... even trigger their traumas! This too is understandable...but only up to a point.

Underneath these rules is fundamentally a fear of erotic desire itself, itself an emotion, the suspicion of this emotion even when you are doing nothing. Obviously there is something incredibly terrifying and violent and destabilizing about real desire, particularly when it is directed at you from another. However, rather than educate people to deal with these inevitable feelings, both of their own desire and that of others, which we can agree will arise even if we deny their importance— it is far more expedient for university people to keep them out of the “workplace” entirely and deny them any real existence. What follows is clear—all thinking people correctly come to the conclusion that they must repress their feelings outright or face the consequences. Why? Because, every man with a functioning dick knows that if he feels a strong sexual desire it will show whether he wants it to happen or not. Desire shows itself on the body, man or woman, whether we like it or not. And we know, if we are at all sensible, when someone desires us, even if they hide it well. So, in order for our desire not to be expressed we must repress the feeling, filter it out, before it can become too strong. And it is not possible to isolate and filter out any inconvenient emotion, not without taking others along with it. As a result we have the University: The Association of the Emotionally Handicapped and Sexually Repressed.





chemical-feelings

A succession of chemicals splashed in my insides, echoing and rippling out and through them, as other chemicals hidden and invisible bathed my skin and eyes and permeated the barriers of my skin, what I feel as the coffee I have just drunk, and the the sun in my eyes and warmth on my skin, the air dry then damp through which I cut with my each movement. I went from one such explosion to another, from inside to outside, from the empty hunger and tiredness to the sudden fullness and vibrance of the coffee cup, the force of the morning and afternoon sun, the sudden looseness of the beer I drank and tasted. It was not a certain feeling, but uncertain. These were the moments which marked my day, up to the moment when tiredness—the television-static-feeling which spread and caught me, ushered me and dropped me into sleep once more.



Fwd: knowing beauty Inbox x



Pellegrino

to me ▾

3:50 PM (30 minutes ago)



I don't know that we have to really "know" someone say they're beautiful. i dont trivialize it but i also don't take it as some rare apocalyptic event. it happens everywhere and all the time if we are paying attention. this has to do maybe with how i think of beauty, or rather, how thinking doesn't really come into it at all. i'll explain. but maybe beautiful isn't the best to use because its so laden with everything, lets just say beauty is whatever attracts you and ugliness what repels you. there are a thousand variations that we use, like pretty or hot or cool or good that really just mean we are attracted by something beautiful. i know that when you're talking about saying you're beautiful youre talking about something deeper thats founded on some deeper understanding--to say someone is a beautiful person rather than just good looking, meaning something about their character, ect, so the difference between looks and personality. i dont think its all that complicated nor do all these distinctions really hold. i dont know if theres one judgement of beauty which holds more than the other--someones appearance versus their inner deeper soul for example. beauty is something that i feel and it feels the same whether what im looking at is "looks" or what someone says, or does, whether i see them for five minutes or over the course of ten years. the feeling is in a sense always the same and immediate. who's to say i don't see someone's soul that when i see them right away, and who's to say what it is exactly i see--and hear, and feel, and touch too, because all the senses are active, arent they? in one instant we pick up on a million upon a million of unsaid details about a person which all adds up to that feeling, the smallest and most imperceptible

things we couldn't even put into words if we tried--all of this information integrated immediately without the need for thought. who says that we need many days or many meetings to notice and absorb these unseen things rather than once? Sure, we change our mind, but i would ask you how often that happens really. I trust the beauty feeling, and its the beauty-feeling that then gives me the firm knowledge to make some kind of statement about something, not the other way around. thats why this saying of beauty isn't such a big deal or require all this epistemology. maybe this is your problem, that you associate this statement with some sort of serious evaluation, a philosophical judgement about them based on data collected through observations in the various spheres of life--opinions about art and life, their behavior in the restaurant or at work or in a different country or dancing the macarena, and so on of course one can do that and maybe that "beautiful" is worth more than another, but i doubt it, mainly because even that is, and necessarily has to be, a partial picture, a photograph stamped in time. i also don't have to worry about whether someone thinks me beautiful is based on the "truth" about myself rather than illusions or pictures, because they are all pictures, some more detailed than others but only that. maybe this is the problem for you-- if for you this statement of being beautiful as, whether applied to you or to someone else, as this definitive statement, being borne out serious, well-weighted philosophical evaluation, then there always will be this terror that we are wrong, because our judgements were wrong, and therefore we are wrong about them being beautiful. but the beautiful thing about feeling someone is beautiful is that you can never be wrong. I've never said to myself, damn you were wrong that was actually ugly, because what i saw then was beautiful and what im seeing now is ugly. if i hear someone playing the trumpet for example, i can say, thats beautiful, that person is beautiful without knowing what they did before or what they did later, how they treat

their family or how they do their tax returns or whether they can dance the macarena or not. and though i've said that i dont need to know someone in this way to say they are a beautiful person, or know them over time or dancing the different dances of their life, that i dont need to form a deep and well-thought out evaluation to call someone beautiful, which merely means to feel that they are beautiful, that doesn't mean that i dont know something, that i am not in possession a sort of deep and indisputable knowledge when i feel that someone is beautiful. again, the fact that we always have such a limited, partial--photographic view of people--in one sense such limited knowledge of something (no matter how long we know them or how much of their body we have touched or how often we've talked about deep things) doesn't inhibit this other knowledge of someone or something being beautiful. it can be a girl or a boy or an instagram post or a rap lyric or a painting or a crack on the wall of an old building, or the way someone picked something up on the ground or shaken someones hand (grace is beauty) but, like, the trumpet player, playing one song, which is necessarily just a picture taken at one moment, we have seen an instantiation of beauty, and what might be more beautiful, their capability of beauty--and that totally particular and limited and split-second image can actually be at the same time ever-lasting, even if later we only see ugliness or whatever, whether its a shitty ass town or a boy we thought was cute but is actually not that hot or whatever--not because we go around with the sad memory of something having been beautiful but because we know that something ugly has within it latent the ability to become beautiful, and this ever changing-ness of people, this ability to move and transform from ugliness to beauty rather than being beautiful all the time, thats beautiful too, isnt it?



< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:18



Everything is in constant
expression—IS an expression

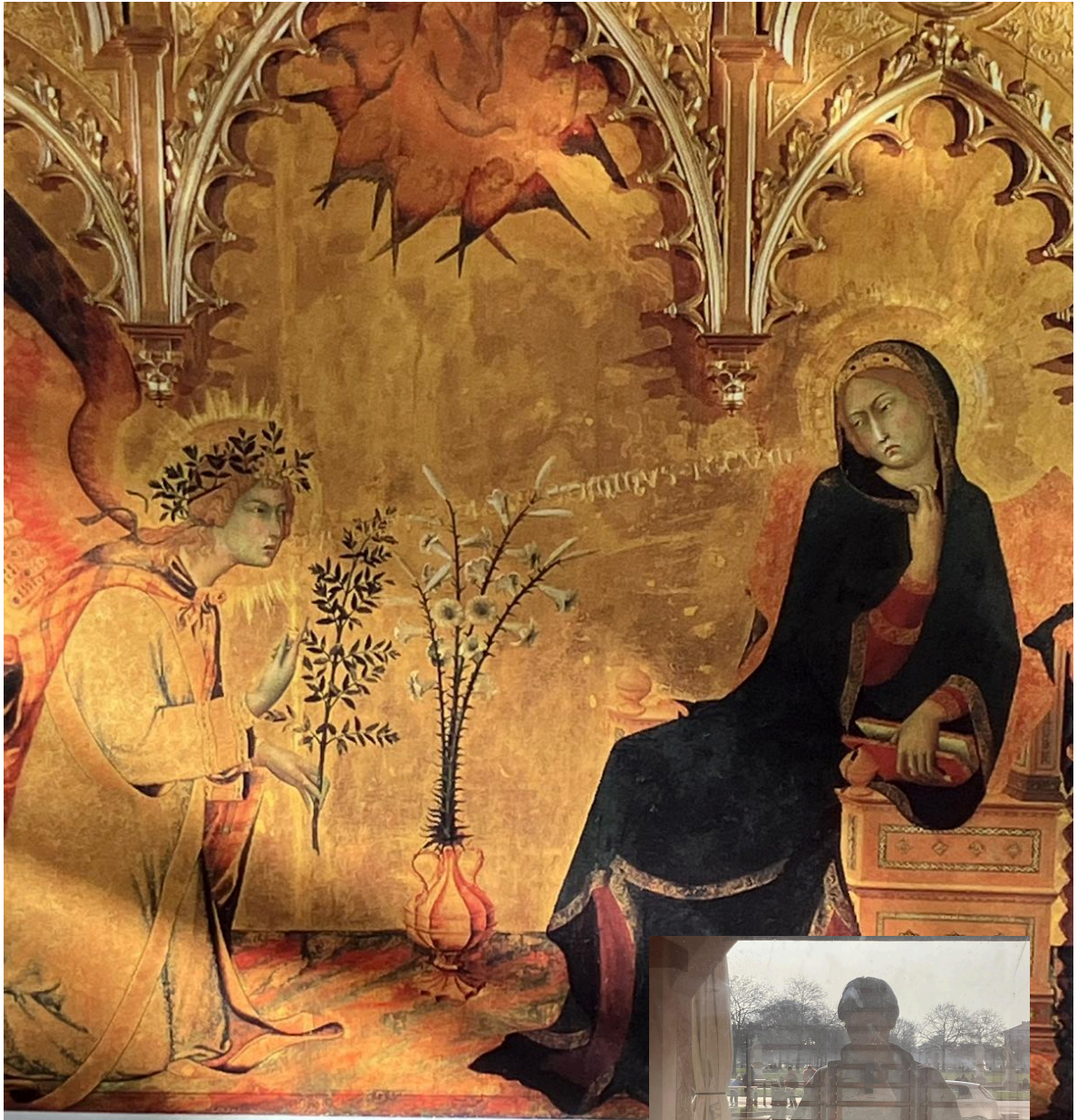




future-intuition

Sometimes I feel that everything was meant to happen as it did. This is a feeling that comes to me after certain events that have given me the impression as they happen that I had foreseen them in some way, not because they were familiar, not because they had happened before, but that, in some important and feeling-rich sense, they corresponded with an intuition I had had before, an image, of what was going to happen, perhaps in the ever-active and image-rich portion of my thoughts which dealt with, which anticipated, and longed for, the future.





space altogether. That was no longer the way we may find their figures a little strange, with curved mouths. But we need only look at the achievements of Giotto had by no means been made real vase standing on a real stone floor, and stands in relation to the angel and the Virgin. The bench on which the Virgin sits is a real bench, receding into the background, and the book she holds is not just the symbol of a book, but a real prayer book with light falling on it and with shade between the pages.



SUNLIGHT-QUAD

THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT THROUGH THE LARGE AND DENSE CLOUD, THE ONLY ONE IN THE BLUE-CLEAR SKY, SO THAT ITS OUTLINE IS BLURRED AND SMUDGED, ITS LIGHT RENDERED JUST THE MORE OPAQUE, AND ITS RAYS APPEAR THROUGH SQUINTED EYES, STRETCHING OUT IN VISIBLE AND CONSTANT LINES OF LIGHT, CREATING AROUND THEM MULTI-COLORED CORONAS, AS IT REFRACTS THROUGH MY CROWDED EYELASHES, APPEARING AS IRRIDESCENT CLUSTERS THROUGH WHICH AS DUSTY WINDOWS THE LIGHT PASSES, AND I AM REMINDED OF THOSE DEPICTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE GOLDEN SUNLIGHT-RAYS SHOOTING FORTH, CARVED INTO WOOD AS THE CORNICE AROUND THE HOLY DOVE.





dancedancedance

Flood-lights at the foot of the long chain link-fence cast long shadows on the dusty and rocky ground. Cigarette smoke drifted up from the excited voices and clinking beer bottles. The gravel shifted and groaned under the weight of the crowd, a procession of dark figures whose outline was barely traceable in the moon-light. There at the head was a small open utility door, and around it spanned a great graffitied wall, many stories tall with rows of dim rectangular windows. In front of this small door stood two austere men. As one approached the door the talk and laughter gave way to silence. The expressions of those present, as well as their black if somewhat strange attire, would have suggested some far more solemn occasion if not for the dulled but insistent thumping emanating out from that great mass of concrete, and the changing multi-colored lights which shone out of the tall windows high up above. The anticipation, and yes, even fear grew in approaching until I stood at the opening, a paces width from those two implacable sphinxes, standing for god knows how long not knowing where to look or what to do with my hands. but to hear the right word, to enter, to pass by them and into the small hallway and to the left into the cloak room where my bags were checked and my phone cameras covered by small stickers, trying to do so quickly and not looking back before they changed their mind, all the while with a quickened heart as if I had just passed under fire and come out again alive-- that exhilaration no doubt was the first Jolt, the first of many, which flushed and opened up my senses. I was wanted tonight.

Sitting on the black leather couches by the coat check, the others climb out of their heavy black jackets, chatting as comfortably as if they sat in their own living room. I by now could get my first good look at them. Taking a big gulp I am confronted by all at once. Revealing themselves to me are shoulders, necks, bare backs and legs and breasts. And Color too, finally--neon greens and bright whites and reds which, in the sea of common synthetic and leather black, was as thrilling if not more thrilling than the show of firm muscle and skin. They walk about with long locks or shaved heads, in jet-black, bleached blonde, or red. With our outfit we each announce our fantasy and an invitation to join--provided you are dressed the part. Some girls are boys, some of the boys are girls. Some of the girls want girls and some boys want boys and then there are all the uncountable permutations in

between and past them. Yet there is a kind of light, or an energy rather, that bathes all bodies in a distinctively feminine cast. Here the differentiation of man and woman, of rough and smooth, of cloth and skin, fades much more into a kind of softness, where things are shown, exposed, and tender.

To me each half-naked person is like a classical statue, curved in graceful and still-moving gesture. Each is worth an hour's attention even if I am only allowed a passing look. It is said that all the statues we have of Classical Antiquity, which we see in museums and in our imagination always in that alabaster white, were actually painted in bright colors, gilded in gold and jewels as rich as the gods and humans they represented. If we could imagine again those young posing figures, all arrayed together, sitting and standing and looking and sweating, in hundreds bristling--we would perhaps have a picture of what that dressing room looked like, and maybe those buttoned-up classicists with their books might understand that their precious marbled bodies do live and move outside the museum walls.

Here is a lot of talk about drugs. We cannot get around it-- it is the main and for some the only subject of conversation, so it is only right I speak about it here. What will I take? How much? It is not, strictly speaking, necessary that I do drugs to enjoy myself--only that the others, the majority, do drugs. When they do I can feel it--this presence is a low but pleasant frequency humming all about--it can almost be tasted in the air-- a slight metallic tang. If I am in the presence of enough people who are, for once, relaxed and therefore open, not only do I benefit from their relaxation and openness towards me, but I too in turn will feel it and my shoulders will gradually loosen despite myself. To be in this space opened up, however chemically, and to be surrounded by people in this space is like being amongst electromagnetic waves of the same frequency who amplify one another. But there is so much going on, so many frequencies operating at once, so many different vibes as there are people bumping into one another that it is inevitable things will become muddled and confused. The best method, therefore, is simply to take the drugs yourself.

I need to go to the bathroom. More often than not when we say we want to go to the bathroom it is not because we need to use the toilet. The bathroom is the drug market-place and also the taking-place. It is understood by all tacitly (in an

example of how anarchist-societies can function) that if you're bringing drugs you have to be discreet enough to hide them well enough and ingest them with no one officially looking. Hence the popularity of the bathroom stalls, being always crowded with people which makes it difficult when we actually need to use them for their original purpose. Anything can be found if you ask enough people. Here the old saying holds --seek and ye shall find. It is a wonderful way to make new friends. If you need to stay up, if you need energy—ask for coke or speed. If you need to loosen up and relax without drinking, ketamine is the word. Then there are those who swear by shrooms and acid but those as we know can be unpredictable. Of course, there is always alcohol, which rules as the undisputed king over all the other drugs (and is my personal favorite).

The bathroom is the only well-lit place—almost too-well-lit, so that when we pass one another to wash our hands we can see the sweat on our skin and our wide eyes. We're all huddled up together, in groups of three or four or five. It is understood that to get into the stall and take drugs alone is sad. But taking drugs is also a communal effort. We take turns holding the cell flat on our palms, crush it with a card and inhale it using a rolled-up bill or house keys. Then we step out, flushed, back into the cavernous dark.

There is one drug, however, which in my view rules as Queen of the night. It is the evening's condition of possibility—the magic ingredient—without which the dance could not live. MDMA or Ecstasy, is this unspoken presence which pervades the party through and through. It does what alcohol can do but more, with a feminine touch, more subtly, more completely and more intensely. The magic of MDMA is not only that it returns us to our body in a great-euphoria feeling, but that it works directly upon the heart, and more specifically, upon our own Self-regard. This regard for one's-self becomes so great, this warm chest-feeling so overflowing, that common and everyday need for assurance or strengthening of this self regard, which we are dependent upon from others, is no longer needed. To feel this finally provides a great, perhaps even the greatest, relaxation. This relaxation in the chest then expands outwards, a warmth that, making its way into hither-to-forgotten regions, re-acquaints us with our body once again. So great and overflowing too is this regard for oneself that necessarily it flows towards the other, by its very nature

perhaps. It is this force above all that surmounts that insurmountable energetic barrier we encounter each day—the one that stops us from approaching a stranger.

The crowd follows the music to the great hall. There, huge square Concrete columns announce themselves, entering, exiting and holding apart the concrete ground and roof far above. At its center a storm is brewing. As I move closer to the eye I am buffeted by sound so furious it is almost silent. There is no speaking here--the public inhales and exhales through each banged up note, swiveling and turning like martial artists in a collective demonstration. I must brace myself, strike down my feet, and lean forwards or be swept away. In the eye of the storm there is the DJ. The DJ leads the dance, she is the source. The DJ is a dancer with her dials and knobs in the same way a composer dances with her stick. A rave without the DJ would be like watching a Symphony play to an empty podium. I begin to breathe, then slowly I begin to feel that familiar warmth going to work. I close my eyes and see the bright lights flash. All is dark here and the feeling is dark and heavy but underneath, if one listens long enough, there is a lightness and subtlety that, once heard, slows and subtilizes you to the finger-tips and weaves them into the music and your own desperate Want.

At the end of the great hall, up the crowded stairs, past the runners-upanddown, through the hallway with the red and yellow and blue stain-glass windows, there stands a small threshold. out of it issues a warm and easy breath of color, talk, and sound. The music is loud but it is soft, joyous, and human. It puts a hand forth in a gentle but insistent invitation—to investigate and explore. At the center of the space is a circular bar at chest height. Before, down below, we could not but look focused ahead towards the wall of Sound which accosted us. Here we now look at each other. It is a game of looks. From each point in the bar-circle the rest of the circumference is open to survey, to meet or pass each gaze as it meets and passes our own.

On the dance floor I see her, feet firmly planted, knees bent supplely, shoulders introducing themselves left right left right like the others. The basin, like the serpent's head, begins to seek out, spiral, and following it, the spine upwards into the neck and head—the serpent's tail. Behind the back and forth which would be the main beat, there are the quiet melodies and colors that speak to the spherical

explorations of her spine and the unveiling and unprotecting of her neck. Her arms by and by participate, raising themselves, to finally make their way up above, twining with each other, leaving the twirling torso and armpits open and exposed. It is the hands that reveal the true dancers. Hands that with great delicacy, each finger-tip's tip touching, as if blind-folded feeling a face for the first time, make their way into space, to take in, receive, and enjoy pleasure.

She takes me through the crowd, drawing closer, into and through the eyes wandering, the heated masses passing by the path cut through them by the bracelet-soft-tipped-long-nailed-grasp curling around itself. She closes her eyes and as if on its own accord the body feels itself, moving to the soft undulations under the beat which moves the others to move in such a way. She cannot not help but move as she does, following her own way, paying no heed to the others. Her fair hair falling around her shoulders, bathed in drunk with the ever-changing-warm-light.

Later we all sit outside in the smoking area on the dirty asphalt floor, with whoever we have collected or has collected us tonight. All the little groups melt into one half-naked body, with many expressions lit up by iphones and cigarettes. Their eyes are turned up and wide like animals caught in the dark. With tired looks they watch the passers-by but with a hunger that overcomes their tiredness. They all look like children to me, especially the old ones.

It is curiously rare, in today's long adolescence that precedes parenthood, to meet other children again. When we do we are met with a strange and unfamiliar phenomenon. Children express their relationships by touch. We see them walk hand-in-hand. When they fight they stay far away from each other and this state is self-evidently painful and unnatural to them. A hug is a reconciliation, and a return to their original state of happiness. Children understand this without it having to be explained.

That is what the critics do not understand—the healthy ones who are afraid of the unhealthiness of it all, without seeing the true disease is the starvation of touch with which we live daily. It is a hunger which grows each day until one day we can no longer take it. And so for all the supposed taboos which a person might

presumably come here to transgress—the most powerful and most forbidden act of them all, which all the dizzying music, drinks, smoke and dark might just make us strong enough to achieve—is the smallest & lightest human touch.

As the sun goes up there is always be a small sense of anguish—a hint of it in the cold air one you are greeted with as you leave the warmth and music behind, a note of it up in the trees with the birds singing their first songs of the day over the morning-quiet streets empty as you walk, heart-full as you are with beautiful things seen. There was the long look she gave you, when you told yourself you would see her later on the dance floor. But there is still time enough for one more dance.

The floor is by now like a windy field of many-colored flowers. In many, most, the petals have begun to find their own space, carry their own weight, and shake on their own with the wind. In those the seeded center, the pistil, the gravitational core, is just beginning to show itself. These form the majority of the field, who now sway and turn altogether, leaning and swirling slightly hither and thither. Then there are, mixed in between them, the usual spent and tired flowers, drooping at the stem, shifting this way and that gracelessly. And then there are, if we are lucky, a few flowers who have come to full bloom. Each is a festival of its own. All of their bright and full petals lead pointing to their chest for all to see, nothing hidden, with each petal vibrating on its own, upon this great head allowing itself to be pushed and pulled, sails unfurled now feeling more of its weight caught in the wind violently, moving to the silent music underneath the music, inter-twining and turning in its own way, letting all of itself be taken, loosened, until the one by one each petal, each seed at the center is given away and they slow and slow and become still.

< Notes

May 6, 2024 at 8:23



I wish I could just grab a hold unto things and keep them for me always, instead of having them slip through my hands.



s.p3llegrin0 @ gmail.com for all inquiries

