

THE PARTY

I'm so glad I'm not John Milton.
Even though I am him, a little bit. Bad eyesight,
and I spend my life caulking holes in a long
allegory about the good and its opposite. I speak
English, etc. And it is even Miltonian,
or at least Satanic in the best sense,
dancing at Woolsey, ecstatic
the space between my shoes and the floor occupied
by platform Timberlands, which seem to come from a shoe factory
ruining the skyline of the lunar surface. In my book I make that
shadowy moon factory a hell for the owners
So when the tides pull our world's waters
it tastes like the tears of those owners.
Rich salt. Beached butt. Bad allegories.

I know you want to see this land of the dead.
Go for it!
They have to slog now, heads down, naked except for globbed
ticks cut like Armani rags. You want to air out
your resentment and I support you.
Later we'll go to the movies and watch
zombies lurch around on screen. They look
like us but are better dancers. Realizing
the world according to their
special traffic.

My landlord's dead and for once
I party in the present tense,
unallegorically. Like paradise.
The shepherd has too much tippie,
loses a few strays, makes a wolf full.
But this fruit is fucking delicious you guys.
Fermented, fierce, raised up by sucrose,
Robyn, Woolsey, resentment, fruit.
The beat comes back after a pause,
hungry to whip its hair loose.
Come in close and touch my juice.

THE AFTERPARTY

In the end the party is not so different than ones in the ancient world.

I mean the ancient world of the global west, that bleating one.

I mean the bleeding one. Roman menus

that calculate how party was the party. Did you eat a whole suckling pig? Excellent. But was it a virgin suckling pig? That's how you know you were at a capital P Party.

At the party you maneuver through seditious buoys, dodge the party foul or commit the foul, collect debts, repay others. Climb and droop like the copper in the cent.

After the party you are all alone, zonin'.

The last dregs of residual sugars dilate and refract sore sweet spots. The charming spots that riot after all the excess skin relaxes.

There's a party. I'm there in pants. Everybody's coming.

Beep beep. Toot toot. Softcore reality principle recurs in the time of the after. Nodding off in a puddle of shoe-beer. Lapping up somebody nasty in the non-Escalade of everyday life, in a brick mattress.

Everyone knows when a party has gotten out of control.

But almost nobody can say when the afterparty has even begun, much less when it busts. Everybody knows that when the party gets too big it is not even a party anymore, but just the state.

And the state has to not only enervate the party, but the very idea of partying. An afterparty of grim austerity, having confessed the deeds and facts of how the party had comported itself. Made fucky-face at the compost. No more making fucky-face at the compost. No more making fucky-face with anybody you don't intend on breaking over a yoke.

A yoke made of Roman wood that has never proven flammable. So you say grazie when it swats your bottom.

Man, a party where Jesus Christ shows up?? Dressed as a rear guard Luftwaffe turning Fiji water into Carlo Rossi??

Except for ABBA I hate everything about the 20th century. Its states, its parties, its insistence on self-reflection. So much "too

soon.” Like, people in the 20th century were still sad about Jesus Christ dying? Whatever. One thing I hate from the 19th century is a painting by Eugene Delacroix called Basket of Flowers. He painted it after the June uprising in 1849, and it screams smug bourgeois triumph at a wonderful party being crushed. Like when your neighbors call the cops. I always wondered what they do then? Rub butts in bed, satisfied of giving birth to heartbreak? Delacroix’s painting is so beautiful. I can’t stop looking at it, in the Met and on the website of the Met.

I’d cover it in urinal cakes until the acid in the pee of every urinal user in the Met that day blotches its radiance, makes it stink like the kitchen floor in the swampy mid-morning after a major party. But maybe it’s better to preserve it and permanently moor my delicious hatred to it. Paint a little version of it myself, perhaps. And have my friends come over to see it and praise my brush strokes. A little party maybe. Maybe try to make it one of those we’ll never forget. And the next day photograph the bruises with my phone. And say “that happened.” And never take the trash out.

LIKE SAYING MERRY CHRISTMAS TO RIMBAUD

What I'm about to say might make you extremely uncomfortable. Like saying Merry Christmas to Rimbaud. Like the time my dad caught me scraping this swollen thumb inside Hanes and said if you're going to do that you better lock the door. Later I sweated it on a bunch of defrosted breadsticks. Or like watching Sammi piss on a frozen ditch. The smell of its steam like the liquor in a pot of greens. So I learn a lesson for once and lock down deep that door against the intrusion of my dad and his double. Shadow dad who topples Xmas, loves Rimbaud.

Everybody loves social awkwardness. Standing around, stuck in the flames of what could have been so easy, so pleasant. But now feel like little Mount Everests of intractability. Like a Christmas where the cookies tank, like the ripped trousers of Rimbaud in that Bohemian poem.

Don't you want to be the world's most oblivious dandy and still learn Sanskrit **I fucking do**. Even though it's odd to run into your coworker holding Monier-Williams's 1,200 page Sanskrit-English Dictionary and have to explain what you're about to go do (read Sanskrit.) I might as well have told her I was going to the library to finger a lemur in such a foul display of "stacks sex" that the Dewey Decimal System would renounce its categories in shame and start arranging books according to colors like that poem where Rimbaud assigns color to all the vowels. If our shared sympathy gets so loose it spills like sibilants out of a slurring mouth we can yet agree to live in a made world of our own discomfort. Half yours, half mine, all awkward.

Our awkwardness is dressed like ABBA because it is ABBA. Singing Merry Christmas to Rimbaud. Singing it in Swedish but we all know what the words mean: love water and be in solidarity with ice. Have it all.

I AM OLDER THAN JOHN MAYER

Pinned between undergrads on MUNI
it came to me suddenly
I am older than John Mayer
I mean, I'm not.
And yet I am,
tackle drooping like the ships of the Argives
bored for nine years roasting weenies.
You know how Spinoza said "the body
is a wonderland?" Sweat gathers,
beads at the faults in my brow.
Here for years I lived like a minor slick spot,
extra in the cast of Grease,
biting the weenie until it tore right off in my teeth,
berating my loved ones with a rerun summer recap
and I had beer breath! Prodigies
are better than any senator.
Eight pairs of wailing headphones warring for prominence
better than any balanced clerk.
Back on the bus,
the soundtrack is better than any senator.
The election is not the object,
liberty is not the object.
The only object is cum and prosody
I wasn't ashamed to be older than John Mayer.
It made a sort of fiscal sense,
like sheep guts scared of approaching cauldrons.
Maybe we are finally the same age?
No one knows what a body can do,
except the police
and John Mayer, the lamest incarnation of the superego (ever??)
Hand in hand we shred to death
graying, wan, and winning.

MY NEW BOOK

On November 4, 2001, in an infamous performance at the roast for Hugh Hefner, Gilbert Gottfried opened a set by making a joke about 9/11. The joke was something like, I'm flying somewhere tonight, but first I have to make a stop...at the Empire State Building. Gottfried is more famous for the material that followed the joke, a new telling of a classic comedic poem called "The Aristocrats." Do you know this poem? It tells the story of a family who visits a talent agent. He asks to see their show. At this point, the poet improvises, generally reciting an index of abject, scatological incest imagery. Then the agent asks, "what do you call it?" And the father says, "The Aristocrats!" Everybody laughs.

Before that, though, after the crack about the Empire State Building, he was met with boos and gasps. The audible sound of a couple people saying "too soon." But what did they mean? That the trauma of 9/11 was too fresh to be represented as anything but trauma? That 9/11 would be funny at some point in the future but it wasn't yet?

Anyway, by the time I started writing my new book, "too soon" seemed to have ceased functioning as a proscription. But the "soon" was a concept that haunted my new book. Because "soon" means "within a short time" but it also means "after now," and the time "after now" could technically stretch into a span by no means short. And when I was writing my new book, my friends and comrades and I were all obsessed with futurity, with immanence and distance.

After finishing my last book I went to Paris. There had been a revolution in Egypt, an uprising was happening in Libya, Greece remained in flames. I walked around Belleville in elliptical patterns of erratic pleasure, checking out the graffiti that read Vive Qadafi, sometimes crossed out but sometimes not. At home in the Bay Area there had been actions all throughout the summer protesting police violence. Transit cops, already infamous for killing a young unarmed man in handcuffs named Oscar Grant in 2009, shot a man named Charles Hill on the train platform—Hill was on the ground and was too drunk to stand. A week later, SFPD shot an unarmed young African American man named Kenneth Harding in the back as he ran away from the cops who had stopped him to check for a subway ticket. In Paris it was literally hot. In San Francisco, kindling smoldered.

When I got back, I rewatched *The Social Network* (2010, dir. David Fincher). Suzanne and I saw it and we both said what most people said which was it was actually a good movie. The expectation must have been that it should not have been a good movie because it was about Facebook. When people started using Facebook people talked about it like it was a space in which content had less consequence. Like people would often say, "So and so is a nice person, but a real asshole on Facebook." As if these two worlds were coterminous but disconnected, and one's many avatars bore little responsibility to each other or to the worlds in which they traveled.

And then I watched it again with Alli. And I liked it again, and I said it's actually a good movie, right? But when I'm not actively watching *The Social Network* I hate everything about it. I love Facebook, but the film seems excessive. Like Achilles dragging Hector's body around in the sand after he killed him. Unnecessarily triumphant. I already had the program downloaded into my capillaries, neurotransmitters and RNA, and then I watch a dramatic representation of how powerless I had made myself in that encounter? And then I watch it again?

Still, none of it seemed "too soon." A film made in 2010 narrating the events of 2004 which would culminate in the dominant social world-making of the years to follow—that's not what seemed out of sync or disrespectful of time. Rather, given the astonishing potential for any made social, even one as dominant as Facebook, to give way to another, what seemed to be at stake in the drama was the telling of a story that hadn't been fully decided. That is, if *The Social Network* was indeed too soon, it wasn't because the events it narrated had happened too recently in the past, but because the event wasn't finished in the world the film purported to depict. As if narrativity had sloughed off its traditional touchstone, the completed event, one that could have a narrative arc, since it was finished and scrutable.

And then, to make the domination even more complete, Mark Zuckerberg started hanging out in the park near my house IRL. Which made me want to barf. And whenever I feel like I most want to barf, that's when I write a book.

I started writing my new book at the same time as the occupations began. I listened to Adele's "Someone Like You" over and over. "Someone Like You" is a song about denial and the affective failure of resolute melodic gnomes to palliate real psychic malady. I was reading Ibn Hazm's book *Neck-Ring of the Dove*. *Neck-Ring* is sort of an Arabic *Ars Amatoria*, an index of various structures characterizing the love relationship, with strategies for triumph inside such structures. Unlike Ovid's book, Ibn Hazm includes a palinode at the end, effectually upholding the power of the strategies elucidated but warning that they must never be attempted. The least likely denial ever. Like Adele, I wish nothing but the best for you / two right. I decided that my new book would be modeled on *Neck-Ring* and I would call it *How to Win*.

Reading Ibn Hazm I thought I finally understood something Stacy had written in the preface to her book *A Cheerleader's Guide to the World*, that love money and writing all come from the same fault. In the fault, where love is the money of affects and writing is the money of meaning, everything can turn into its opposite. The way money transforms something immaterial (desire) into something material (an mp3 download of "Someone Like You.") In *Neck-Ring of the Dove*, Ibn Hazm describes love as having precisely this power, to make the ugly beautiful, the ecstatic grief, the want flesh.

Ibn Hazm also suggests you can fall in love even when you're asleep, and my new book considers dreams part of the same fault as money, love, and writing. Like how you fuck somebody that you really hate in your dreams. Like how you meet your worst

enemy and you run your tongue along their clavicles until they turn into water or velvet cognac and you tell them how much you love them and then you wake up and say ew. In my opinion such a love is a tumbledown building without any foundations. But maybe my book is too obsessed with foundations. Is totally nostalgic. I wake up in the middle of the night choking on imagery. And then freak out at a doctor's office the next day.

So my book started to be less about how to win than to be occupied with money, love, writing, and dreams. And then there was revolution, since my city was smoldering. But then again money, love, writing, dreams, and revolution can all be about winning and losing. When the occupations started there was a great imperative to participate in public actions. Gil Ott wrote that "the imperative levels address." None of my friends wanted to level the imperative, since it's related to empire. And yet some couldn't contain it. The reified demands of compulsory fealty to the insurrectionary present slipped from their lips. I wasn't mad at them. Okay, I was. But I got over it and I hope they did too.

Sometimes revolution tries to turn something into its opposite, by replacing one state with another. Sometimes it tries to turn states of being into their opposites, like oppression and competition into equality and sorority. And sometimes it makes the lover scream at their lover. A climaxing jazal. The whelping dog getting singed around a girdle of death. And I'm supposed to eat out the devil afterwards. The golden lame bridge. Gold lame tights.

Halloween is the night in which anything becomes something else. On Halloween at Cynthia's, Alli dressed as gold, that "yellow slave." After the after party I wrote "Dreams—Occupy Oakland. Shitting poppy seeds. Lindsey barging in while I showered and refusing to leave. Occupying my bathroom." I wrote, "human spam." I wrote, "Timberlake's tears." I wrote, "Standing in disbelief, the antithesis of Stalinist confidence, one's subjecthood blooming. It is the pasture lards the brother's sides / the want that makes him lean. The erased servant in Manet's Le Balcon." I wrote, "recognition is the misrecognition you can bear."

If love is the money of affects, is revolution the "love" of politics? When the occupations started it was almost impossible to think about my new book. I went to Occupy Oakland the first night that the tents went into Oscar Grant Plaza. I came from work and the beautiful blue fabrics I was wearing clashed with the black hoodies, but it was all right. I saw my friends and they seemed happy, there was a noticeable—even suspicious—lack of police presence, it felt safe at the same time as it felt totally precarious. But inside that safety there was something else, invisible yet powerful. Like a shot of capital to a reeling economy or the sight of the beloved across the market. The sweet panic of new love, so inconceivably precarious. Bungee jumping into an exploding star

The occupations, like new love or the first few minutes after snorting a huge bump of cocaine, generated enormous, immeasurable amounts of affect. And that was wonderful. As someone who loves to get high I felt the translation of interior warmth into the effervescent hysteria of a night you know has blossomed even before the scalding sun of futurity sears the glitter off it. But I was worried about putting my body in close proximity to that volcanic diamond of affect. Not only because such excesses of affect are difficult for any human body and human relationship to absorb, but because I am an addict and have a deeply entrenched fear of the hangover. You know, the routine where you lean into the moldy shower wall and spoil it with tears of shame? Or do that for several weeks on end?

So I became a stay-awayer. And even though I stayed away from the occupations, I felt the frays that started showing in the seams of the relationships with my friends and my community. With me, with each other. Everybody started breaking up and hooking up and everybody's new books took up radically different forms. I started thinking of this moment as marked by hyper-ambivalence, recalling that ambivalence literally means the opposite of its current meaning: the Latin words that make up "ambivalence" mean to feel especially strongly in two opposing directions.

I was saved by a few phone calls, where I could talk about solidarity that stays away and how hard it was to write my new book. And my friends went out into the street and the crazy cops shot them with wood and rubber and plastic and chemical weapons and put them in jail and kept them in jail and tried to ruin their lives. And they went to general assemblies, now and then studded with tents, now and then crawling with crazy cops, and I went home and studied Sanskrit and chopped brussels sprouts and watched stoner comedies and went to bed every night racked with guilt. And sometimes there would be parties and everybody would tend to each other's wounds and I'd watch them and love everybody and hate the crazy cops and still stay away. But one thing we all had in common was that Rihanna song.

I'm really in love with the minor jam. The piece that lives in oversaturated rotation not for all time, not even for a month, sometimes not even a week, but which still stuffs the empty space in its reign with all the particularities of its glory. The 80 hours of E-40's "Function" for instance. But the first time I heard "We Found Love" it was obvious that I beheld not only a very excellent pop single but one which was undeniably durable. So that while the lyric fact of "We Found Love" makes every effort to substantiate its timelessness, the feeling expressed in it seemed to describe one place and one place only: the hopeless places that all of us now contended with as spaces of revolution, of love and love-sickness, of raw debt, of lived poetics.

The beauty of "Someone Like You" is its commitment to strong ambivalence. How it scales between irony (the fact that "Nevermind" in the song means "Mind! Mind!") and desperate sincerity. In "We Found Love" on the other hand, the feat is the explosive phonic representation of what felt like a whole world's throbbing optimism—how cruel

it was at times, how precarious, how enraged. And when the beat climbs to its crescendo it sounds like a riot feels. It pivots towards haywire. The sentence “we found love in a hopeless place” describes the present as a triumph over nihilism. There was no way we could have done what we did. As if it came from the future we were all thinking of, no matter which hopeless place we currently languished in: the plaza, the street, the jail cell, the tipsy phone call from the shaky flat.

While I was writing my new book there were various waves of intense hope. My friends in the occupation decided to take over a building abandoned by fiduciary failures and transform its meaning in the city. Some of them brought overnight bags and sleeping bags and their medication. They were met by an astonishing force of crazy cop violence. Alli and I had gone up north and were staying at this meth chic motel, and although we had gone up north to the meth chic hotel to give ourselves a little space from among other things the occupation and the building takeover, we ended up watching Bay Area news. Watching the war zone in Oakland and the wood and rubber bullets and tear gas and the four hundred arrests. And I went to bed disturbed and had bad dreams. And then Stacy died.

I think there’s a cliché that poetry is one of the human efforts that is supposed to provide relief for profound grief, but I think in the immediate afterwards it’s always totally inadequate. Too soon. Certainly poetry has always concerned itself with timelessness and glory, with a kind of deathlessness founded on its own excess, embodied by its attempt to conflate itself with memory and everything remembered. But in the immediate moment of irreal devastation, poetry is at its most grotesque. Now there was this cavern that emerged inside me concomitant with Stacy’s body leaving the world and poetry did not fill it. But because poetry did not fill it, because my new book couldn’t address itself to the cavern and the disappearance of Stacy’s body and intellect from this world, because rather the world atrophied so gravely that day, I’m not going to try and describe my grief in a discursive way in this ekphrastic description of my new book. Instead I’m going to tell you about a poetry reading.

Because the night of Stacy’s shiva I had to read poems from my new book at the church. I went to the ceremony for her with the awful adumbrated knowledge about the fate that awaited the day, that it could not not be done, couldn’t be canceled, could only be scrutinized or berated for its untimeliness. The shiva itself was an uncanny simultaneity of extreme affects: undeniable joy at seeing so many beloved friends and comrades in one room, the shared passionate love for Stacy and marvel at her intellect and art, the overwhelming grief of her disappearance.

I read the poems from my new book, and it turned out that the poems were not only inadequate to the grief of the moment they were sickening. They were gross and full of excrement, cum and shit and laughter—all things Stacy loved to think and write about, but all the grosser to stand, breathe, read out loud. And when I finished reading

them I sat in my chair and looked up at the top of the ceiling of the room of the church.

Kathleen was reading, but all I could do was imagine compressing myself into a polyangular morpheme of dust that could rise above the voices and the horror of the room and tuck myself into a hollow corner of the beams, a spot untouched by human hands for decades and preferably a place that would remain untouched. So I could dilate and decay into a monad of pure mourning, braced against any community ever.

Old friend / why are you soooo shy / not like you to hold back / and hide from the light. I listened to “Someone Like You” at least once every day. Its simultaneous irony and pathos was deep after Stacy died. I sang it out loud on my walk to the train each morning, wanting to transform the walk, to transform the city that was so atrophied without Stacy in it. So I sang it to the young millionaires waiting in line for the Facebook and Linked-In and Google wi-fi luxury buses at the corner of 24th and Valencia—figuring they should have one little taste of vintage freakiness before commencing work.

So when I heard that the poets in New York City had gone wild about karaoke, I promptly took my new book and went there. I had been thinking about the libratory and spectacular power of pop music in political uprisings. At the occupations, my friends would sing pop songs to the crazy cops. Rihanna’s “What’s My Name.” Ludacris’s “Move.” Later Dana reminded me that one explanation for this might be that pop songs are fundamentally for us. That despite being commodities in the service of the dictatorship of the consumable they were special and particular in their use, abuse, and reuse.

Karaoke is a momentary autonomous zone, a miniature of that crowd at the occupations demanding pigs say their name. A camp in which tremendous acts of courage and wild solidarity for one’s comrades flourishes. My first night in New York I had a nightcap at the Hairy Monk, a bar in Gramercy. It is one of the world’s worst bars and I love it. I didn’t need the nightcap, but are nightcaps about need. In any case, this particular night they had karaoke, and it was just as awful as the bar was awful relative to a world of taverns. I put my name in, paid a dollar, and minutes later delivered a miserable rendition of “Someone Like You.” Despite my misguided drunken decision to try to hit the high notes on the chorus rather than waver in my range the whole bar clapped. The KJ asked them to clap for Brandon. She said my name. Yay Brandon. They said my name. Oh na na.

The next night I read some poems from my new book, and then the poets went to sing karaoke and reiterated the solidarity of the night before. The poets sang beautifully, they sang tenderly, they sang with every exertion of irony and sincerity and optimism. We occupied a small bar in lower Manhattan and turned it into an outpost for anti-cruelty. If the drinks had been free and not merely cheap I’d say it was a temporary free school with a curriculum in economies minus competition. Megan and I sang

“Someone Like You” as a duet and it was so right I thought Adele must somehow be able to hear us. It’s true, hearing us in a dream which must have felt like seeing yourself in a bad outfit, but still. Our apotheosis. The hangover was glorious and lasted for 2 months.

It makes special sense for poets to love karaoke. After all, as I learned most profoundly from Stacy, poetry has its origins in a liminal zone between counting and recounting. Between production, appropriation, reappropriation, and recital. Between money and notches on a stick. Between memory and action. Poetry always involves the engagement with a dormant measure, inextricable from but never synonymous with writing; it activates through the body and does so at the risk and expense of community, of love, of death. For most of human life the poet has also been the singer of her poems. Now we’re mostly too embarrassed of our poetry to sing it out. But it does make karaoke the absolutely perfect afterparty.

This appeared to me in the form of an idiot’s epiphany. Like anytime you realize oh shit I’m obsessed with something you realize it had always been there for you and you were just too stupid to love it. I came home and tried to spread the gospel to my friends and comrades. They were somewhat amused with the notion of poetry extending from a space between money and the notch on the stick, and many were willing to experiment with karaoke, but they were mostly preoccupied with thinking about May Day.

The night before May Day we gathered at the bar to talk about what we wanted to do on May Day, and to sing karaoke. The bar was near the Ashby BART and is called Nick’s. David took me there years before on the way to the train. Then, it had been an almost exclusively African-American bar. White people bought it, took down all the pictures, put up jazz posters, fired all the bartenders, hired young white bartenders, and started having karaoke three days a week.

Meanwhile there was a pre-May Day anti-gentrification gathering in the park in my neighborhood across the Bay. The very park where Mark Zuckerberg gets his freckles tanned. So that place seemed deliciously wrong, since it had become the absolute icon of hyperdilated gentrification in a neighborhood a decade at least saturated by senselessly overpaid, semi-socialized Caucasians (mostly) and the tech money they ride in on.

As I was contaminating Nick’s with my own disgusting white body and all its desires for unrestrained consumption, the anti-gentrification march in the city got hot. A vanguard group broke from the march, and started smashing in the windows of the boutique businesses that had crowded in over the years. Fancy cars had their glass shattered, anarchist signs spray painted on the hoods and the walls. The police station, despite being surrounded by a ring of crazy riot cops, took several hits of both artwork and masonry. There were no arrests. The news lit up the phones of my friends and we celebrated what sounded like a victory.

I sang "Friends in Low Places," an appropriate song for our insurrectionary moment as any. Just think of the encampments in the occupations as precisely "low places," although they were mostly free of beer and whiskey as far as I could tell. Oases of free soup in a desert of really gorgeous phones. I sang "Someone Like You," making sure not to try and hit the high notes. Alli and I sang "Ring of Fire," a paean to the people breaking the glass of the haute coffee shop and the boutique accessories shop and the boutique accessories shop next to it.

We met up with all our friends the next day in the plaza. We arrived to MJ blasting on the speakers and free cupcakes. Within minutes we heard a voice cut the music to say our comrades need our help. "Don't Stop Til You Get Enough" gave way to "Fuck the Police" and we all sucked into the magnetic tumult despite many of our intentions to avoid the thick display of force. When the force started gathering bigger and more brutal, Alli and I walked to Luka's for lunch, a place where the poets had often gone after readings at 21 Grand. There is a back room whose walls could tell a beautifully swerved history of contemporary poetry if they could talk. Our friends joined us. We drank, we played the jukebox, we laughed, we worried, we fussed, we reached out for information about what the crazy cops were doing and who they had hurt and who they would like to hurt.

In the evening, we went back to the plaza but it was clear that there was going to be more and imminent violence on the part of the police. They massed on the streetcorners, each of them with dozens of handcuff-ties studding their hips. We walked to have Chinese food. We ate and we worried and we laughed and drank, and fussed and reached out for information, and we lauded the food. We talked about the day and how depressing it had been, and how marvelous, and how ill-conceived, and how wrong, and how we were all so happy to have been with each other. Walking back to Alli's house before everyone scattered, the city was terrifying. The helicopters useless for anything but making vast amounts of noise. We kept seeing little pockets of cop cars and crazy cops arresting young people. We walked home fast.

You know how Lou Reed wrote the happiest sad song ever ("Who Loves The Sun?") and the saddest happy song ever ("Perfect Day")? May Day was a perfect day after all, bruising and beautiful at the same time. So perfect the time before it resolved into the perfect tense. My new book was less caught between two different worlds than lavishly relishing in both at the same time. At one end, Adele singing with a mouth full of tears, resenting contingency with bared teeth. At the other, Rihanna, glimmering like a cracked-open trunk of treasure, insisting life be livable despite the spoiled real.

The world of things we loved seemed to have hurt us instead of lasted. Nevermind. It would last and last. In the crater it made upon impact we dreamed of its continuance. A world without competition, without teeth, without saline spraying out of your eyes. One without crazy cops. One with Stacy back in it. With the volume turned all the way up. Hopelessly in love, hopelessly in place.

