

## But the Thing Is It Is Possible to Feel Really Good

There is no maximum level of manipulability  
built into our world's approach to us—kitten's  
clumsy pawing of a paperclip across the one bare patch  
of desk, what it means when everything is structured  
by debt is that default could put the lie to beauty,  
to the impossibility of actually sharing with any other person  
those nameless moments, and then this person saying  
no what do you mean I felt that too I was in it with you  
and the objects you give to it out of faith in the allegory.  
It is so much easier to record your voice than it used to be.  
Not an archive of loss in the end but an archive of unforgiven  
petty offenses and minisculely personal failures, as if collectivity  
were really just a means to satisfy our desire  
for transparent communication of selves,  
for total permeability. Our voices change  
as we slide into a hermeneutics of aesthetically shaping  
potentiality while it lurks along beside us pretending  
like a child at the game of what I want to be when I  
grow up. You will never let yourself arrive finally  
if you know what's good for you; when you do  
you'll find the conditions of possibility have been  
rendered in such a way as to allow only phantom status  
to your companions, ghosts of impossibility. As those  
you've made promises to proliferate more promises there comes  
the possibility of spaces in which multiple faithfulnesses  
can be maintained even as each appears in itself to be impossible  
to reconcile with any other, let alone all of them, which feels  
like the cold night air of any spring you care to remember.

## I Wish I Could Watch This Movie with You and That's Dangerous

Anyone who believes economics rather than politics  
is the only truth has never lived in a relatively poverty-free  
region where access to birth control is constantly under threat  
by religious groups with no special economic claim to power,  
though it's time we operate—every last one of us—  
as if we could have existed in the forms once held  
by others, pre-eyebrows, and fetishes wrapped up  
with the skinny-armed sleep everyone longed for back then.  
Because sometimes the real challenge when bringing a portrait  
into existence is to stick with the pattern that guided our initial  
strokes even as other clearer patterns emerge, begging  
that we recalibrate our fidelity in order to make their apparition  
complete, the inversion of normativity (not the converse)  
where feeling normal means one's own historically discrete  
events are misinterpreted as processes staged repetitively  
by an undefinable set, so feeling normal as a method  
of never being alone—just being this way  
the way we just are, the skin of us traced  
by the skillful fingers of the idea, drawn shape  
by an alien desire, vacuum expressed as hope.  
When I say I love you what I mean  
is my critique of the world ends with you.

## It Is Necessary for Heresy to Disappear

Even our impossible future extraterrestrial opportunities are determined by our need to withdraw resources though after so many variations it is possible to draw up scenarios in which the AI is unable to compensate for the negligence of large groups, as opposed to the hunger of individuals serving a one-year tour. Nobody's here for their health, after all. A containment suit is a kind of acquiescence to the delicate embeddedness of our bodies in air where you don't boil or explode, where the distribution of cells rather than individual bodies resembles a gas leaked into a vacuum chamber, the flapping of a blowout expending momentum on the highway shoulder, but wouldn't it be easier to inject some kind of knockout gas through the ventilation shaft than to crawl in, all bearded and uniformed, yourself, as definite as you are? Out into the world is the instruction we most enjoy ignoring. You really can make the case that bland internet drudgery is the exalted sacrifice we have to accept from others—even though you can tell whether a cc camera is looking at you, it's only on faith that we accept the action is prophylactic rather than prurient, though in practice our objects tend to perform a process of moral grandstanding either way, like the same knife always laying just out of reach no matter which hand tries crawling toward it. Sometimes humans tackle humans. It's their nature.

## The Unexamined Dream of Full-Time Employment in the Fast Food Industry

We would like to forgive you, release you from responsibility,  
so we must annihilate you or be hopelessly trapped in these towns  
composed by variations in the spatial arrangements among the same  
necessary objects, monumental only by demand of logistics. That you  
fell in love with your own, held them full of meaning, saw depth  
in their everyday doubleness, the cicadas, the cottonwoods, the water towers.  
We would name every object, specify a history, birth and life—  
a proper name, that is, decided upon before you and dependent  
on your argument if you want to claim ever to know anything at all.  
For reality affords no shorthand. To be within history  
is to know your own radical singularity as the last indivisible effect.  
But you are most guilty for your perverse refusal  
to imagine a better world for anyone except yourself.  
What we forgive is that you are what you are  
and this through no fault of your own, nor your desire  
to find yourself again and again in the reality you create  
by understanding it that way. It would be absurd to blame you  
as it would be to admit the validity of your actions. Take off  
your clothes and learn to eat better, satisfy the uncomfortable  
flesh that holds together the opacity our social relations  
require in order to remain legible, set yourself against  
the off-focus background as the one thing whose sharpness registers  
what could exist only in this precise historical moment  
and so exquisitely pure in its contingency, oh  
we are all so Leibnizian these days, aren't we just?

## They Disapprove of Mumbo Jumbo Too

It's a misconception about plant-life now  
that the boundaries between the Cambrian and the Pre-Cambrian  
have eroded, moist and insouciant,  
not the rigorous archaeology aimed at unearthing  
first articulation, the first explosion of flowers' bloom.  
Horizons remain pitched for expansion,  
but there are ways of being local inaccessible  
to most actual localities; that is,  
local is not really a generic category.  
Alleys are transitional places where rats learn to swim.  
You might see a deer out your back window, tense with panic  
and slipping on the pavement: the impossible effort  
of what lies beyond the light and the luminous world,  
for our senses are buried in eternal darkness, somehow bounded  
by the asphalt of the new publicly financed bike paths  
that ring just past the edges of what still feels like our town.