

INCLUSIVITY BLUEPRINT

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*Je mets une pomme sur ma table. Puis je me mets dans cette pomme.
Quelle tranquillité!*

I place an apple upon my table. Then I place myself inside this apple.
Such peace!

—H. Michaux

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Acknowledgments

It goes without saying that new work is the work that "goes there." Still, for now, I've chosen to stare other suns free of their smoke and pass down into that glen to the East, having seen there, from the canon portal, above the basket of abalone shells soon to be loaded onto the junk ship, hundred-year-old crates of dried wild apples and gunny sacks of roasted cinnamon.

I'm only hungry for now, but later I'll be dying of thirst. By degrees, then, tomorrow morning, I'll part my eyelids and squint through the flaming gauze of my headache, in order to tend to the concealment of my stupid datedness before you wake up.

Internal bashing will have become the unvoiced ritual of cornering myself in the salon of my body: a nightly break-in of a house that is burning, but only in the imagination of the burglar, whose hallucinations will have led him to pray beside my toilet, to wash his hands in its water, to scrub his face with my loofa, having forgotten his intention to thief entirely.

There will be the planar scuttle of water rippling where my spit will have landed, just offshore.

And there will be the phrase *au large*, which has always evaded my easy translation.

And there will be *bornes*, and *bornes*, and *bornes*.

And there will be a quantity of unravished limbs.

But then there will be no eponym.

SUMMER!

Dreams until now were futuristic, slices from a fruit almost ripe,
or with the hair on my skin comes the grating that contains me.

A window at garden-level with dull moonlight and three
Pieces of unbuttered bread, like glass dipped in water,

Disappear. The light knitting a spherical grid leaks
From your tear ducts in icicle-forms. No, I'm there for no one,

And every time you think suicide is on deck, sweet summer
Arrives with its play of intensely bright shadows, "vague and obsolete."

I DARE YOU TO KEEP ME COMPANY

You could have piled the trunk of every tree in this wood and still felt just as far from your given name, but as you breathed you could have sworn the air was made of acupuncturist's needles drizzling over a black sea of jackhammering umbrellas. So you had me wait for you a thousand times over in the Rapunzel turret, where the deadbolt of the New World's last lock had been cranked into the passing mouths I had passively refused to liberate from the assembly line.

With a map you could seek the rift. I would meet you there, where the yellow seas curtsy to a vertical shore of mirrors.

I could have helped you banish the pines, but the voices, too umbrageous to be articulate, had folded the sunlight like a topographical map, and it often grew too dark to see.

Thinking of obscure people in the community seemed to force them to coincidentally appear, and so the flowers of a thousand lifetimes laid the way home, where the Cerbereans had kept our bedrooms just as we had left them.

Untying ourselves from those distant lives is not as deliberate an act as we thought it would be:

The motor is simply the process of forgetting.

COCAINE / ZEUGMA

That it's burning's capacity to kill that clues us into the feeding-unto-death occurring in the bush still astounds me, the bush being a thing water can touch, but which even the furthest extension of language cannot, as if the rejuvenating coolness of fresh water were an apology from the world as we drown in it, or rinse away the salt of the dried sweat our body perspires into our cuts.

If only it were true when I had the thought just now that no one has ever drowned in fresh-water—only salt-!

We, too, at the moment of our second coming, will turn away, before appearing, like this implied presence of water, if for nothing more than to demonstrate the principle of zeugma to the still-pimpling rhetoricians.

And if the falling powder need some angle on which to momentarily rest, may it be a steep one, so most of it keep floating down into our nostrils. For its is not a simplicity implied by the cloud form (which would, in time, be determined by its washing away,) but a centripetal attraction toward a space just to the left of our chests.

CONTE

At first the raindrops distributed themselves evenly over the clearing and the forest beside it—the eye could see no further—but slowly, they funneled inward toward the hand itself, as if streaming down the edge of a perfectly translucent funnel.

Rotating on the axis of a stationary wrist, the hand threaded a wisp of this matter from the cloud's center, as if peeling the skin off a newborn by pulling the umbilical cord from its navel, or threading yarn from a sack of sugar soaked wool.

A black dog emerged from the nearby forest and, while sharpening its claws with a heart-shaped pumice, ran in circles around the hand as if around a pit of spellbinding fire.

The cloud screwed into the palm and rang, as it grew denser, like champagne flute.

The palm expanded to the size of the clearing and the fingers formed a wall, into which the dog collided, having been blinded by excitement, as she rushed toward the forest, whence she had come.

From the wall you threw the servants down.

FRUIT FLIES

for Matt Longabucco

The last thing I'd want to be is a copycat suicide, but if my body were to jump out of that window, who would be able to stop my sight from crossing the threshold first?

And if then, my body, having stopped itself for fear of this kind of imitation, were to feel a breeze, teetering there, thirteen stories up, but with no resolve to turn back in, where the impossible length of life washes over me in its cadenced waves—but with no will to take the plunge . . .

Rain, rain, go away.

The sun is so revivifying!

How it sharpens the edge of our cognition, or rather, sculpts its central precision miraculously out of a fog, which, in time, is revealed to be composed of fruit flies, which, in turn, must be trapped and drowned, like me, in this wine . . .

LIFE CYCLE

Botanically speaking, I want my language to be a non-vascular plant in the land plant division Bryophyta. I want it to be a small (a few centimeters tall), herbaceous (non-woody), plant that absorbs water and nutrients mainly through its leaves and harvests sunlight to create food by photosynthesis. It would differ from vascular plants in lacking water-bearing xylem tracheids or vessels. As in liverworts and hornworts, the haploid gametophyte generation would be the dominant phase of its life cycle. This would contrast with the pattern in all vascular plants (seed languages and pteridophytes), where the diploid sporophyte generation is dominant. I want my language to reproduce using spores, not seeds, and have no flowers.

ACCIDENTAL SUICIDE

A moth flies into the flame of the candle on my bedside table. The third time, it falls to the wood, its wings too burnt to fly high enough to reenter the fire. Suddenly, I understand the tenderness of putting glass around gas lamps and lanterns. I wonder which concern is the more primordial: the struggle with wind or with watching moth after moth fly its way into this farce of accidental suicide . . .

But language without a topic too can evoke profoundly familiar feelings: of being awake too late and drifting in and out of lucidity. If in a state of relaxation, this is one of the most pleasant ways to think clearly, but if it's simply a matter of being unable to articulate otherwise, and there's still work to be done—some nasty little project due early the next morning, that friend who still hasn't called you back—it can bring about a small atrocity.

The key, then, may be finding ways to coax language into a state of pure relaxation in, or better yet, by way of this kind of drifting, to tend not toward cohering, but toward basking, up late, in the unspoken-for hours of language's night.

WHAT IF?

for Alice Sant'Anna

When a thread does run from one end of the rope to the other, which bell are you going to ring? Excuse me. Who cares that a platitude be disproven? Rejoice! For they stepped in the same river twice, and it made them have a baby.

And when a plastic tree, miles away, really does look bigger than its exact duplicate—mere inches from your eyes—which drawer will you open to find the lightbulb you found was necessary to hide from her? If it's even there anymore, will you screw it in and set it down on the dry leaf pile on the tall, tall staircase?

But what if their skin, too, began to smell of fire?

What if spaying took four?

What if a word could be spayed, or did not occur?

Or if, even in the most abject cold, a dear always smelled like the gray of smoke?

I think in the rings you blow from your fingertips. I think, in so far as they are not promiscuous rings. Not at all, until they float, extend, distend, go pop, or get lost.

So, they contain bricks when I am too long away. In their gut I contain bricks when they are away just one day. Do I contain bricks when they are close, then, too? Which is to say, does she contain bricks when I am not away?

I am thinking in seven rings, which are my gears, my seven movements: come lie on the sun warmed moss—it is not wet, no—if it often is, it is not so now—not unless it has rained—which it hasn't, because it can't here—only an imagined rain—so not a rain at all.

FÊTES (OUR SONGS)

There is a holy land of laceration that is short, but over time leads to the sea.
So it can last, and that I, too bitter, too frail to accumulate breath, won't matter,
won't waste what doesn't have to make rhyme,
this is the distance at which to set the rudders apart—
but to come off desperate, even unwilling, and yet to still radiate love of self, "it
will take such courage to step into the light of what is true."
To maintain almost nothing, receiving these sums without units,
bust the thread open, because they love you and need you there,
their faces drenched in the same breaking light.
But who was it who sang to me,

*Swing low while you're craning,
And slowly your rope
Will in the morning call,
When your eyes are saliva blue.*

*Don't buy that
What might have been lost
Lost me
What might have been,*

*Because bramble,
Eerily inside you,
Hit hit hits pink
Into the pyramid,*

*Not like you—
Probably blindness—
For what's eager shapes
The far side of soon.*

Digits braid into an eye and into a forehead, and these knots work backward now more comfortably through the splinters raining over Florence.

Inevitably, dust and rain also braid into the eye, aggravating the oblique spirit one last time—and another last time.

So, for once, I'll refuse to wait, won't take another first step unanswered by promise.

Then, to wake up, duped again and still half-cut, in the fold of an empty wallet, with mangrove roots for legs, covered with red poppies!

ILLEGIBILITY

Down by the docks where questions persist, the answers couldn't be more than one ring around the sun, or patience, or a single span of attention away.

But who was it who sang to me,

*Don't touch the shoulder
At the end of
That cold world.*

There is a fatigue that comes with being filled, for as long as there is no ruler to determine length, comfort won't be something you can assume, but the doppelgänger come so fast on the scale of the translated, and as anal also enables ever more numinous elements to unite, to take account of different degrees of proximity—areas, instead of being—so the ethical relationship of listening and pantomime, like any one thing and its inverse, must first be in bed in order to say “no,” but stay awake.

So you gut the hull, choosing no more carefully than before, spending more than promised, though thatching still exists, even if out of sight, inside knots, or in story books,

and its qualities persist, and you persist, and so does the blood-orange light under the table.

But who was it who sang to me,

*“Playthings come and go.”
It's the proverb of youth
That's at some point forgotten,
When we ourselves become toys,
But, unwilling to own up to it,
Start tying ourselves into its yoke.*

Inhabiting the same space, though everything in the room felt as if it had been measured in metric units, the bases of our mistakes were rational because they had been forgotten.

With a little backing, she would have liked to Orphically dissemble patience—but these were never words for voices . . .

I hadn't thought of them this way, and I guess realizing it now is dangerous, Standing here in front of you—

An illegible handwriting guides, trapped by its age.

To lighten distraction, for the sake of a more efficient decryption, crossbreed the question “who could without be” with the wish of gaze.

The can't-go-with-you grain of this funny noise of long-legged plotting,

The thousand-mile strides tearing their way out of my throat,

Gone without word into the hecatomb of waiting.

Watch the better days riding their magic carpet up through the windmill arms!

Resistance without clarity stretches two erasures with the cable tensors of a bridge, fun to look at when perspectively distending.

A pocket of blank acts, turning, like a cache.

These terms are willing to eject a hand from question or lightless sweat through web-felt pressure, bracelets, marrow, or another kind of pressure.

To rediscover the palace in a font's cool & crippled ship.

Resistance nor reflection wanes, not distracted enough to rain the impression without frail.

BEZIER PHOTOS

couldn't they speak au moins
une fois chaque trois ans mais non
par la back fenêtre de la bagnole quand she came out
de notre maison les mercredis soirs toujours 5 heures pile
à lui raconter des petites nouvelles de la semaine
comment vont les gars peter kit and ben par exemple
he'd put down the back window passenger side
elle y marchait tête basse I mean it was really fucking cruel
making her walk around the back of the highlander™ like that
like no way in hell would I ever do that to anyone
surtoût qqn I'd been married to que j'avais évidemment chéri-e
she'd walk over to that back window passenger side
à raconter nos vies il hochait la tête ne répondait jamais
wouldn't look at her ne parlait point pas un seul mot
god damn thinking of it now it was so fucking mean
like the definition of mean on dirait même
des conneries enfantiles right there
I've never seen anything like it sauf dans le cinéma
mais I never asked him about it never could get myself to
muster up the guts à lui call that bullshit
it was never the right time parce qu'il était toujours
l'heure de faire la vaisselle disons or to
set the table or nous asseoir jouer la guitare en silence dans le salon
et vraiment je l'aimais à cette époque-là autant que j'aime toujours
mais avec le recul on dirait même qu'il faisait toujours très clair dans ces jours-là
yes the light was always just right l'air juste un peu fraîche
or after dinner it was time to watch the ballgame
red sox vs yankees on pouvait vraiment veiller ces soirs-là
mais ce n'était jamais l'heure de parler des trucs qui nous comptaient
vraiment non tout ça c'était pour les amis et the notebooks
mon thérapeute M. le cahier how now looking back
est-ce que je ne me perdais pas la tête pendant ces moments
dans la voiture qd il nous faisait witness to that inexcusable
putain je m'excède là
to that hatred fois après fois au travers la tinted window
mais il n'est plus comme ça time to cut off the fat
du passé all the graisse lopped off to coat nos corps avec
pour qu'il ne nous fasse plus jamais froid au présent

SLIPWAY

On the dock, what duct tapes his mouth shut is his breath.
To take, more closely, in this transformation, between his lips, growing cold, a
guess—
Choosing the winter on the lagoon isn't necessary, like the pale, hanging light
after a storm.
It's not a question of memory, nor of her face losing its softness.
The estuary disappears behind his body, claimed by the wood.
The entire city, the whole bay, a wide and parallax view.
Just barely, move over a bit, like tickling the hair on the man next to you.
That one—in the cold—your first contact with the jealousy of heat.
Fine hollow black lines, a long oblique gesture toward the ear.
Hermeticism on a black platform: in satchels, in bread.
Seeing that some red patches hang above the water, the city installed flood-
lights to light them up in the evening.
In the town, wind sweeps through the swinging door of the dark little station.
I recognize this face by chance, facing me, myself, like the spatial distortion of
a bridge drawing near.
The moment is not chosen, nor the spatial distortion of the nearing bridge, nor
the sinking cargo of first steps.
The square is skinned, deserted, not being the steep street nor the steps of the
bridge.
Overview of a distracting sound.
Taken in this beam of light, I dive into the rosebushes.
These aren't the ones crawling out of the dream, but from the pillow citadel of
childhood.
Drowning out sixty-odd years of things.
It's still technically the city at the bottom of the hill in the Eastern industrial
district. To get there, you must have a weightlessness.
Instead of being completely between the wooden slats, we hear to the side.
It must be the early fall, but these are not the same houses.

TOWARD BECOMING LITERAL

after erica kaufman

To kill the movement toward becoming literal, I built this excuse for expression to speak to you in secret of my autoimmunocentric want to just give up and let my spirit rot in codependence with my sacroiliac joint afflicted by ankylosing spondylitis. For, if what I tell you were to get back to ears craving anonymity, the ungenerated skin cycle would be made to leave town, the way I warn would become an instance of lore, in movements of anatomic wax ring toss.

Part of me thinks I should say it all, flesh it out to the extreme, but then, looking back . . . to have gone home the other night, Notebook—I swear! To have been that reckless mess in that traveling counter-public event, then clerical, then obedient, and only then could sleep, and only lightly because brightly I loved the hypergrammatic intent tower, the super-brand-new garden of continuous charades, the absolute comfort of it all. What an arm extended between us, suspended in whiskey! (An orb, too.)

I see now how much easier it is to abstract every last thing, but more softly, apologetically -phobic of emo sewage wrangling the derelict lingo, instead of a cogent motive to be treated with a dignity manifest only in subsequent editions—not in prelapsarian time.

The measure of stride, first with, then without friends. Waiting out the shelf-life of stumped, disappearing gestures toward killing reason itself. For extreme amounts of writing are an oppression of speech, and I am not to speak to you of the censorship and divorce present in my daily routine, nor am I to think of you when I sit alone or wake at night alone, feeling empathy for book and self for want of drafting. Not accompanied nor am I alone; I am with you, so I am out of season.

I have somewhere surely lived a toy life with your epic cycle of slow remediation, while firs on the gum tree warped into these hyper-baroque limbs, these adamantine vessels losing foreignness beneath the same blossoms as three Marches ago.

To remove a part of my body, to become someone else in a public state, we too camp out in this parking garage and increase the unilateral carnage of our almost parallel lives. Our place is under the initially private highway, where the archangel Gabriel doesn't touch us, damaging our cheek bones, or mark us elegiacally. It isn't as complicated or clean as you originally thought, but functions like one solid receptacle, this being stuck here in the anxiety of letting go of the wheel, going 90-something, this desire to halt my adaptation to the sequential derision of bi-polar cancellation. (I didn't know it would seem so historic to be conscious of my pulse.)

The daytime hesitations that provide this OCD analysis of specifics its *raison d'être* are actually harder to justify than just going out and staying out, as "a social appendage who is also drunk."

I used to think the body a landless metaphor for the scriptural right to territory, but there is no guardian anymore. And when it's time to leave the gazebo, will I finally achieve non-eternal life? And again, if we're so misled by majoritarian phylogeny, why do we instinctively people the dominant?

I asked the 8-balls, the talking mirrors, the tarot cards, the fortune tellers, the flower torn leaf by leaf, the horoscope, my intuition on drugs, and they all replied alike: "In order to have a lot of light ones now lonely with the fan on, caught in indulgent self reflection too graphic for the dragon cherub."

ON NEGATIVE PREFIXES

after Catherine Wagner

To encounter the phrase "the autonomy of art has its origins in the concealment of labor" is to cross a semblance of fact—cold, fraught, and yet still the case, however much this case need dusting or being done away with, refinement, refinishing, or replacement.

To move beyond what is troubling about the case, state it simply and clearly. State it just as it is, then invert the operative terms. This simple inversion, if allowed to bleed beyond the confines of language and affect change in the physical world, incites the beginnings of an evolutionary process called "apophatic progress," or "generative negation."

To create, for example, through this procedure, the phrase "the engagement of art finds its end in the transparency of leisure," is to have inverted the case and the contents of its hollow, in order to highlight negativity's presence in historical development, in absence, to move toward what the mere observation of the case was preventing from surging into existence.

This inverted phrase, however, could also fall prey to the impotencies native to language, if made to remain a mere point of departure, a vector indicating nothing more than the first step of an otherwise ambiguous course of action.

Imagine now a scaffold sinking into the center of a vast lake of acid at the speed of its structure's dissolution.

Imagine that the contents of each floor—the people, the animals, the things, confined and without escape—are being successively scalded unto death, and thereafter rendered indistinguishable from the individual mass of acid, consumptive and disturbing in its indivisibility, especially disturbing to those who will have to wait the longest to burn: those occupying the highest floor, for once made to hear the screams of the ones below, whom they have been passively holding captive.

To think it was they all along who could have altered the course of things with a mere lifetime of generosity!

A PARAPHRASE OF MARX

Buoyed up by society at large, I foresaw that in my times of leisure I would continue to practice the arts by which I have successfully resisted definition. Then the day came when a single question disturbed this course of action to which I had predisposed myself: on whose back am I reclining while I set these afternoons aside for navel-gazing?

With no end in sight, the formlessness of my personhood had become undeniably masturbatory, though masturbatory in an absolutely negative sense: a masturbation that yielded no pleasure and, at the moment of climax, did not liberate me from—but united me with—the deep anxieties of the global violence over which I realized, too late, I had been coming.

THE APPLICATION

The object of my application was to gain access to a plane of language honest and freely discursive. Like a procedural work, it provided me a strict framework that liberated me from inhibition and habit, gracefully voiding the products of my free-range creativity with its stringent demands.

The application taught me of economy: I desired a new voice, terse and pointed. I filled it out, again and again, as nothing more than a literary exercise. I admired its simplicity. It restructured the interests and aims of my writing, then, my very manner of speech.

The application taught me English. It forced me, in fact, to learn English all over again. Its questions served me as a model for the English I hoped to eventually speak.

But when they offered me a job, I knew I had done something wrong. I looked back and wished that I could read the application for the first time again, repeatedly, one time after another, applying, alive and in death, a virgin applicant forever, filling out its form for the first time forever, and ever. And when I let myself say yes to their offer . . . Oh god, only now can I see the irrevocability of my mistake . . .

Don't talk to me. This would be easier were I made of glass.

INCLUSIVITY BLUEPRINT

I. IS FAR / IS BLUER

Now alone, I've lost access to that "redemptive" escape,
The open and the concealed have swapped spirits,
And by law you are on a high shelf of transition,
Looking down on the upcast eyes of the city
Milked over with the glaucous stuff of in-between grounds.
And by law this can't be sadness, but
That something out at the point where adjectives fail.
I don't know what to call it: unwilling?
My attentions drift to spaces that feel
At first esthetically conservative,
Though you have given me
This extension of your person,
and within it I recognize
Beneath the novelty
The shapes I first learned to inhabit:
Lines straight or arcing,
Simple forms, like triangles, quadrilaterals, hexagons, etc.,
And inside, perspective too still follows its old patterns
(What is far is bluer)
Which is to say that space is the same as ever,
And this time it's not a matter of touch, but sight.
But remember. You are only here as a process,
As a space a material forced out of its native structures
Can return to
When the stakes get raised
Even one notch too high.

II. INCLUSIVITY BLUEPRINT

The point is to lock your jaw, glass, and screen,
To make them less like windows, portals less confessional,
To slant their roofs and ceilings, be they sinking or rising
Through canals of futurity with loss as peripheral banks.

Farewell and goodbye, between these words a choice,
Quantities of desire, almost a flavor, whether to rear up
Image or flesh, or, if you don't believe my mistrust,
Watch the Imitation Spring crying snow on the shoots

And my choice to view hindsight as pedagogical
Has locked me out of your inclusivity blueprint,
But into our already-superabundant hoarding chamber,
Where joy becomes indistinct and more meaningful,

A vague ease in roundabout yet concrete forms.
So I grow this warm counterpart to time's accordion,
By turns inert and volatile; you turn away
When you smile, it's infectious, that modesty in light,

But happiness too can be difficult to trust outdoors.
Time and again without a roof it floats away.

III. THE CITY THEY GAVE YOU

On another earth, the parents who love you are walls. Beyond them, you can
see the city—the city they gave you.

At my edges you are lonely. Let me blur them:

break/fissure—rupture/urethra
caption/nimbus—mackerel/opus
sanctus/rage—bleat/now
frozen/like—prolonging/jaw

They gave you no city. Let me blur them:

voice/upset—voice/centered
layman/abstract—another/body
unforeseen/plastic—freight/heat
astrigent/committal—narrative/hope

They gave you no city. Let me blur them:

salmonella/healthy—desire/cóntent
imprévu/because—elsewhere/no
sequence/derision—cancellation/bi-polar
jokes/sleep—nard/burial

Let me blur them because, good as they've been to you, they gave you no city:

breakage/point—return/confess
soak/loin—creak/moan

pure/joy—light/because
unanimous/forge—agree/forget

You knew that's how it would end,

agree/forget

But I didn't mean to write that there.
It was you who meant me to.

IV. DURER TUE

The smell of mint, smoke, and smothered candles stolen from a highway memorial,

And slow-burning red lights, rotating in the golden throng of elsewhere's crickets,

Approach like a strange animal in the dark brush.

Rustling bodies, supine beneath a triangle of stars, prewise arrivals,

The approach of one segment's ending and another's beginning.

They seek the waning Pleiades, which no longer illuminate the coupled nights

Constellated throughout the vegetable garden.

As if spitting our images onto film, they synchronize their movements

With the conductor's wand of these first breaths of autumn

To find the narratives concealed by the overflow.

But you mustn't say never, mustn't say a thing,

Lest you spoil the dream of becoming a bird,

And having access to these secret plains of basilica.

*
* *

And once the traces of significant events appear to have been swept away,

Where your vision and its blankness wait around the corner

In the shadow of the rain that widens more gradually

Than the smoke of images here left unchosen

For the vagueness of their Fibonaccian expansion,

Where I learn a lesson,

Where I undergo changes imperceptible until I return to the foraged nest,

Where I find myself begging you to return to the habits by which you were once identifiable,

Where I lurch apprehensively toward our friends,

Whom I mistrust for their capacity to steal you, whom I love by keeping still . . .

—I know. I hope to change and not waver

Beneath the impossibility of remaining tangible.

If only the heart, as a fruit, were yours to consume.

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